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THE LIVES
OF
EARLY METHODIST PREACHERS.

CHIEFLY WRITTEN BY THEMSELVES.

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

THOMAS JACKSON.

THIRD EDITION, WITH ADDITIONAL LIVES,
IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOLUME VI.

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THE LIFE
OF
MR. JOHN VALTON,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF;

EDITED, WITH MANY ADDITIONS AND LETTERS,

BY JOSEPH SUTCLIFFE, A.M.

"THEY that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."
(Dan. xii. 8.)

THE LIFE

OF

MR. JOHN VALTON.

It is a remark of a judicious minister, that he read books in general to enlarge his knowledge and improve his mind, but he read Christian experience with a view to bring his heart into a good frame. He was, certainly, correct; for nothing can excite and revive our piety more than models of the most enlivened piety. A personal knowledge of the subject of the following memoir enables me to say, with confidence, that he was such a model, while he remained in private life, as well as when he moved in a sphere of great usefulness, and an enlarged acquaintance with the church of God.

In the present age, our magazines and religious periodical narratives abound with experiences, which sometimes fail to excite that interest which is desirable in the religious world, because of the sameness of sentiment and expression which predominate in those accounts. And, with regard to virtuous persons recently deceased, those who collect the narratives are apt to overlook instructive deviations, and flatter the piety of the dead to please their families. The author of the following narrative will

not, I think, be accused of this: we here see the man, the Christian, and the minister, as he was.

On this delicate subject, a noble lady on the Continent, being importuned to favour the church with some account of the great things which God had done for her soul, replied, "I could have wished that they had required me to publish, with the same exactitude, the greatness of my sins, and the dissipations of my life. This to me would have been much more consolatory. My hands being tied on this head, nothing remains but to conjure the reader ever to remember, that among all the saints converted to God, I do not remember one who is a greater debtor to redeeming grace. When I consider the resistance which I made to the grace of God, and the pleasure I seemed to take in resisting, I am overwhelmed at the idea of the patience and long-suffering of God towards me, who so long opposed His Spirit by the resistance of my nature."

Mr. Valton felt similar sentiments on the same occasion. Prior to his entrance on the ministry, he wrote his experience, in six volumes; but very much diminished his Journal amid the laborious avocations of a Methodist preacher. This defect is in some sort supplied by a synopsis of his labours and experience, in a seventh volume. He left an additional manuscript, containing an account of his life and labours for the last ten years. This volume commences by a letter to the venerable Wesley, in these words:

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE long resisted your importunate desire to give you a short account of my experience, being desirous to conceal my insignificant life till I was no longer interested in the honour or dishonour that

cometh of man. But your last letter on the subject, connected with the same opinion of Mr. Fletcher, [Vicar of Madeley,] has at length convinced me, that I owe it to God and His church. I therefore humbly submit an extract to the perusal of candid people, imploring the benediction of God to accompany it."

Mr. Valton, respecting his family, observes a delicate silence. Though they were reduced, and in a dependent state, yet we gather from several circumstances that they were the remote branches of a noble house. Some of them had been distinguished in Church and State. On the invention of printing, when valuable manuscripts were eagerly sought for the press, one of the Valtons was possessed of an ancient copy of the Greek Testament, which contained the remarkable verse on the Trinity, (1 John v. 7,) and which is denominated in our books of Biblical literature, *Codex Valtoni*. In a Compendium of Theology, by Professor F. Turretin, reprinted at Amsterdam in 1695, 4to. edition, we have the following reply to the Arians, who say that the verse was foisted into the text:—"Nay, it was extant, as St. Jerome affirms, in the most ancient Greek copies: (*Hieron. in Epist. canon.*)"—and he notes further, copies of the best repute:—"and Erasmus confesses, it was extant in the most ancient copy of Britain, and in the most laudable editions; the copy of the Complute, of Antwerp, of Arias Montanus, of Valton, which are the best in use, have the place." *Imò in antiquissimis codicibus Græcis extitisse notat Hieron. in prologo in epist. canon.: et Erasmus fatetur, extare in codice Britannico vetustissimo; et laudatissimæ editiones Complutensis, Antuerpiensis, Ariæ Montani, Valtoni, quæ optimis codicibus usæ sunt, hunc locum habent.*

Respecting the family of the Valtons, when at Midsomer-Norton, I learned from Mrs. Rooke, that Mr. Valton had once told her in free conversation, that his father had come to England as page in the suite of George the Second.—We shall now hear his own words :—

My parents were natives of France, and of the Roman Catholic communion. They came to London in the year 1738, two years before I was born;* so that it was my providential lot to be born and brought up in England. I was first put to a day-school to learn English; and then removed to the school of a priest, where a French woman was employed to teach that language. During my early years I was trained to a regular attendance at the Romish chapels in London, as were also my brother and sister.

When I was nine years old, my mother took me over to Boulogne, in France, and placed me under an abbot, who had a few boarders; giving him a particular charge to perfect me in the French language. The abbot used to say mass two or three times a week, at an adjacent chapel, and to employ two of his pupils to assist at the altar. In a while I was allowed to participate of that honour, and was not a little proud to wear a surplice. In this school I remained six months, bowing to images of wood, and stone, and wax, and imbibing the baneful potions of idolatry and superstition. My mother, now coming over, took me with her from Boulogne to Paris; and being once in the church of Notre

* In the sixth volume he names his birth-day, November 23d, 1740. He was baptized John Francis, but never used the second name.

Dame, I was so delighted to hear the little choristers chant and sing, that I used my earnest endeavours with my mother to procure me a place among them ; and she seemed willing to comply, but had no friend in the place to procure me the situation. As the priest with whom I had been entrusted rigorously observed all the fast-days of the saints, which half-starved the boys, I shrunk at the idea of returning, and prayed my mother to have me removed. She complied, and endeavoured to place me in a convent of Jesuits. Not, however, agreeing on the terms, I was placed for three months longer at a private school, while she went to visit her friends in France. Here I can once remember with pain and praise making auricular confession, and receiving the absolution and benediction of my confessor. What a mercy that all this had not irrevocably grounded me in the errors and principles of the Romish Church, and indelibly stamped me a Papist ! But God had determined otherwise, as the sequel will show.

My mother now brought me home to London, where having been for three months, my father was persuaded to place me at a grammar-school in Yorkshire, to perfect me in the rudiments of the Latin tongue. The clergyman who was head of the school, not knowing that I had been rigorously educated a Roman Catholic, sent me to church with his own sons. And I have often marvelled that I should so readily comply. However, I can well remember that serious impressions were made very early on my mind ; but I had no one to guide me in the way that I should go.

When about thirteen years of age, the Bishop of Chester came, and confirmed between two and three hundred young persons. I attended with these, and

the bishop laid his hand on my head ; but the next day my conscience sorely reproached me, and I thought I should be damned for what I had done, having been baptized a Papist. I was sorely troubled for a time ; but it wore away.

In my fifteenth year, I happened to meet with Hervey's "Meditations ;" and cast my eye on that part which treats of the resurrection of the dead. I was now sensibly affected, and resolved to amend my life, and to pray that the resurrection might be a welcome day to me. For several days I had a deep impression on my mind, and was careful not to offend God ; but, alas ! this also was soon effaced.

At seventeen years of age, I returned to London, and was placed in an academy to learn book-keeping. While here, I was appointed a clerk in the Office of Ordnance, and sent to Portsmouth ; where God, in the midst of temptations, was pleased to restrain me in an extraordinary manner.

While here, a carpenter often came to heat his glue-pot at the office-fire. He being a Methodist, the clerks used to surround the fire, to have a little diversion with him. They would say, "Well, John, is there yet any hope for us? Shall we all be damned?" This would sometimes bring on serious discourse ; but we, like the swine, trampled the pearls under our feet. He one day said, when I was out of the office, that he had some hopes of John : but though I then laughed at his words, I have since found that the bread* cast on the water was found after many days.

* לֶחֶם *Lechem*, Eccles. xi. 1, signifies corn, and all kinds of provisions, as well as bread. The reference is to the custom of husbandmen, who, after the rivers overflowed with tropical rains, waded into the retiring waters, and sowed their corn to procure an early vegetation.

After residing for two years in Portsmouth, I was removed to Greenwich, still ignorant of the things which belonged to my peace. But I had not been there long before I was ordered to embark with the army for Portugal, as clerk of the stores, and assistant to the pay-master of the artillery. Though a high martial spirit had made me a volunteer in embarkation, many fears soon assailed me, lest I should perish at sea, or fall in battle, and my soul become a prey to the worm that never dies. What a pity that the good impressions on the minds of youth should be hid so much from the eyes of the church, and escape her fostering care!

After being in Portugal for nine months, peace being restored, the army was ordered home. During my stay in that country, I became intimate with some of the priests; and having a passion for splendour, the decorations of their churches, and the brilliant dresses of their images, occasioned my frequent visits; yet the issues were, that I felt no sorrow for having escaped the "mother of harlots."

On my return to England, a desk was again assigned me at Greenwich. I had not been here long before a sore trial made me think of God, and drove me to prayer for some days. In these exercises I found happiness, and a prospect of heaven, to which I thought I was then hastening.—[This is understood to have been a love affair, which greatly affected his health, and laid the foundation of that nervous complaint which more or less followed him to the grave.]—At this time Mr. Romaine's "Sermon on the Dry Bones" providentially fell into my hands. It seemed fraught with impossibilities, that I should live conformably to what was there required, being surrounded with gay companions;

and the odious epithet of Methodist was so revolting, that my Babel religion soon fell to the ground. In short, by associating with the officers of the army, I had contracted a habit of swearing, and indeed most other vices of the army, and was become quite a libertine. For swearing I was often reprov'd by my friends, which happily operated in the issue in a total renunciation of that vice.

Providence, whose designations are always gracious, now interfered to remove me from a dangerous group of companions. In December, 1763, I was ordered to the king's magazines at Purfleet, to do duty there. This seemed cruel, that I, who was but just returned from foreign service, during the campaign in Portugal, should be ordered to this isolated station, while two younger clerks were allowed to stay! When I arrived, I expected to meet with a kind reception from the young engineers; in which, however, I was disappointed; and remained for some time almost a solitary stranger.

[Mrs. Weaver, mother of the venerable Mr. Weaver, clerk in the king's works at Woolwich, and local preacher, was then living at Purfleet. She told me, that Mr. Valton came there quite a gay and pleasant young gentleman; and as he excelled on the violin, they rented a room, where he played in the evenings, and the young people danced. But, she added, when he turned Methodist, we turned Methodists; and the room, which had been shut up for some time, was re-opened for prayer and reading. In a while, he procured Mr. Wesley's "Sacred Harmony," and began to use the fiddle again in teaching us these new and engaging tunes. Of the rise and progress of this work of God Mr. Valton gives the following account.]

There was at Purfleet a lady of the name of Edwards, whose husband was an officer in the king's service. Soon after my arrival, they invited me to dine, and treated me with many civilities. Mrs. E. was a member of Mr. Wesley's society in London, and the only Methodist in that part of the country. I often spent a leisure hour at their house. One evening the conversation turned on religion. I threw in my mite, probably more from complaisance than inclination: it made, however, a strong impression on her mind in my favour. This conversation became, what God willed it to be, less tiresome to me in some succeeding evenings, and I went so far as to join the family in singing hymns. This pious woman, persevering in her good designs, lent me Baxter's "Saints' Rest;" Rutherford's "Letters;" and Law's "Serious Call." By her conversation, and by the reading of these books, I began to see my soul as the moth fluttering about the flame. Fear now prompted me to pray, sometimes with, and sometimes without, a form. I left off my grosser sins, and sacrificed my accustomed amusements, as a sort of atonement for my past transgressions. To these, some little charities were added, and acts of self-denial; which I considered as highly meritorious, and as tending gradually to blot out the handwriting which stood against me in the book of God.

But, here again, this good woman, whom I may call my soul's friend, beat me with much difficulty out of these Papistical notions, which still floated in my mind, and convinced me that nothing would avail without faith in Christ; and that salvation was the free, unmerited gift of God, through the redemption that is in Him. The books I was then

reading confirmed all she said, and shone with increasing light on my beclouded mind.

I was now sorely embarrassed with notions in my head, conflicting with sins in my heart. I knew not what to do. In fact, I began to despair of salvation, and thought to recede; but this I could not well do, having, as it were, by the kindness of this family, taken the bounty-money, if I may use a military term; and to retreat now would be shameful. I could not pray with devotion; my addresses to the throne of grace were irregular and dissipated, and prayer seemed a burden. At length, encouraged by my friends, I unbosomed my whole heart to Mr. Wesley, in an anonymous letter, soliciting his advice. The answer I beg leave to transcribe for the benefit of those who may be in the same state.

“LONDON, *January 31st*, 1764.

“It is certainly right with all possible care to abstain from all outward evil. But this profits only a little. The inward change is the one thing needful for *you*. You must be born again, or you never will gain a uniform and lasting liberty. Your whole soul is diseased, or rather dead,—dead to God, dead in sin. Awake, then, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. To seek for a particular deliverance from one sin only, is mere labour lost. If it could be attained, it would be little worth; for another would arise in its place. But, indeed, it cannot, before there is a general deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. This is the thing which you want, and which you should be continually seeking for. You want to be justified freely from all things, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ. It might be of use, if you should

read over the first volume of [my] Sermons seriously, and with prayer. Indeed, nothing will avail without prayer. Pray, whether you can or not. When you are cheerful, and when you are heavy, still pray. Pray with many or with few words, or with none at all: you will surely find an answer of peace, and why not now? I am

“Your servant, for Christ’s sake,

“J. WESLEY.”

This letter seemed fraught with impossibilities, and I should have misconstrued the whole, had not Mrs. E. explained it, and very much to my satisfaction. I now determined fully to enter into the service of the Lord of Hosts, and to seek the deliverance described in the letter. I saw now the gracious hand of God in removing me from Greenwich, and in my being unnoticed by the officers when I came to Purfleet; for had I contracted an intimacy with them, all this good might have been frustrated. Nearly at the same time, a little child, about seven years of age, came to drink tea with me: I happened to call her a little angel, and she rejoined, “O, sir, I dreamed last night that you was an angel, and that I saw you flying up into heaven, and that I called after you, but you would not stop for me; and I asked my father’s leave to come and take tea with you, that I might tell you my dream.” This little incident gave me, for a day or two, great comfort; because I received it as a token from God of what He was about to do for my soul, by fitting and preparing me for a better world; for since my trial and affliction at Greenwich, I had ceased to wish for length of life.

But all this was transient. Satan now began to

assault me with scepticism in its most dreadful forms,—that there was no God, else He would hear my prayers. I was tempted also to disbelieve the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and almost every doctrine of revelation. In short, I quarrelled with every book I read, as dark, mysterious, and irrelevant to my case.

March 6th, 1764.—I was to-day very unhappy, and thought that God had abandoned me. I sought for a form of prayer, but could find none that suited me. At last I drew up a form, partly out of the Prayer-Book, and partly out of Dr. Horneck's "Happy Ascetic," which I used for a few days; and then laid it aside, as not uttering the language of my heart. I now prayed, sometimes with words, and sometimes with none. But when I could utter a few words, I had sometimes a gleam of hope from an overclouded sun.

In the evening, a religious young man came to spend an hour at Mr. Edwards's, and I was invited to meet him. He related his experience, which very much agreed with mine, while groping the way to peace of conscience, as it were, over a dark mountain. We spent the evening in very profitable conversation, and closed with singing and prayer. I never, in all my life, enjoyed such happiness as this evening afforded me. I came home, and offered up my addresses to Heaven with an unusual flow of words. My prayers were interrupted only with tears, the effect of heartfelt joy. I could have spent the whole night in praising God: my pillow was easy, and when I awoke in the morning I arose and prostrated myself before the God that never sleeps.

11th.—This day being the Sabbath, I attended the morning service at church; and prayed very earnestly

to God. In the afternoon, I spent some time with Mr. Cawley, a carpenter, who had come from London, partly with a view to inquire after the welfare of my soul. Before I had been half an hour in his company, I loved the man, and became united to him in spirit. Alexander the Great once told Diogenes, that if he were not Alexander the Great, he would desire to be Diogenes. But I could have said, I would rather be Mr. Cawley than Diogenes. We closed the interview with singing and prayer. Yet neither singing nor praying has any lasting effect to raise my mind. I ever sink back into that nervous gloom to which my constitution is inclined. My petrified heart seems unwilling that a tear should drop from my eye. Nay, such was the apathy I now felt, that had my relations been bleeding at my feet, I think it would not have moved me. I sometimes thought that God had entirely given me up.

On relating my feelings to my good mother, I observed that she shed tears. She assured me that I should soon receive comfort, notwithstanding the agonies of my mind. She encouraged me to look to the Saviour, adding that "the vilest sinner should never despair." These last words reached my heart, and caused the tears plentifully to flow from my eyes. My heart swelled, and my eyes so overflowed, that I left the house; a spark of celestial fire now kindled in my breast, which dispelled the gloom, melted the rock, and diffused Divine love through all my heart. My soul exclaimed, "What acknowledgments shall I make to Thee, O Fountain of Divine love, for Thy goodness to a worm! How incomprehensible is Thy love to sinners, and how ready art Thou to forgive, and to meet them when they return! How inexcusable am I to distrust Thy goodness, seeing every

object around me proclaims Thy goodness and love!"

In the afternoon of this blessed day, I found the river of joy swelling in my breast by the influence of the heavenly shower. The Sun of Righteousness has indeed risen on my soul with genial warmth, and called forth the enlivened seeds of gratitude. I was not disobedient to the heavenly influences, but instantly on my knees acknowledged the blessing, and prayed that the Lord would no more hide His face from me, but pardon my impatience, my pride, and unbelief. I could now bless God for the hidings of His face for my peevishness and distrustful reasonings; for I found that without His gracious restriction, I should sink back into all the bad habits of my fellow-sinners.

In prayer also, I found that God had now loosened my tongue: I could pour out my soul, and speak as the Spirit gave me utterance. I could now pray that the Lord would grant me such of my petitions as tended to the welfare of my soul, and at such times as He saw best.

21st.—My soul for the last three days has been gradually sinking; but to-day the strong man rose upon me with uncommon violence. I discovered anew the latent evils of my breast. I felt pride, repining, and discontent. Ah! how is it that I, who but the other day had such overflowing peace and joy, should now sink so low!—"Ah! little did I think," exclaimed I, in my anguish, "that religion would bring me to this! Surely I never found evil passions so predominant in my career of worldly pleasure. Well, I shall now lay religion aside!" These were my words. But I reflected that I never found any real pleasure or lasting good in the

world; and to return to it would be but to increase my misery in this world, and endless torments in that which is to come. A faint hope now shone upon me, that faith and hope would yet again spring up in my mind.

While in this weak and depressed state, I was asserting something of importance, which was disbelieved by the person to whom I spoke: I felt great anger,—*et ira est furor*,—and called God twice or thrice to witness the truth of what I said, and, in the agony of my mind, silently vowed to abandon religion. O, how I was stung with my own words! I was like a madman. I dropped on my knees to pray; but could not. I fell prostrate, but could not remain so; fearing lest God should strike me dead, and send me to everlasting fire. I could scarcely stand all the day, I was so greatly affected. I could but remark the difference in my feelings between this and the former conflict, after offending God. Then I was all apathy; nothing moved me: now everything heaped a mountain on my depressed spirits. I wished to hide myself in some dark retreat, being burdened with the light of the sun. At night I ventured to pray, but without much hope. In the morning I was much the same. However, about eleven o'clock the Lord gave me a token of His love and goodness in my heart. I exclaimed, "O God, let me never more offend Thee by anger, nor despair of Thy mercy and love; but be always resigned to Thy gracious will!"

April 6th.—I went to London, and called on a gentleman, to whom I had once written on business, to direct me to hear a sermon. While I was there, Mr. Mark Davis (then stationed in town) came in, and I accompanied him to Wapping, and told him

all my heart and state. I hid myself in this small and rough-looking chapel under the pulpit; and though much annoyed with the people's coughing and noise, yet I was delighted with the discourse on "Quench not the Spirit." It seemed to be wholly on my account. How happy are the Methodists who have ministers that know how to speak a word to him that is weary!

Sunday, 8th.—I attended at West-Street, Seven Dials [bought for a chapel in the Establishment since the purchase and rebuilding of Queen-Street chapel]. The great decorum and strict attention of the congregation inspired me with reverence and awe. The unaffected piety, the correct, uniform, and decent responses of the people, were very moving, and I may say to me, as a stranger, astonishing. The singing was heavenly, and seemed to come from the heart. In the evening, I attended at the Foundery, (Mr. Wesley's first chapel,) and heard an excellent sermon, which stirred me up to press towards the mark for the prize of my high calling; and should have found more good if I could have retired for prayer; but, lodging with a great family, I had no opportunity. How favoured are the Methodists to enjoy such ordinances and sermons as these! And yet my heart, my vain heart, is afraid to have it known that I am become a Methodist.

22d.—To-day I went to Snow's-Fields chapel to hear Mr. Maxfield, and stayed the sacrament, but found the enemy so harassing my mind with temptations, that the reasonings with him took away much of the good. The sermon, however, was very affecting, and kept me in tears most of the time. Surely these are workmen who know their work, and know the hearts of men!

30th.—Though I have been in a good frame of mind the last few days, I now found a return of old temptations. It has been my method at those times to fall down on my knees and pray; that being the most advantageous posture in which to resist the enemy.

May 3d.—To-day, Mrs. Edwards being sick, the severest trial of all my life came upon me: I was forbidden to go to the house of my soul's friend, the blessed mother in Israel, who, under God, had been the instrument of saving my soul. The enemy, for some weeks, had been stirring up the mind of Mr. E. against me. He was determined to prohibit my access to his house, and had for some weeks been secretly and openly defaming me; and in such sort, that the gentlemen in the king's service despised me. Among the rest, he accused me of insanity, and thought that my religious conversation and prayers contributed to augment the rheumatic fever and affliction of his wife. "They laid things to my charge that I knew not of."

I went to my room full of anguish, and of the most horrible temptations. I spent the whole night in prayer, sometimes on the floor, sometimes on the bed. The reproaches of the ungodly brought all my sins to my remembrance, and seemed to overwhelm me with a sense of the wrath of God. While in prayer, the Almighty seemed clothed with angry aspects, and with thunder in his hand. Meanwhile the Saviour presented Himself in His priestly garments, interceding for my soul. For a time the Almighty seemed inexorable, but at length dropped His vengeful arm, as though He had said,

"My Son is in my servant's prayer,
And Jesus forces Me to spare."

This view of God and the mediatorial throne continued with me for several days, and was followed with much peace.

4th.—This day, by acute pains, Mrs. Edwards became delirious. The gout having reached her stomach, she was not expected to live; and, I believe, her affliction was much augmented by the grief of her mind. My prayer was, that God would not separate us, but cut short His work in me, and take me to the realms of bliss, whither I thought she was going. About ten o'clock I retired, and wrestled with the Lord, that He would ease her pain, and remove her delirium: and it pleased the Almighty that very hour to grant what I asked; which greatly increased my faith, and strengthened my hands in prayer. From this time also, Mr. E. seemed reconciled to me. Perhaps it was the affliction of his wife which made him so angry with me; but, Lord, what is man?

10th.—To-day I also was taken ill, and feared lest I should lose my senses. Great trials always augment the infirmities to which my constitution is inclined. I spent most of the morning in prayer, and in much distress of mind. A plot had been laid to get me removed back to Greenwich, among all my old and wicked companions. Providentially, I was enabled so to remonstrate as to break the snare. I have, in this instance, realized the note of Mr. Wesley, Matt. iv. 1; that after the strongest consolations we may expect the sharpest temptations.

15th.—This being the Sabbath-day, I met Mr. Watkins at the church-door, an officer who had served with me in Portugal. I was ashamed to say that I had turned Methodist; and yet I durst not let him go without telling him of the danger his

soul was in. The ship was lying off Purfleet, in which he was going out to Peniscola. I took him to dine. Our conversation soon made him ready to exclaim, with the gaoler, "What must I do to be saved?" We wept and prayed together, and sung hymns. He told me that he had a strong conflict, as the ship was to sail that evening, whether he should venture ashore to take leave of me; but something unaccountably said within him, "I must see him; I must see him." I gave him all Mr. Wesley's Sermons and Notes, and other books that I had, accompanied him about a mile, and was fully persuaded that God, who had begun a good work in his soul, would finish it to the day of Christ. My soul was knit to him in affection, as the soul of David to Jonathan.—After parting from him, I cried, "O Lord, the Keeper of Israel, into Thy hands I commend him. Save and defend him, that he may renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and be a true follower of the Lamb!"—From this time, I felt an unaccountable desire for the salvation of souls, and resolved to speak to individuals whenever I could find opportunity. A little fruit encourages the labours of the husbandman.

July 14th.—I went to London to hear Mr. Charles Wesley on the ensuing Sabbath. His word was with power; and I thought my Saviour was at hand, never being so sensibly affected under a discourse before. In the evening, I heard him again at the Foundery, and all seemed to be comforted or affected by his word. On returning, I lost much of the good by joining rather than reproving the discourse of the passengers. My conscience severely accuses if I join in any unhallowed levity of conversation. Surely my heart is a composition of sin, at enmity with

God, and subject to the prince of this world, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

31st.—My father and my brother paid me a visit to-day, and my mind was much hurt by their conversation. My poor father inquired, whether I did not sing Whitefield's hymns; assuring me, at the same time, that if I followed the Methodists, I might never more expect preferment. My brother is altogether averse to religion, especially to Methodism. The way is too narrow.

August 4th.—This morning, in consequence of reading certain books, I was more strongly tempted to believe in absolute predestination than ever; and to believe also, on account of the evils in my heart, that I was one of the reprobates. In the course of the day, I named these thoughts to a friend, who replied, "If predestination be true, you ought to rejoice and be happy, because, being convinced of sin, you have one of the first marks of being elected." This afforded me a momentary comfort. But, ah! I sink again into anguish and pain, and cannot believe that there is one saint in glory that ever was so wicked as I have been. Yet, bad as I am, the price which my Redeemer has paid is such as the Father can accept: therefore I am encouraged to believe, that I shall yet have a place in glory at the Saviour's feet.

12th.—This morning I had sweet communion with God on my way to the church. But, on thinking what I should say at night, when five of us met for Christian fellowship, several pertinent texts came into my mind. Here, again, Satan stirred up the latent pride of my heart. This may arise chiefly from my evil nature; but, from whatever source it may spring, it seems to contaminate all my thoughts,

and words, and actions. I have not read or heard of anyone who has had such sore and bitter conflicts with the evils of nature, and the temptations of Satan, as have fallen to my lot. Perhaps the Lord is, by these conflicts, forcing me from seeking to be justified by the law, or preparing me to be useful to others. This thought gave me comfort.

15th.—This morning Satan seemed to concentrate all his heavy artillery against my soul, in a way he had never done since I began to seek the heavenly kingdom. Pride appeared also in its strongest forms. I was shocked at the aspects of the temptation; and, falling down on my knees, resolved to surrender myself wholly into the arms of God,—that, if He would save me, I would resist no more. Presently my eyes were bathed in tears; and now a concurring thought seemed to say within, that this was the very thing I ought to do.

16th.—This was to me a happy day. I went to the office, having shaken off my legal chains, and sought no more to fulfil the law in my own strength. Leaning on my Saviour, I felt Divine support, and entered on duty without fearing the seductive habits of company. I was obliged indeed to be social; but all the while I was happy in God. He kept me as a little child, and showed me that I knew nothing as I ought to know. Here was a lesson I had never learned before.

17th.—This was a sore morning of temptation to my soul. “Ay,” said the enemy, “you are now become light and trifling.” A messenger of Satan was allowed to buffet me with all the reasonings and excitements to unbelief. I walked the room in a state of distraction. My cry was, “Save, Lord, or

I perish." My soul chose strangling rather than life; and, had not the Lord been on my side, I had fallen a prey to the enemy.

31st.—During the whole of the last fortnight, I have passed through deep waters. Satan takes great and grievous advantages of the nervous infirmities of my constitution. He upbraids me with my past sins as a monster of wickedness; and tells me that all my religious intercourse with the friends is pride, hypocrisy, and deceit. If at any time I have enjoyed what they call "the drawings of the Father," he then assails me, that I am become light, trifling, and vain. Often I am assaulted to renounce religion altogether, and give up myself to despair.

Saturday, September 1st.—This morning I was greatly comforted in reading the Holy Scriptures; and going to London, I heard Mr. Wesley for the first time. Next morning I heard him at Snow's Fields, on Matt. iii. 2: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He observed, that the unawakened sinner is under the power of evil, and sin prevails; the justified has grace and sin, but grace prevails. He thence proceeded to show the necessity of having the kingdom of heaven set up in our hearts, in order to sanctification. O, how much I was blessed by hearing this discourse! I heard him again at Spitalfields, and twice received the sacrament to-day.

In the latter sermon, on 2 Kings v. 12, I was pleased with his criticism on Naaman's words. He said, that our versions contained an egregious blunder, in reading verse 18 in the future instead of the past tense. It should be, "When thy servant *hath gone* into the house of Rimmon, and *hath bowed*,"

&c.* His conscience accused him of worshipping an idol, instead of the God of the whole earth.

3d.—I attended preaching at the Foundery at five o'clock, and at ten a friend took me to Miss Marsh's meeting for Christian communion. The friends spoke their experience, and they greatly encouraged me by giving their opinion that I was in a justified state. At the close of the meeting, Mr. Maxfield [whom a good bishop had ordained, to prevent Mr. Wesley from preaching himself to death] administered the sacrament. While they prayed, I thought the Lord gave me the witness of His Holy Spirit.

[Miss Marsh was a lady of good education; and, having a small independent fortune, devoted her life, and all she had, in doing good. She sometimes made excursions to Bristol, and other parts of the country, where she met classes, &c.]

25th.—Since the 8th of this month, I have been confined to my room by a fever; but, by the grace of God, I am recovered. O, how good and gracious was the Lord to me in my affliction! My temptations were suspended. My cry was, "Father, take me to Thyself!" I had a longing desire to depart, and be with Christ. I had no doubt but that I should see and enjoy the Lord for ever. God gave me such tokens of His love, that I could not be silent. I once exclaimed, in the words of Addison, "Come, see a Christian die."

In the beginning of this affliction I had examined my heart, and seen myself as deserving the heaviest wrath of God, and knew not how to escape; but instantly I found a trust in Christ, which I thought would keep me from perdition. Satan again assaulted me with predestination. For six or eight hours my

* Dr. John Lightfoot makes the same remark

conflicts, accompanied by many tears, were so great, that the sweat ran down me like water; but from this time I began to recover.

30th.—To-day I came to London, but much harassed with the thought that I was flying from persecution, and leaving the cross behind. My design was to get food for my soul; and I was much blessed under Mr. Richardson's sermon, as also under Mr. Olivers's prayer.

October 16th.—I have had a relapse of my fever for the last ten days; but while under the chastisement of my heavenly Father, my mind was kept in peace. I tasted much of His presence and love in my affliction, and felt a longing desire to depart, to be with Christ. I have held fast the promises in this illness, and wait to see them fully accomplished.

17th.—I went to see my father, and found him low and dejected. He said it was chiefly occasioned by my being turned a Methodist; for my patrons would hear of it, and cast me off to provide for myself. I told him, that since the late change in my views, I durst not now spend my time and money in taverns and theatres. I now neither dared to swear, nor lie, nor commit the least known sin. I asked, if he found me less obedient, or affectionate, or in anything altered for the worse. He was silent, and seemed satisfied with my defence.

18th.—I was this evening admitted into the band-meeting, and was much blessed in hearing those pious and holy souls who have long walked in the way speak their experience. I went also to another meeting, where the Lord's supper was administered, as before.

23d.—This day I returned to Purfleet, much refreshed and strengthened in my soul. Glory be to

Thee, O God! Do Thou, O Lord, preserve my soul when I am distant from the Shepherd's tent! Supply from Thy fountain such wisdom and knowledge as my soul may need; and make me a faithful steward of Thy bounty, whether temporal or spiritual, that I may freely give of Thy store, conformably to the designs of Thy providence.

November 7th.—The Lord was pleased to suffer my ague and fever to return, and sometimes to be accompanied with delirium: a disease which affects many in these low and marshy grounds. I have not been able to keep my thoughts stayed on the Lord, but have comforted myself with the thought, that I was in the wilderness state described in Mr. Wesley's sermon: and yet, all do not pass through that state to the promised land. I have also been much tempted to doubt of the pardoning love of God which I received while in London. Because it was not incontestably clear, I feared it was not really the case; and that my comforts were only the drawings of the Father.

20th.—My fever and ague still continue, and my inward conflicts and temptations are unabated: I could scarcely think of God; nay, I seemed angry with Him, because He had not favoured me as some others who had not sought Him half so long. I felt also many sins and foolish desires rising in my heart, but did not give way to them. My mind, however, was greatly relieved in hearing Mr. Wesley, on Luke xxii. 31, 32, in which he showed how Satan was allowed of God to sift His children, as wheat, that the chaff might be blown away. I saw that I had undergone that sifting, and much in the same manner as Mr. Wesley had described. I was, indeed, much edified when I heard that other believers

had been assailed with the horrid temptations which had long pursued me.

21st.—This morning my soul was very happy in prayer, though my fever still continued. And when I am thus happy in God, my bowels most yearn after the souls of poor sinners. I have collected a few of these to attend our evening meetings, and pray and talk to them for two or three hours together, notwithstanding my fever. They have not been able to resist my words, but melt and weep under my feeble exhortation. While thus arguing and pleading with them, and seeing them unable to resist my words, I have myself found surprising comfort and joy; and my memory has become so retentive, that pertinent texts have poured in upon me with uncommon light and force.

December 2d.—This day I read over Bishop Taylor's "Rules of Holy Living," and fell down on my knees, praying that God would forgive all the loose speeches and slanders of my tongue. The book enlightened my conscience with regard to many of my sins. While in Portugal, I had wronged my deputy of £23. Had he complained to the Board, it is probable that they would have given it in my favour. But I was not sure that they would not have given it against me. No matter; though several years had elapsed, my conscience now compelled me to pay him the money.

Sunday, 9th.—Mr. Windsor met our little class in Purfleet. He was lively, and his words were blessed to us all. His words indicated earnestness of soul, strength of faith, and ardour of love. He greatly assisted me in the method of pouring out my soul to God; and he was the instrument of many blessings conferred upon me, particularly in his method of

thanksgiving in certain parts of his prayers: no wonder that David should delight in the society of saints.

Next day, in reading Mark xi., the 24th verse was much blessed to me. I said, "Lord, I do believe that all Thy promises shall be fulfilled to me." And, indeed, in that hour it was given me to believe with the heart unto righteousness. God truly blessed my soul; and left not the least doubt of His then fulfilling His promise. The power of God rested so strongly on my soul, that I felt my bosom glow with love; and was ready to say, "Lord, it is enough. If Thou givest more, take me to Thyself!" The Lord is merciful and gracious. He will not chide for ever. He makes us to hear joy and gladness, and causes the bones which He had broken to rejoice. O my soul, remember His marvellous works, that in all future temptations thou mayest trust in Him!

11th.—This morning the Lord was pleased to give me fresh tokens of His love. He overwhelmed me with His goodness, and I felt that I could love Him because He had first loved me. My prayer was, that He would renew me in His Divine image, create in me a clean heart, and bring in His everlasting righteousness. Truly, He has heard my prayer when I had continually evil thoughts, and took pleasure in many of them. I told those things to Mr. Windsor, and was much encouraged when he said that believers in general were assailed in the same way. I named also a temptation to pride: after giving an exhortation, I had overheard a hearer say, "What a wonderful young man is that! I hope God will bless him."

21st.—My happiness has continued till to-day, when, alas! while talking to a man about the wolves in Portugal, I dropped a word which was not

strictly true, with regard to my having seen those wolves. It was in a moment of confusion caused by his questions. I sighed and groaned most of the day for pardon; and next day felt my peace return, but not with the faith and confidence I had before. Thanks be to God, however, that this year, which began with so much bitterness and anguish, ends with days of sunshine and peace!

January 1st, 1765.—O Lord, do Thou grant that this year may be productive of universal holiness, and that all nations may acknowledge the Saviour of men. In an especial manner, do Thou bless us of this nation; and make us a holy nation, a peculiar people. Let peace be within our walls, and righteousness in our dwellings. Fill our hearts with love, and let our lives show forth Thy praise. Continue to us the means of grace, and grant that we may never provoke Thee to withdraw Thy favours. Glory be to Thee, O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

O my soul, stay upon thy Saviour, and hang upon His word: is it not music to thy ear, and health to thy bones? Last year, at this time, thou sawest no beauty in thy Saviour, nor comeliness that thou shouldest desire Him: nay, thou didst despise and reject Him. Thou didst account His life folly and misery below. But now, O my soul, go forth with the voice of singing, and declare His righteousness to the ends of the earth. The Lord hath redeemed thee, and plucked thee as a brand from the burning. He hath brought thee out of darkness into marvellous light, and given "the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins," through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

5th.—Two days ago I felt much encouragement while praying for the prosperity of our little class;

and this morning the Lord seemed to receive my prayers when I besought Him for my relatives in London and in France.

21st.—This evening, being in London, I attended the bands, and happened to sit on the next bench to Mr. Wesley and the preachers. His eye caught me; and he asked me, whether I found it good to attend the means of grace. I answered in the affirmative. He inquired again, whether I did not feel an anxious desire after preferment. I rejoined, “No;” my one desire being to love God. I then sat down; but was much harassed that I had not spoken my experience. The truth is, I was not then so happy as I had been in the beginning of the year. But O! before the meeting closed, I was much comforted to hear two or three souls praise God, and tell of His marvellous grace. O Lord, hasten the time when I shall praise Thee without ceasing, and when all my heart “shall be holiness to the Lord!” What avails it that Thou hast pardoned my sins, if Thou dost not renew me in Thy image, and give me that mind that was in Christ!

“Give me Thy only love to know,
Give me Thy only love!”

February 3d.—I have spent a comfortable hour with two or three persons who have a desire to save their souls. But pride began to rise in my heart from what one said of me. Alas! it mixes itself with all I do. It is neither decent nor wise to praise men to their face. I was buffeted also with hypocrisy, for talking of the love of God, when I felt but little of it in my heart. Yet my conscience acquits me of doing this to seek the praise of men.

6th—I rose this morning at my usual hour, before

five o'clock, and read the lessons and Psalms, and a sermon by Mr. Wesley; which course I now always pursue. It happened to be the sermon on the witness of the Spirit. Some things in it staggered me, because I could hardly say that it was my experience. However, after reading, I went to prayer, and was much comforted.

7th.—To-day I wrote to my father, and gave him an account of the change which grace had wrought in my heart. I ventured also to point out to him some prominent errors of the Church of Rome. And being very happy in the love of God, I wrote also to Mr. Windsor, at whose band-meeting my soul had been much refreshed.

27th.—I have been in a deplorable state of mind for some days past, and felt all my former peevishness return. O my nature! my nature! I really believe, had not God directed me to the sermon of Mr. Wesley, on "We are not ignorant of Satan's devices," my spirit would have failed before the Lord, and I should have given up my hope as lost. My unholy tempers, and the men with whom I have to do, make me cry for entire renovation of heart.

March 6th.—I have been exceedingly tried and tempted for the last four days. I have been too dead to God; and if I trifle but for a moment, I receive condemnation. The voice of God, by the secret influence of His Holy Spirit, warns me of the least danger. It seems as though the Lord were calling me off from terrestrial things to close communion with Himself. Lord, I bless Thee, that Thou hast put it into my heart to pray for this; and hast discovered to me my utter helplessness, that without Thee I can do nothing.

I have lately read in "the Christian Library" a

treatise on Fasting, by Robert Bolton ; a holy minister, and a skilful surgeon. It is either by fasting twice a week, or by early rising, that I am so weak as not to kneel upright in prayer for any length of time. If it proceed from the latter, I am sure it will be a far heavier trial to lie in bed than to rise at an early hour.

10th.—I heard Mr. Wesley preach a charity sermon at Spitalfields chapel, for the benefit of the poor weavers. He observed, that by giving one pound the Methodists might gain ten, and stir up the Church of England to charities. At night he kept a lovefeast, and was in great spirits. Next morning he was about to set out on his long journey to the north of England and Scotland, till October. I believe there were few dry eyes in the place. My prayer was, “O Lord God, do Thou accompany him wheresoever Thou shalt call him; and make Thy face to shine upon him! Do Thou give him a mouth, and wisdom, that none of his adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist; and receive him at last to Thy kingdom of glory!”

16th.—This morning I made a bold, I do not say a wise, request to God: I asked, having a strong sensibility of His presence in my soul, that He would finish His work, and take me out of the world to my Redeemer's kingdom. The request was followed with so much peace and joy, that I thought He was about to take me away. O, with what rapture did I anticipate dying! My hope was full of immortality. I could sing the pilgrim's hymn with delight. I want no foot of land, (unless it be under ground,) nor wife, nor children, nor honours, nor pleasures, nor preferments, nor any creature. Christ supplies all these to me, and ten thousand times more.

21st.—I have not been so happy for the last three days as I was before. Notwithstanding, a friend to whom I had unbosomed my state, said, he believed that I had received the abiding witness of the Spirit. I believed his words, and felt happy; and prostrating myself before the Lord, I felt abundant joy to overflow my heart. But, alas! in the midst of my joys, a man from Greenwich came on business to spend the evening with me. His conversation was loose, jocular, and carnal, and much mixed with profane swearing. I often tried to divert the conversation to better subjects, but failed in courage to reprove him. O, how I was condemned for allowing him to take the name of God in vain, almost in every sentence! The Holy Spirit spoke once, yea, twice; but I did not obey the heavenly Monitor. When he was gone, a cloud was left on my mind; and I besought a pardon with cries and tears. Having to breakfast with him next morning at an inn, I prayed the Lord to restrain him from those shameful words; and, blessed be the Lord, I do not remember that he swore once all the time I was with him.

April 5th.—This being Good Friday, I fasted till near six in the evening. O that I had abstained also from sin! But in the course of the day I gave way to anger against a person; and it was nearly an hour before I could recover an even temperature of mind. O Lord, I fall every moment without Thy special support. Root out of my heart every plant which is not of Thy planting! Sometimes, when I have been delivered from a temptation, I have thought that I would never distrust the Lord again. I find, however, that if Satan be driven from one retreat, he enters at another, and laughs at human resolutions.

7th.—This being Easter-day, I had a gracious season at the Lord's table; for the Lord was in the means. In the afternoon I was both comforted and tempted. I have often thought that the Lord would send me out to publish His Gospel to perishing sinners; and yet I know I have not gifts for it, but am aware that I have pride enough; and, I believe, zeal, but fear it is not "according to knowledge." I prayed for humility, and that God would never suffer me to speak in His name, no, not even privately, in my own spirit, or wisdom, or knowledge. Are there not murderers enough of souls already? Surely there are special receptacles in hell for false teachers. These are the armour-bearers of Satan, the captains of his thousands. What a blow he strikes at the kingdom of Christ when he gets one of these into commission!

25th.—O, how has the fear of losing my leg by amputation tormented me for the last four days! [Mr. Valton told me, that the complaint in his ankle came at first with a chilblain. The complaint seemed to go away, and he walked for twenty years without any appearance of lameness. Sea-bathing was recommended as an antidote. However, in the course of thirty years, the bone became carious, and ultimately, after suffering the severest pains, it occasioned his death.]

28th.—Mr. Windsor paid us another visit, and met us at Mr. Healey's. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so does the countenance of a man his friend." When in company with good men, all my fears and nervous agitations vanish away.

Saturday, May 4th.—I went up to town to hear the Gospel, and spend the Sabbath in the Divine ordinances. In the passage-boat, there were three

common women. The miserable creatures swore bitterly; and one of them addressed herself to me,—from what motive I will not judge. I lifted up my heart to God for a word in season, and watched an opportunity to lay before them the greatness of their danger. I had scarcely begun to speak before one of them was pricked in her conscience. Another, the most daring of the three, was obliged to leave the cabin. The third wept once and again. I advised her to beg her bread, with assurance that in six months the Lord would direct her into a way of getting an honest livelihood.

6th.—Being in company with Mr. Henton, a preacher, he asked me if I had now the love of God in my heart. I answered, that the Lord was very gracious to me; thereby evading a direct answer, because my evidence of the direct witness was not clear. O Lord, why do I thus doubt? If I am Thy child, send forth Thy blessed Spirit to bear witness with mine, that I may unceasingly cry, Abba, Father! What variety of changes occurs in my Christian warfare! Now borne aloft on the wings of faith, and then cast down with doubts: now one sin pushing sorely at me, and then another: one while the soul rapt up into the third heaven, and then grovelling in the dust: one day experiencing much of the Divine life, and then doubting whether it be a real work of grace. O, happy are they who experience a permanent sense of the Divine favour, and can rejoice in assurance of glory, notwithstanding the daily exercises and temptations of life.

11th.—O, how dead and lifeless have I been for these few days, and yet no way troubled about it! My thoughts were dissipated, my confessions unfeeling, my repentance verbal. I fear I have lost the

substance of religion, and scarcely hold the shadow. I have often said, that if I lost ground or abated my earnestness, I should be the most miserable being alive. In this I was mistaken. It is now plain to me that we may fall away, and yet not lay it to heart. It must be, O Lord, of Thy tender mercy, and unwillingness to part with a child of Thine, that Thou layest, as the last effort of Thy Spirit, trouble and heaviness on his mind, and sendest a blast on all his endeavours, that peradventure he may recollect himself, and return to Thee again.

19th.—This evening, about six o'clock, I was at prayer, and felt so lifeless and forlorn, that I resolved not to go to the class. My eyes were swollen with weeping, and I thought my friends were no way likely to quicken me. However, after prayer, I set out, and had a refreshing time. A woman expressed a desire to meet with us; and next day her husband came, and related how he had attended the ministry of Mr. Whitefield, Mr. Romaine, and Mr. Madan in London, but had lost his good impressions by coming to Purfleet, and leaving the means of grace. She had opposed the truth in London; but now they both seem in earnest with God. Three are now added to our little flock. I read and prayed with them, and left them happier than I was myself.

June 1st.—Company coming from London, I was aware that they would expect me to dine with them; and doubting how I could do it with safety, I hid myself in a garret for prayer. At length I resolved to set out for London; but the tide would not permit. In the evening, after calling the names of the labourers, I found a note requesting my attendance at the inn. So I was obliged to go; and had

not been in their company long before they began to drink filthy toasts : I avoided drinking them. At length, they called upon me to give mine. This, also, I refused. One of the company gave a toast for me, and insisted on my drinking it. This, blessed be God, I refused, and took my leave. One of my most intimate acquaintances followed me, and entreated that I would not estrange myself from all my friends. Another of my old friends followed me ; and seeing my views were changed, he very much approved of my steady adherence to my religious principles. Thus, through the blessing of God, my soul escaped ; as a bird from the snare of the fowler.

Sunday, June 9th.—A small party of us, taking our dinners in our pockets, walked to Bexley, to hear the good vicar, the Rev. Mr. Piers. He was one of the first clergymen that opened their churches to Mr. Wesley, and gave him the right hand of fellowship.* He preached an excellent sermon to a dull congregation, on Paul's description of charity. In the afternoon we walked to Wellen, and heard one of Mr. Wesley's preachers.

15th.—Three weeks ago, I went to the shop to

* The first Conference was held at Bristol, in the year 1744 ; attended by six clergymen, and four lay preachers ; viz., Messrs. J. and C. Wesley, Henry Piers, John Hodges, Samuel Taylor, John Meriton ; and the lay preachers were, Thomas Maxfield, Thomas Richards, John Bennet, and John Downs. In 1747 the fourth Conference was held in London, when Mr. Piers was again present ; and he continued his attachment to the end of life. I joined a maternal great-grandson of his in the Dartford society, in 1817. Mr. P. incurred the common odium of Methodism. When preaching at the Visitation at Sevenoaks, about the middle of the discourse the arch-deacon walked out, and all the clergymen followed ; but the congregation stayed to the end.

visit our carpenter, who had lately joined the class ; and last night I was present at his departure, I would hope, to glory. He was cut off by a fever, in seven days. On being taken ill, he sent for me, and said he knew that his Redeemer lived. I doubted of this, as he had a quarrel with his neighbour. He bewailed his hasty temper, and I got them reconciled ; and they received the sacrament together. A day or two before his death, he said, "What reason I have to bless God that I ever saw you! ay, to love you better than my own father:" with many other feeling words. Yet I was suspicious that the wound was only slightly healed; not so by me, for I preached the law to him, and applied but few Gospel promises, and prayed a whole day for his salvation.

21st.—I went again to London, that I might enjoy Christian fellowship in the classes and bands, and hear the word of God. Next day I paid a visit to my father. Alas! how often did he take the name of God and Christ in vain in ordinary conversation! How strong must that infatuation be, when one who lives in gross sin can be assured of his salvation, because he fancies that he belongs to the true church; and that another, who prays and strives, cannot be saved, because he is not of his faith!

On Monday, 24th, I heard Mr. Jones,* on Matthew iii. 8, 9. While expounding John the

* Mr. John Jones was a medical man, of good learning and great abilities. When Erasmus, a Greek bishop, was in London, Mr. Wesley advised Mr. Jones to get ordained, that he might assist at the altar. But Mr. Charles, denying the validity of this ordination, would not allow him to officiate. The issues were, that Mr. Jones procured ordination from the Bishop of London, and was afterwards made vicar of Harwich, where he closed his career.

Baptist's sermon to the Scribes and Pharisees, a man wept aloud, and went out. We got him into the vestry, and prayed with him. My soul, blessed be the Lord, was much refreshed during this visit.

July 9th.—This morning Jesus did anew most sweetly reveal Himself to my soul. "All His garments smelled of myrrh, aloes, and cassia." I could rejoice in His salvation. Yet in the midst of these manifestations, it would be suggested that I was under a delusion. How was it possible that I should be so happy in the love of God, whose heart was so wicked! Notwithstanding, I have strong assurances, that if the Lord take me out of the world, my departure shall be full of peace and joy. I can anticipate dying with great delight.

25th.—This morning brother Weaver came to tell me, with tears of joy, that he believed he had found the Lord last evening, after he went home from the class. We kneeled down to thank the Lord. My soul participated in his felicity. I exhorted him to hold it fast: we embraced, and parted; I being in haste to go to Chelmsford assizes. This intelligence did amazingly cheer and refresh me on the journey.

[About this time, Mr. Valton began to study physic, that he might give away medicine to certain poor people, who could not employ a medical man. He began also to instruct one or more of the children, by hearing their lessons at convenient hours. Here follows a plan how his day was spent.]

My present practice is, to rise at five, my constitution not allowing me to rise earlier. Before I dress, I offer up a short ejaculatory address to God. When dressed, I pray for nearly half an hour, and read the morning lessons, and a few pages of some other book. Sometimes I substitute one of the

Epistles. When my scholar comes, we read the Psalms, verse for verse, and then use Mr. Wesley's form of prayer (abridged and modified from Mr. Joseph Alleine). Before eight, I pray in few words to God; and at nine I read another chapter, and sing a hymn, and then go to prayer. At twelve, after the office-hours, I offer up a short prayer, imploring forgiveness of the sins of the day, and that God would preserve me the remainder of the day. I then hear my scholar, and add a few short petitions. At one o'clock, I dine; and then with my scholar read the evening Psalm, and at three utter a short prayer. At five, my scholar and I pray for pardon and protection during the night. At six, I confess the sins of the day, and implore a pardon. I then attend some meeting, or walk. At eight, I use Mr. Wesley's form, in order to aid me the more in praying for others. I generally go to bed immediately after nine, when my prayer is but short, and presently fall asleep. Such is my daily walk with God, but much interrupted by journeys and business.

Yesterday I had a remarkable answer to prayer. A week ago, the soldier and his wife complained in the class, that they had no place of retirement for prayer; and that they were exposed to much ungodly language in the barrack. I was affected with their case, and led to assure them that the Lord would provide them a place; and yesterday the surgeon came to me in a considerable degree of warmth, some things having been stolen from the hospital: he insisted that the woman should be displaced. This enabled me to give the key of the room to the soldier's wife, where she and her husband could often retire for prayer.

August 17th.—This day I had a special trial, to humble my soul: one of the workmen under my care gave me very abusive language; and yet I did not report him, lest it should be prejudicial to his bread. It harassed me all the day; meanwhile, I prayed for him, and felt nothing contrary to love.

21st.—This morning I had a propitious hour, while at morning prayer. My soul was exceedingly happy in God. I thought I could now say, "Father, not my will, but Thine, be done." O Lord Jesus, I give Thee my body, and soul, and everything else which I esteem or value on earth. Claim me as Thy right, keep me as Thy charge, fight for me in all assaults, and revive me when I am cast down!

September 3d.—During the last few days I have had but little of the sensible comforts and overflowings of joy which I have before experienced. But peace I still enjoy; peace which the world cannot take away. I now perceive that we are all but learners in the school of Christ.

October 4th.—A nervous gloom and agitation seemed to seize me. Such a day surely I have never seen. O my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? I prayed for death, life being a burden. No power to pray, no faith, no love.

5th.—My cry was, "Save, Lord, or I perish!" I had a dreadful conflict with the enemy of my soul. Ah! Lord, I cannot drink this cup. O, remove it, if it be Thy blessed will! Yet not my will, but Thine, be done. I was ready to curse the day of my birth. Pity me, O Lord! for I would love Thee with all my heart and soul. The Sabbath comes, but no rest, no peace; no comfort even at church. In the evening, I met the class at twice; but on kneeling to pray, was not able to raise my voice.

“From shore to shore why should I run,
When none his tiresome self can shun?”

17th.—Yesterday I came to London for succour and comfort. I had prayed the Lord to open my way, which He was pleased to do. How good art Thou, O my God! What thanks are due to Thee, the almighty Parent of good! At the Foundery I heard Mr. Jones, at five o'clock in the morning, on 1 Cor. iii. 11-14. He comforted me much, by showing that a believer could not perish; but that he who rests in justification, and does not seek for sanctifying grace, must be saved by fire.

18th.—I heard Mr. William Darney, at five, expound the sixty-third Psalm. The dry and thirsty state of the wilderness suited my experience. I could say, “O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee.”

[This preacher was a native of Scotland, and educated in high Calvinistic opinions. On joining Mr. Wesley, he professed a belief in the Methodist doctrines; yet the doctrine of sanctification, as taught by Mr. Wesley, he did not believe; and his favourite doctrine of the final and unconditional perseverance of the saints, he never renounced. As a master encourages his workmen, and as a general animates his army, so we should ever encourage the saints to persevere; yet this should not be done without all the strong and salutary cautions of the sacred writings.

[With regard to indwelling sin, St. Clement, a companion of St. Paul, and Macarius, and all the primitive fathers, teach as the Methodists. But Augustine, though he had taught the same, yet, when aged and sick, fell into nervous infirmities, and became timid and fearful lest he should perish. He

read the seven penitential Psalms daily, with tears, and wrote his Retractions; among which he contended that the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans was not, as he had formerly said, "delivered in a figure to bring over the Jews from legal bondage to the liberty of Christ, but was St. Paul's own experience."—Notwithstanding these opinions, Mr. Darney was a most laborious missionary man for more than twenty years, chiefly in the manufacturing districts, and in the north of England. It is true, he durst not preach these doctrines very openly; but he would do it with a friend, and in remote corners of the land. The Calvinists liked to hear him, and gave him the appellation of *Scotch Will*.

[Once, indeed, he was detected in a very remarkable manner, as was related to me by an aged Baptist minister in the north. He preached in a yard, and stood on a hogshead. In the discourse, he reverted to his favourite subject, perseverance: he declared that the saints could never fall; no, so sure as he stood there, they could never fall. The preacher here augmenting the powers of emphasis by a too heavy stamp of the foot, in went the head of the hogshead, along with the preacher; and it was with difficulty, he being corpulent, that his friends could extricate him. This may illustrate what Mr. Valton adds.]

October 21st.—This evening Mr. Darney drank tea with me at my lodgings, and the conversation proved very hurtful to me. I told him, that for some time I had been wrestling with God for a clean heart, and for an instantaneous deliverance from inward impurity. To my great surprise and discouragement, he said, there was no such thing attainable on earth; that the notion was quite

unscriptural; that while we are on earth we must be growing in grace, and always receiving fresh supplies of strength; and, consequently, that the notion of an instantaneous deliverance was quite unfounded! This discourse threw me back into great discouragement. I retired, and wrote as under.

“Then, Lord, if this be true, I shall one day fall by the hand of Satan, who is ever following men for destruction. Great God! and can it be Thy will that this cursed concupiscence should continue as long as there is life in man? Shall I always be in danger from this? Where, then, is Thy great salvation? Ah! come, death, thou great sanctifier, thou joint Saviour with Christ, Thou that prepest us for glory, and deliver me from sin! Christ has done His part, in the purchase of redemption, and in preparing me for thy finishing hand. Come, O death, bring forth thy topstone with shouting, ‘Grace, grace unto it!’ Finish the work, and prepare me for the Lord.”

After this discourse, I almost despaired of holding out to the end. I would have given a thousand pounds, had I so much money at command, not to have heard it. The consequences might have been worse, only a friend in the city had let me read a letter from Mr. Brandon, then in the Colchester Circuit, giving an account how he had attained the grace of sanctification. I thought I should, situate as I was, one day be conquered. On naming this to Mr. Darney, he advised me to marry. What a variety of helps there must be, in addition to what Thou, O Lord, hast done! Nay, death must lend the finishing hand. I almost repent coming up from Purfleet.

24th.—This evening my continual prayer was answered. Mr. Wesley arrived, in perfect health, just in time to step into the pulpit, and preach on Psalm lxxxi. 10: "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." What an extensive promise,—Ask, and have! This discourse, opportunely removed my doubts about an instantaneous salvation; yet, otherwise, I was blessed under Mr. Darney's sermons. I see, when we enter the field against the world, the flesh, and the devil, we must hang out the bloody flag,—to conquer or die;—no quarter to the old man; and victory is sure to the persevering soul.

December 25th.—This morning I rose early, and met the society at four o'clock. At night, we had buns, after the manner of the London lovefeasts; and God blessed us together. I received a very comfortable letter from Mr. Wesley, in answer to mine of the 17th. But, O! my soul for the last six weeks has been greatly afflicted with nervous gloom, and sorely harassed with temptations, often more than I thought nature could have borne. This must be my infirmity, since I have peace with God.

26th.—This morning, I could almost believe that God had cleansed my heart from sin; not from any more comfortable communion I had with God; but I thought it must be near, and that I ought to enjoy it, as it were, by anticipation,—a sure way to bring it by believing. Lord, do Thou confirm it by the testimony of Thy Spirit! Amen.

January 1st, 1766.—By the mercy and goodness of God I am brought safely to the beginning of the new year. May the Lord grant that I may improve the mercies of my added life, and spend every hour to His glory! In the evening, I went to the renewal

of the covenant at Spitalfields chapel. It was a solemn and devout season, and God was eminently present. I now find an abiding sense of His love to my soul, and confidence to believe that my sins are blotted out; yet the enemy sometimes causes me to doubt a little, though not now with either pain or fear. The cause is, feeling some emotions of pride, and a desire of the esteem of men: I start at the thought, and pray to be delivered from them.

16th.—I was much blessed this morning at prayer, and felt encouraged to believe that the Lord had cleansed my heart from sin: yet, sometimes in the day, I felt fretfulness and wandering thoughts. Mrs. Smitton, a lady on a visit here, related her experience in the class. I truly rejoiced in spirit, in hopes of finding the same grace. Under such testimonies I catch a flame from the celestial altar, which glows with hallowing influence. What, shall one member be blessed, and all the others not rejoice?

17th.—While seeking a clean heart, and a right spirit, I have been much perplexed and misguided by some friends in London, of warm heart, but less enlightened minds. They endeavour to force faith into me by saying, "Believe that the work is done, and it is done." This has, sometimes, driven me almost to distraction, so that I have been ready to charge God foolishly for not honouring my acts of faith. If I am to ask the blessing, and expect it now, solely for the merits of Christ, this is the scriptural way: but if I am to expect it for the sake of my poor weak faith, what is this but to seek it by works? What is it, in fact, but to believe a lie, that the work is done when it is not done? Mr.

Windsor, to whom I opened my mind on this point, greatly relieved me. Since then, I have had much peace, and much comfort, from the words of Habakkuk, "If it tarry, wait for it." I am endeavouring to do so, and believe that I shall soon obtain it. How valuable are spiritual guides and leaders who are divinely taught!

23d.—O good Lord, what a day! and the day set apart to praise God for my conversion! I read books likely to give me light, but could find nothing relevant. I am always, either in thought, word, or work, doing amiss. I long to please God in all I do; and yet such is my behaviour, and such is my nature, that I am grieving and displeasing Him continually. My life is a sore burden; I fear I shall be ruined. I cannot bear it; nor can I hold out much longer. But what can I do? for hell I cannot bear! I must bear one or the other. I am damned if the Lord help me not. O that He would pity me! Avaunt, Satan! "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." I believe He will deliver me, and that these sore conflicts are for my good. My prayers have been mixed with strange cries and tears. Surely this is a time of trouble, and such as I never had since I became a seeker of salvation.

Sunday, 26th.—This morning I was much comforted in prayer, and felt an overflowing of peace and love. In the evening, at our meeting, I expounded on the woman who had lost her piece of money; and a woman cried aloud for mercy while I was in prayer, and in a short time was enabled to praise the Lord. Her soul was so filled with a sense of God's pardoning love, as not to be able to contain her joys. This mightily encouraged me, and, indeed, all the class. And we were the more encouraged

because she afterwards retained her peace and joy. These are marks of the power and presence of God which cause the angels to rejoice.

February 8th.—Through the mercy of God, I still enjoy peace, and have continued to do so for many days. Yesterday we spent in fasting and prayer, in our little class, for sister Edwards, whose life was thought to be in danger.

11th.—William Thompson, a labourer, has joined our little class; and next evening brought his wife, and his brother and wife also, to our meeting. The latter had said she should not meet again. Thank God, our little flock is now increased to nine.

23d.—At the class this evening I had great faith for those that had not found peace. While at prayer the room was filled with tears and cries. My soul pleaded, saying, "Lord, whom wilt Thou bless?" "Ah!" cried one, "it will not be me, I am so unworthy." "O, no," cried another, "I am more unworthy." We continued in prayer till every one was made happy, except the soldier who had lately joined the class. He complained of the hardness of his heart, and seemed the more distressed to see others made happy while he was not so. I was much tempted, after I had returned home, to think that I should have faith for others, and almost none for myself. For the last fortnight I have sunk back into my nervous gloom of agitation and inquietude, fearing I shall be lost at last. God only knows the conflicts and temptations through which I have passed. Yet, in the midst of my greatest agony, I thought I heard a soft whisper through my heart, and a whisper thrice repeated, "I have blessed thee; yea, and thou shalt be blessed."

April 14th.—In the morning, while at breakfast, I felt my soul melted into tears of joy. In the evening of this day, it was suggested to me, that I had not lost my Saviour, but that the terrible aspects of Satan and of hell, and the thought that I was quite fallen away, were only a taste of that bitter cup which some souls are called to drink, and which good Mr. Thomas Walsh found on his death-bed. These considerations greatly encouraged me.

18th.—This evening brother Weaver called me out to pray with two matrosses, (privates in the artillery,) who were committed for the murder of a man the preceding evening. The guard-room was full of soldiers. I trembled a little at first, but soon my nervous fears vanished away. I read part of Ezekiel xviii., "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness," &c.; sung and prayed, then talked to them: but, alas! they made efforts to deny the crime. The soldiers seemed deeply impressed, and behaved with the greatest seriousness: so I closed by singing and praying a second time. Next morning, I was with them again, and continued most of the time till they were taken away to the gaol at Chelmsford. We collected them a little money, and I forwarded hymns and prayers for them soon after. I wrote to them during their confinement; but the case proving to be one of manslaughter, their repentance vanished away.

28th.—I had written to Mr. Pennington to come and spend a Sabbath with us at Purfleet; and felt no misgiving after I had written the letter. However, yesterday, Mr. Mark Davis, a preacher in the London Circuit, came and preached, at seven o'clock, on the road-side, to a pretty large congregation; and at six the congregation was very large. Next morn-

ing, at five, he preached in brother Weaver's house. Here a storm rose on me and brother Weaver. He must, with a wife and four children, be turned out of bread, and I dismissed; the store-keeper and the commanding officer being incensed against me for bringing a stranger to preach close to the magazine. Mrs. Edwards interfered, and a soft answer turned away wrath. By this visit five persons were added to the society; which was a happy circumstance, as part of the class were presently removed to Woolwich. During this conflict and storm I was sick at home of a fever and ague; and my medical attendant was little aware that it was the agitated state of my mind which occasioned the fever.

During this fever I was seized, as I thought, for death: my breathing ceased. My cry was, "O Lord, prepare me for dying!" In this state I felt no condemnation for past sins, and had peace in my soul; but I expected that the Lord would have manifested Himself to me in that glorious manner which He is often pleased to do to His dying saints. Such, indeed, were my peace and joy after this crisis, that I really thought the Lord had cleansed my heart from sin: my warm and hasty tempers seemed all subdued. If it be so, may the Lord bear His witness to the work.

26th.—Walking to-day with brother Windsor, I told him my experience: he thought that God had indeed given me a clean heart; and I was not aware of feeling any wrong temper till, this afternoon, a degree of resentment rose in my heart. This good and happy frame has been connected with much enlargement in prayer, and an overflowing of tears, and praise, and joy.

June 3d.—O, what deadness have I experienced

for the last two days! Terribly afraid of falling from grace, and borne away with wandering thoughts! Full of peevishness, anger, envy, and jealousy! Weary of life, and sorry for my birth! I really thought it was impossible for me ever to gain heaven. I know this is my infirmity, ever excited anew by crosses and trials. My cry was,

“ Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past!
Safe into the haven guide;
O receive my soul at last!”

July 11th.—For the last six weeks I have had great and sore conflicts with the enemy of my soul. My cry now was, “ My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” Surely I cannot hold out beyond to-day. I prayed so often, that my knees were sore; and ate nothing, except a little bread and cheese in the morning, till four o’clock. Some of my past sins were thrust in my face. Yet, thank God, I am kept from murmuring. Much of this is nervous infirmity; for when engaged for God, and meeting with His people, this dejection is altogether removed.

20th.—This Sabbath morning, while at prayer, great encouragement was afforded me, accompanied with a strong persuasion “ that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, should ever be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.” I could talk with my Maker, and He graciously refreshed my soul. He now shows me that my depression and my wanderings are occasioned very much by want of faith in the promises. O gracious Saviour, enable me to rely solely on Thy wisdom and strength; and strip me of all

dependence on an arm of flesh! Glory be to Thee, my ever-faithful Lord!

August 12th.—I have received great light by reading "The Gospel Glass," in "The Christian Library:" a very searching book. I discovered many spots, but was persuaded the Lord would wipe them all away; and I saw so many marks of a sound conversion as to afford me great comfort, and, especially, as I was assured, that what I had discovered amiss should all be done away. O, how manifold are the mercies of God to me! To recount them would be as impossible as to number the sands on the sea-shore. God is love: and they that have most love are most in the Divine favour; for God loves His own image.

O Lord, I do beseech Thee, enable me to glorify Thee in my body and my spirit, which are Thine; make me willing to be spent for Thee in Thy service, upright and honest in Thy sight! Let Thy glory only be my aim, Thy cross my boast and joy, and Thy crown my final portion! I long to serve Thee for Thy own sake, to be wholly Thine, and ever abased, as a poor nothing, at Thy feet.

24th.—Being in London, I heard Mr. Wesley with great comfort; and was delighted to find that Mr. Whitefield and he, though divided in connexions, were nevertheless of one heart and one soul.

29th.—This being my intercession-day, which I spent much in prayer, I kneeled down at twelve; and no sooner was I engaged with God, than I felt a strange and silent alteration, and for nearly five minutes began to cry, "Glory, glory, glory be to God!" Then, after a moment of calm, I said, "Thou hast delivered me from all my sin. Thou

hast not failed of all that Thou hast promised in Thy word. Glory be to Thee, Thou hast given me the desire of my heart over all my enemies, whom, I trust, I shall see no more for ever." "O Lord," my cry was, "I am sure Thou hast destroyed my sin, and made me holy; I am sure Thou hast; I am sure Thou hast performed the work. O, give me the seal, and let me, if it please Thee, depart hence, and be for ever with the Lord!"

It was, however, suggested by the enemy, "You see now the fruit of much prayer and of walking closely with God." Grace in my heart replied to the tempter with shouting, "Grace, grace, upon it!" My words were, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." The Lord, I believe, has removed the stone from my heart, and will perfect His work with acclamations of grace and glory. Being now very happy, I prayed that the Lord would not suffer me to be high-minded or vain-glorious, but ever keep me lowly at His feet, and never suffer me to lose the blessing. I fell down on my face, and praised the Lord; for my efforts to pray failed. I was lost in wonder, love, and praise. I now felt

"The sacred awe which dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love."

Yea, I felt it, and rejoiced in the Lord.

I next, according to custom, sat down to read the Psalms and Lessons for the day; and then falling down on my knees, a much greater portion of love flowed into my heart. O, how I then began to praise the Lord for Mr. Wesley, for raising him up to preach the whole Gospel! I prayed earnestly, not only for him, but also for Mr. Whitefield, that

the Lord would give him to see the truth of what Mr. Wesley preached. I felt a great desire to write to him an account of what God had done for my soul, but was deterred by the fear of vain-glory.

30th.—Glory be to God, I have still reason to believe, and hold fast my confidence, that the Lord has delivered me from all my inward foes ; and that sin shall no more have place in me. I am lost in amazement at His mercy, when I consider how often He has delivered me from the most imminent dangers. O, verily, Thou art God, loving and gracious : I see Thy hand in all my ways. O the many snares which have been laid for me, and yet the Lord has preserved me !

September 1st.—Various doubts have crossed my mind to-day, whether the work which the Lord has wrought in me be real ; but I have endeavoured all in my power to resist them. And, blessed be the Lord, I do not know that I have felt anything in my heart contrary to the Divine change. O, I never could have imagined that there were such condescension, love, and parental tenderness in the great Jehovah towards worms of dust and corruption !

While writing, as above, O how the fire of love did kindle in my soul ! I long to be prostrate at the Saviour's feet : my soul is ravished with His love. What I have read in Mr. Wesley's " Plain Account of Christian Perfection " tended to comfort me, where he observes that " most of those who found the blessing in London, a few years ago, were delivered from sin before they were filled with love." This was much the same with me.

3d.—I have been most sorely beset to-day, by the enemy of souls darting old temptations across my mind. But, in the presence of God, I believe that

they come not from my own heart; and I got rid of them as fast as they came; yet they were very troublesome, and sorely afflicted me. I find many fears also, lest I should lose the blessing; but, by the help of God, I will believe as long as I can. I find myself so weak and tender, that a very little thing will discourage me. O Saviour, do Thou ever save me, and may Thy will be done! The enemy often suggests, "What if such and such things were to happen? you would soon see an end of all your perfection." The Lord rebuke thee, Satan.

9th.—This has been a day of sore and dreadful temptations. While in Mr. Healey's house, after dinner, I sunk down on the floor. I requested them to leave me, that I might wrestle with the Lord. My conflicts were hard with flesh and blood. Yet the temptations coming from without, and being resisted, I felt no condemnation. I fled from them to visit the sick soldiers in the hospital.

11th.—Lord, I am in great distress: my sorrow is great, and my temptations are strong. In some moments, when the billows go over my head, I am ready to say, "O that I had never been born! or, being born, that I had speedily made my exit!" O, Jesus, hear my complaint, and bear with me! O, forgive my past and my present unfruitfulness, and lay it not to my charge! Deliver me, I pray, from the fear of man! I desire, were it possible, to spend my soul for Thee, and yet am afraid to spend the body! I desire to help the thousands that are about me; I see I want more love to constrain me to do good. O, make it my meat and drink to do Thy blessed will!

19th.—This morning I heard, at Spitalfields, a most close and searching sermon: it came home like

the address of Nathan to David, "Thou art the man." In the evening I attended the select band; and, no preacher being present, I was requested to open the meeting. The enemy afterwards tried to excite pride in me, because I had met the band. Yet I still believe that I have the blessing, though the evidence be not so discernible as at the first.

23d.—To-day I visited my sister, just returned from France, where she had resided for eighteen years, quite a gay lady, dressed *à la mode de Paris*. Having presently after to visit in a family where they were all Roman Catholics, I feared to suffer loss in my soul, and besought the Lord; and was heard in that I feared. I spoke pointedly against theatres, novels, and the prevailing follies of the age. And when mauled for Methodism, and leaving the true religion,—as the Pope's supremacy, the infallibility of the Church, *cum multis aliis*,—I was, by the grace of God, enabled to make such replies as they could not answer. But I saw their resolution was, "Thou shalt not persuade me, though thou dost persuade me." I stood firm against my dear sister's prayers and entreaties to return to the Romish religion. By-and-by she and others got angry with me, dropping delicate hints that I was a hypocrite, and that religion had made me mad. One young girl, however, seemed affected, and resolved to search the Scriptures, and with prayer, as I had advised her. Lord, I bless Thee for preserving me in this day's fight! I am, therefore, the more encouraged to believe that the Lord has cleansed my heart.

29th.—Yesterday, being Sunday, I attended at Spitalfields; and, after service, having retired for prayer, the Lord did, in a most wonderful manner, bless me. He poured His love so plenteously into

my soul, that I hardly knew how to contain myself. I thought I must have cried, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin!" I never was so overpowered before, and my strength was well-nigh spent in praising God. O, how did my soul exult, and gasp to breathe the purer air of heaven! The saws and racks, the Pope and purgatory, of which we had been talking a few days before, were now as nothing to me; all were trifles light as air. Christ is mine, and I am His.

October 5th.—The Lord abundantly poured His love into my heart this morning. I went to church very happy, and experienced much of the Almighty's presence. I do not know that I ever had a clearer testimony of the Spirit that my sins were forgiven, than I now have of being cleansed from sin. When I calmly put the question to myself, "Yea, has the Lord indeed destroyed my sin?" I felt the Spirit strongly answer by an inundation of love.

8th.—The Lord still blesses me with an increase of love. I scarcely ever go on my knees but I find fresh manifestations of His goodness. I feel no doubt, no unbelief, nothing but love, unless it be now and then a fear lest my evil tempers should return. I feel no desires after the flesh, my sole wish being to live more and more to the glory of God. Yet I am tried with our little society. Since some of our brethren were removed, they have not met well; and they find fault with me for reproving them too harshly when I hear that they do amiss.

I have lately paid three visits to Tilbury-Fort, where I found two or three that have formerly been awakened under the word, but are now in a dark state: I have exhorted and prayed with them, in hopes of seeing the work revive. Four soldiers have

now joined our class at Purfleet, who I hope will enliven our meetings.

November 16th.—Being in London to enjoy the means of grace, I read Mr. Walsh's Life a second time; and was much comforted by finding, that for many days he experienced sore temptations, and at the time deep consolations. I find it has been exactly with me as it was with him. After reading the account of his death, I went to prayer, and had a remarkable sense of the presence of God. O, how sweetly did He deluge my soul with His love! But, having caught a cold, I was violently seized with pain, and quite unable to walk: so I called a coach, and reached the barge. The next day I was worse, and looked for death every hour. But O, with what transport was I filled! my joy was unspeakable and full of glory. Like Stephen, I saw, as it were, the arms of Jesus open to receive me. I exclaimed, "Truly His blood cleanses from all unrighteousness!"

17th.—This day was as yesterday. The thought of the Saviour, and of being with Him, did so move and elevate my soul, that I thought the vessel must break, and that the love of God would kill me. My tongue was fully employed all the day in declaring the loving-kindness of the Lord.

27th.—My health is so far restored that I went to the class. Two of those who left us are now dead. I hope we are clear of their blood. I am rather low in my spirits. The enemy harasses me about neglecting the sick, and the souls at Tilbury. How can I under these temptations "rejoice evermore?"

December 11th.—I have had a relapse of my fever, and much depression in my mind. But though there was no praise on my tongue, yet there was

peace in my heart. I fell back in my chair at brother Healey's; and, with uplifted eyes and extended arms, could bless the hand that chastened me. In all this affliction and dejection I have been kept from murmuring. I have great need to add to my faith courage: then, under all my afflictions, I should be far more comfortable.

31st.—O Lord, what great and sore trials hast Thou brought me through in the year past! Yea, Thou hast brought me through all, and didst truly deliver me from the stony heart. O God, there is no end of Thy goodness and mercy; and if I never live to write another journal, let this last page speak my heart,—**GOD IS LOVE.** I now know the meaning of that text, “Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.” He purgeth us that we may bring forth more fruit. Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High, Three in One, and One in Three! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen.

January 1st, 1767.—“Blessed be the Lord my God, who hath brought me safe to the beginning of a new year. Glory be to God that I am not yet cut down! May I now “reward the tiller's toil,” and become fruitful, and faithful to the grace of God!

In the presence of God, I have no doubt that the Lord did deliver me from all sin; but whether it be so now or not, I cannot so clearly tell. If I were assured it were not so, I should be truly miserable. I cannot say, when crosses come, and afflictions are to be borne, that I find either murmuring or impatience. I am content to suffer, so that I may be found blameless at the coming of the Lord. I hate all praise, feeling that I am vile, ignorant, and helpless; yea, “a dead dog” in the sight of

heaven. O my God, make me an honest man, a true and upright Christian, such as Thou wilt own in the day of Thy coming!

Shine on Thy work, that I may know the things that are given me of God. Make me a pillar in Thy house, to go out no more for ever; and seal me to the day of redemption.

8th.—A scrutiny took place in my breast this morning, whether I had lost the evidence of my sanctification. Did I really feel, and in some degree give way to, anger? I believe I did. O, how unhappy I am! Some time ago a text was powerfully applied to my mind: "Gad,—a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at last." The first part of this text is fulfilled in me: I am overcome. O that the second may also at last be accomplished in me! I feel unaccountable reluctance to visit the sick in the hospital; and the classes are all discouraged on my account.

[For about two months Mr. Valton had a return of his nervous fever, accompanied with ague, as he himself states. A gloom of discouragement overspread his mind, but not without intervals of sunshine; and he was able most of the time to attend to the duties of the office. In three or four places his journal is painted in the strongest language of anguish; and which none can fully sympathise with but those who have drunk of the same bitter cup. Hear what he says in his own abridgment which was published in the *Arminian Magazine*. It may be useful to others; for God who delivered him can deliver them.]

19th.—This day my miseries became insupportable. I was only fit for Bethlehem Hospital. No demoniac could be worse. Cries, tears, groans, and

moanings issued from my heart. I uttered words which I ought not, and yet could not help it. Like Job, I cursed the day of my birth, and concluded the day in an agony of prayer. My language was, "O, I am damned, I am damned! I am fully overcome. Poor unfortunate young man! My poor soul, thou must perish at last. Farewell all hope. O my God, for Christ's sake take away my life! Lord Jesus, call me home, and deliver me from the evil to come, else I shall finally perish!"

20th.—This morning I rose at five, and was till eight in utter despair. Tears, and groans, and stretching out my hands, were part of my morning sacrifice. Yet I was kept from murmuring; but earnestly besought the Lord to take away my life. In the course of the day I was comforted by a letter from a lady in London. She encouraged me to hold fast the promise I had received, "Gad—shall overcome at last." It is not one temptation, but a troop which have vanquished me. For the time I had power given me to pray, and to believe that I should at last overcome. O God, I bless Thee for this consolation; and I beseech Thee to forgive what in moments of anguish I have said amiss.

24th.—This morning, after praying with much deadness, I soon became quite another man: all my trials and temptations were suspended. The transition so delighted me, that I scarcely knew how to utter the sentiments of my heart. I was so happy, that I could scarcely pray; not so much from sensible comforts, as from an apprehension of the removal of my temptations and trials. I thought the Lord had answered the prayers of some one who had been engaged with Him on my account.

February 4th.—Being in London for the last six

days, and among Christian friends, my temptations have vanished away. Mr. Wesley comforted and encouraged me very much. On Monday I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Harle, at Mr. Windsor's. These have both been touched by the Gospel within the last few weeks. I found, to my astonishment, that Mr. Harle lives at Rainham, but five miles from me. He took me home in his chaise to sleep, and next morning went with me to visit some sick people. Like the young ruler, mentioned Mark x., he has great possessions, and much zeal.

6th.—Returning to Purfleet, my temptations seem to return. Yesterday I was in Bunyan's iron cage, terribly harassed by the enemy. This afternoon Mr. Harle came to see me: he is full of peace and joy, and imagines he shall see war no more. He stayed to attend our meeting, and was much blessed; but my fleece remains dry. What augments my present trials is, the remembrance of what I enjoyed after the 29th of last August, when for many weeks I walked in the light of the Lord, and talked with my Maker, as it were, face to face.

March 12th.—I went to Mr. Harle's, to hear Mr. Glascock, whom he had invited to preach in his house. Soon after the text was read, Mr. Dearsby came in, the father of Mrs. Harle, dressed like a country squire, with a large horsewhip in his hand. He was a tall and powerful man. He, and two more, began the fray by calling wicked names. He then endeavoured to strike the preacher; but he evaded the blow by slipping up stairs. I sat still, expecting no further harm. He then came up to me, and asked, "Who do you belong to?" I replied, "To the king." "No; you are that dog," &c., &c.; "and I will write and get two or three of you turned out

of your places." On saying that, he drove me out of the room. I slipped into the kitchen; and, while engaged in praying for him and others, he followed me, violently swearing that he would broil me on the fire; and, seizing me by the breast and thigh, he laid me on the bars. The two, thinking, perhaps, that he was going too far, rescued me, and drove me out of doors into the hands of a mob of thirty or forty men. The mob, merciless as their employer, pulled me about various ways, crying out, "This is the clerk: pull him to pieces!" They tore my shirt from the top to the bottom. Some held me by my long hair; others by my cravat, which they called my bands; and one nearly succeeded in getting my watch. At length, through the mercy of God, the man who would have broiled me rescued me from their fury. Mr. Harle's brother conducted me through the yard; and at a small distance I met the vicar, the Rev. Mr. Walters, and his lady, come to see the after-game, who saluted me with "Villain!" &c., &c. Three of the mob followed me with execrations, intending to put me in the pool at the end of the town. Suffice it to say, I reached home to thank the Lord for having escaped fire, and water, and blood.

14th.—For the last two days, since the storm at Rainham, I have enjoyed much of the presence of God, and find my faith in Christ much increased. In the course of the day, having besought the Lord for guidance, I wrote to Mr. Walters, in vindication of my conduct in visiting the sick; for he had bitterly reproached me for this; adding, that I should say, they would be damned. Four more of our class, and the more pious too, are ordered on foreign service. May the Lord be with them where their lot shall be cast!

16th.—For the last month I have been sorely depressed with nervous dejection and temptations; but this morning, though weak, I was enabled to meet my friends, and my mouth was opened to pray and to speak with great power in the class. I found, by waiting upon the Lord, that my strength was much renewed. On examining my heart, I have found in myself three kinds of prayer: *first*, an impetuous, earnest, and violent desire that others might be blessed; that is chiefly man's prayer: *secondly*, an humble, earnest, pleading prayer, proceeding from a broken heart, bleeding with compassion; there is much of the Spirit of God in this,—it is generally much blessed to others: *thirdly*, the prayer of God, or praying in the Holy Ghost. This consists in short phrases and sentences, chiefly in Scripture language; the soul feasts on the answer while one petition slowly succeeds another. This is the prayer which God emphatically inspires. It is often not relished by lukewarm professors; but on the purified it leaves behind the mantle of Elijah. Lord, evermore teach me thus to pray! Since this depression has rested on my spirits, I have had much more life and spirits when I have prayed in the meetings, than in my closet.

22d.—Being in London, I dined with a Roman Catholic party, consisting of my father, sister, and a young lady of well-cultivated mind. This young friend and myself had rather a protracted disputation about Catholicism. My father was very attentive; but my sister, like Gallio, "cared for none of these things." I perceived that my father approved of my arguments: the lady could not answer me with any degree of plausibility. After my father and I were left alone, he became very serious and

we parted with kind affection. I yielded to him in sitting for my portrait, to be sent to my brother, in South Carolina; but on this condition, that I should appear in a plain dress, and my Bible in my hand, with this inscription on it, "IN CHRISTO SPES MEA."

July 7th.—To-day I went to Sevenoaks for the re-establishment of my health; and found benefit soon after I got out of London. I spent my evenings mostly with a few brethren at the preaching-room, and once had much liberty in meeting a large class. The communion of the saints is known to none but pious souls.

August 14th.—Being returned to Purfleet, I find my health better, and my soul refreshed. I had many good times in London, and led a sort of angelic life, frequently visiting the sick in St. Thomas's Hospital, and the Marshalsea Prison. I begin now to find more comfortable assurances of my salvation, but have not been without temptations. My discouragements and want of power to pray have surely been owing chiefly to an infirmity which affects the nerves.

24th.—At our public meeting this evening we had two strangers, who are hearers of Mr. Whitefield. After singing, I felt enlargement in prayer; and, after a little circumlocution about setting up for a preacher, I ventured for the first time to take a text: Matt. v. 25, "Agree with thine adversary quickly," &c. The Lord opened my mouth beyond all that I could have conceived, and enabled me to speak as the Spirit gave me utterance. I sung and prayed three times, and yet was afterwards better in health than I have been for some time.

29th.—This is the anniversary of the day on which the Lord put my inward enemies under my feet, and

entirely destroyed them; and though I have been sorely afflicted with temptations and nervous depressions, yet, glory be to God, He has preserved me amidst all the ills which have assailed my soul. I find on those days on which I am the most employed for God, in the hospitals and among friends, that I have the most humbling views of myself. I loathe myself, and regard my life as a mere blank. God be merciful to me a sinner! Some days I am so much engaged that I have scarcely time to eat.

November 19th.—The Lord of late seems to have favoured me as Job, by giving me twice as much in the end as in the beginning. He has enlightened my mind, made my memory retentive, and given me amazing power of utterance, in which I was before very defective. In expounding the parable of the Dry Bones this evening, I was enabled to speak convincingly. In these bones we have a striking emblem of the natural man, dead in sin. In the noise and shaking we have a figure of the awakened sinner, going about for help, and inquiring what he must do to be saved. By the flesh and sinews we see the state of one using the means of grace, and gaining the form of godliness; and by the breath coming into them, we see the Spirit of Life, as in regenerate souls.

December 23d.—I begin now to comprehend, in some degree, the height and depth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. When I am not watchful for two or three days, the Lord rebukes and chastises me, but yet does not change His gracious countenance towards me. I have power imparted simply to commit my soul into His hands, that God may give or withhold temporal or spiritual good, as seems right to my Heavenly Father. I seem

to live in sweet communion with angels and saints, and on the borders of paradise. Surely I taste the powers of the world to come, and long to depart, and be with Christ.

December 25th.—This being the festival of the nativity, thirteen of us met at five in the morning, and I explained 1 Tim. i. 15: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." In the evening we joined ourselves to the Lord and to His people, in the more regular form of a class.

26th.—This was to me a most remarkable morning. My soul was favoured with sweet assurances of honour, glory, immortality, and eternal life. In general, I now feel a kind of heaven; and in prayer I have such displays of the love of God as astonish and abase me. I hide myself as in the dust, and say, "Lord, I am nothing, and Christ is all." Often I have watered my books, while writing, with tears of joy. O, blessed be the Lord for redeeming grace, and all that He has laid up for us in Christ Jesus the Lord!

January 1st, 1768.—O my God, how manifold have been Thy mercies to me, the chief of sinners! Thou hast performed Thy mercy promised, by delivering me out of the hands of all my enemies, that I might serve Thee without fear all the future days of my life. Thou hast given me "to overcome at last," and a consoling hope that I shall no more drink of the bitter cup of trembling. Thou art my God, my rock, and my hope. Glory be ascribed to Thee for ever! Amen.

February 21st.—This was a morning of sore temptation till about nine o'clock. I thought the Lord was about to present to me again the bitter cup. I most earnestly besought Him to deliver me,

to shield me from future evils ; and in the midst of my distress that promise was applied, "My grace is sufficient for thee." My soul felt its truth and power, and praised the Lord.

March 10th.—I was favoured this evening with much enlargement in prayer ; and the Lord blessed us much in our little meeting. I have of late remarked, that whenever I have prayed for anything in particular, I have soon after heard of something which has indicated a gracious answer. I have been praying much for an enlargement of the work of God ; and was gratified to-day by hearing that Mr. Wesley has been preaching in Chatham barracks, and that multitudes, both of officers and soldiers, had received the word with joy.

18th.—To-day I went and spoke to the colonel in behalf of three of our labourers who had lately joined the class, and now had received notice that they should be dismissed at the end of the month. The crime laid to their charge was—praying at meal-times. The colonel promised that he would dismiss the complaint. In the evening I had a gracious time, while enforcing a full and a present salvation, from those words, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

April 7th.—The last few days I have been very busy in the magazine ; and, blessed be the Lord, there is not a man that swears in my presence. And I find my soul fully as happy there as I usually do in my hours for reading and prayer. Like the labourers, I have now no time for reading and prayer, except at meal-times. An active life is better than a sedentary life for the nervous infirmities which still hang about me.

15th.—Brother Ottawill was arrested this morning

for a debt he had contracted before his joining our class, and taken to the inn at Aveley, prior to his going to Chelmsford gaol. I went to console him, but had no thought of compromising the matter, having no money. His wife, the creditor, a young lady, and the two bailiffs, were present. We sung a verse and prayed, and the lady's heart was so touched, that she offered to grant him a discharge on paying down six guineas. I had but three, and she took his note for three more. On returning, an officer accosted me,—“Valton, I have good news to tell you. The Board have granted you £3. 12s. for the pains you took in settling Mr. Gare's powder account.” This was an unexpected boon, at a time when I was destitute of money.

17th.—This Sabbath morning Mr. Harle fetched me in his chaise to Rainham; where, after dinner, I expounded the parable of the Prodigal Son. So the enemy has roared in vain: he cannot stop the work of God. It was far better that I took my ill-usage to a heavenly rather than an earthly court.

May 20th.—Last night and this morning, being in agony of mind, I again looked over Mr. Wesley's “Treatise on Christian Perfection;” and was humbled to find that I had lost some marks of that happy state of mind. I saw that I was wanting in love, meekness, patience, and humility. I felt in myself a degree of dissimulation, and of inordinate love of the creature. I found that my spiritual union and communion with God was much diminished, and that dryness, wandering, and sameness had succeeded in my prayers. I saw that I had sustained a loss in my soul, and felt that I myself was alone to blame. Yet, while expounding the principal parables here, and in the villages, great power, and frequent

tears, attend the word. O Lord, fully restore me again to the glorious liberty of Thy children!

June 10th.—This day my dear mother in the Lord, Mrs. Edwards, departed this life. Happy woman! safe landed at last on a broken piece of the ship. She cared for my soul, as a mother for an only son. Would to God I had died for thee! The Lord has released her from great tribulation and afflictions. Sorrow and sighing are fled away, and everlasting joy is now begun. The will of the Lord be done. She has lived, in four years, to see two classes in Purfleet, one of women, and another of men. Lord, prepare my soul to follow!

August 3d.—Since I have read the Life of David Brainerd, I have sorely lamented my unworthiness, and late decay of life and love. I have never read of any man whose life had so near a resemblance to my own, with regard to feelings, to trials, and desires. In how many places has he transcribed my whole heart, which I, for want of abilities, have omitted! Yet, in my narrow sphere, engaged in a public office, controlled by superiors, my longings and desires, disappointments and encouragements, have latterly borne a resemblance to his. But, then, as a little star differs from one of the first magnitude, so was it between that man of God and me, a worm of dust. My aims, not my progress, resembled his achievements; or rather as the miniature is to the original. I say it, to show that the grace of God endeavoured to make me such, had I been faithful to its drawings. I honour his memory, and should have thought it a great favour to wash his feet.

19th.—Yesterday I expounded 1 Kings xix. 11-13: Elijah taking refuge in Horeb. I had no sooner begun, than the power of the Lord descended

like a cloud, and rested on the whole assembly. Such clear illustrations, close applications, and pathetic exhortations, I hardly ever before was enabled to make. While pressing the words, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" it seemed as if the chariot of the Lord, and the horsemen of Israel, were come to hasten us away.

[The writer, having waded through five dense volumes of our author's experience, comprising a period of five years, since his nervous fever at Greenwich, when he was a total stranger to experimental religion, would pause a moment to mark the contrast between the inward miseries he generally sustained, and the overflowing consolations with which he was often favoured. His conflicts which in fifty places made him wish to die, were bodily, and of which the enemy took great advantage. Perhaps, the "thorn in the flesh," of which St. Paul complains, was something of the same kind. Theophylact calls it *capitis malum*, "a complaint of the head." Be that as it might, Mr. Valton was preaching day and night in the villages, and, when travelling, to strangers; and in his Master's work he had no time to think of nervous afflictions.]

September 4th.—A friend told me this evening that Lord —— had sent a message to his tenant not to receive me into his house, nor suffer me to come upon his premises. Dr. B.'s sermon accounts for this. "Why should my lord come out against a flea, a dead dog?" My friend added, that had not my interest been good, I should have been turned out of my place. This treatment made me rather low at first; but I soon recollected that I had deserved a thousand times more than this; and, that though man was unrighteous, yet God was just

in suffering these trials to come upon me. But, seeing His Majesty's chaplain and a noble lord united against me, will not the people think that I am some hydra, sphinx, or other monster?

October 10th.—Having for some time had an invitation to Gloucestershire, I set out this morning for Painswick, where I was received with much affection and joy.

14th.—Last evening I was at brother Holder's class, and we had a blessed season; and, this morning, I spent two hours in conversation with him. He is a simple, sincere, and upright young man. The people flock round me with so much affection that I am afraid of myself, lest I should rest here, and not seek after more of the love of Christ.

21st.—Last evening I met the class, and this evening I spent with brother Newman. His soul was full of love, and he had no doubt of the blessed work of sanctifying grace in his soul. Another brother, affected by hearing my experience in the class, seems on the brink of deliverance. I told him that *now* was the accepted time, and that the Messenger of the covenant would come suddenly to His temple: and, indeed, it was so. He was excited to full expectation; and, in the middle of the night, the Lord came and took possession of his heart. We rejoiced and gave thanks together, as being partakers of like precious faith.

29th.—The last week I have been very much employed in visiting the poor in their houses, and have found much of the presence of the Lord. While meeting the classes also, I have eaten of the hidden manna. O, assuredly,

“ 'Tis a heaven below
My Jesus to know ! ”

November 7th.—I arrived safe at Purfleet, after some hard contests for my Master, as well in the hoy, as on the coach ; for I soon let the people know my character. I found my friends also in a comfortable state ; and we met together, now eighteen in number. The good Shepherd has kept them during my absence.

13th.—This morning, being Sunday, I expounded Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c. The Lord gave me such power in holding forth a full and a present salvation as I had never experienced before. My heart was full of matter, and my tongue full of argument. The word fell as the seeds on good ground, leaving conviction on the mind.

December 31st.—This evening, in the class, I read two letters I had received from Painswick ; from which I took occasion to press them anew to look for sanctifying grace. Two members of the class were so blessed that they stood up to praise the Lord. I retired, and closed the year in prayer.

O Lord, I bless Thee that Thou hast brought me through another year. I thank Thee, O my blessed Redeemer, for all my great afflictions and sore temptations. There was, I know, a necessity for them. Thou hast supported me under them, and Thy grace has been sufficient for me. I bless Thee also for the success Thou hast given me in Thy work, and for the honour Thou hast put upon a worm of dust in employing me in doing Thy will. Five years ago, I crossed the Thames from Greenwich, a stranger to God, and a stranger to myself ; and now I can sing,—

“O! the fathomless love,
That has deign'd to approve
And prosper the work of thine hand !”

Sunday, January 1st, 1769.—The whole of this day was a rejoicing day to my soul. I found the Lord present in every duty. The society met at six in the morning, for singing and prayer; and we plighted our troth to the Lord, and covenanted to serve Him more and more in the coming year.

20th.—This evening I talked with a family, and prayed in brother Weaver's house, who had just returned from the burial of their child. This is the second family that has left our meetings under a pretence that they must take care of their children; and the Lord, in this low and unhealthy place, has soon taken all their children away.

23d.—Last night I found my soul in a sweet frame, and fraught with matter, while explaining verses 10–16 of the eighth Psalm. But, just as I was about to begin, on seeing a decent stranger coming in, I was seized with fear and trembling, from which I suffered greatly. O my Lord, why dost Thou leave me a prey to those fears? Is there not a cause? Is it not to prevent pride, and check my forwardness? O Lord, if Thou hast sent me, qualify me for Thy work; but if I have run before I was sent, prevent my continuance in Thy work!

February 25th.—We have been dull in our class-meetings of late, yet the work is going on. A week ago sister Shepherd found peace with God; and yesterday sister Ottawill came to say, that the Lord had cleansed her from all unrighteousness, and that His love had been so plenteously and powerfully shed down upon her as to overpower the body. How gracious is the Lord!

March 1st.—A revival has at last broken out in our little flock. Yesterday morning brother Shepherd

found peace with God, who had applied a line of a hymn with much consolation to his heart,—

“How happy the man whose heart is set free!”

This morning also, brother Ottawill was roused with these words, “Arise; why tarriest thou? and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” He arose to prayer, and the Lord spoke peace to his soul. It is rather singular, this was both his birthday and his wedding-day, as well as the day of his espousal to God. O, it was delightful to see these two brothers and their wives praising the Lord together!

27th.—This moment a present of five guineas is brought to me for assisting Mr. Back in services he had done for the Board, and for which he had received a gratuity. This makes good a promise I received from the Lord some days ago. Being, myself, in a little debt, and called to assist a poor family in distress, I had scrupled the propriety of doing it. Immediately it occurred to my mind, that faith in God was better than ten thousand a year. I kneeled down to thank the Lord, and disposed of the gift in acts of charity.

April 9th.—This evening, for nearly an hour, I had great enlargement of heart and utterance in expounding 1 Cor. i. 9–11. O, praise the Lord for His abundant grace! I now find a comfortable assurance that my name shall never be blotted from the book of life. The Lord has assured me, that I shall go out of His house no more for ever. Jesus is mine, and I am His. The promise I once received, now comes with reviving force,—“Gad shall overcome at last.”

[May 2d, Mr. Valton wrote to Mr. William Holder, of Painswick, as under :—

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,

“ YOUR sufferings are what I foresaw while I was with you ; and I know by your experience that the Lord is about to do greater things for you. He will shortly bruise Satan under your feet, and seal you to the day of redemption.

“ There is a promise and glorious privilege, enjoyed but by few, because not earnestly desired and sought after,—an assurance wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, that we shall be ‘ pillars in the temple of God, to go out no more for ever ; ’ and that ‘ our name shall never be blotted from the book of life.’ O, my dear brother, if you have not received this promise, ask for it, and you shall have it! Then you shall find obedience an easy yoke, and your soul will abound in joy, like Jordan’s swelling flood, and your peace will flow as a river, with a deep and constant stream.

“ For your encouragement, I will to you speak freely : I do enjoy that blessed assurance. I received it a few months after the blessing of entire sanctification ; and I daily enjoy a heaven upon earth. Temptations often assault me, and sore temptations, too ; business hurries me, and weakness oppresses me ; and yet nothing alters my calm, solid, and uninterrupted hope of eternal salvation.

“ My dear friend, be not then dejected, however you may be tempted. Quietly wait for His salvation, and you shall yet praise Him. Beware, my dear brother, that you never remit Christian duties : this will hurt your soul. You may be strongly, though imperceptibly, drawn to lethargy of soul. Keep

awake, as a Christian soldier. Be like the four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind. Your enemy slumbers not: you travel to Zion through hostile ground; therefore, keep on the armour of God. Go on, my dear friend: Zion's towers already appear. Salvation is nearer than when you believed. The Lord is ready to come, and His reward is with Him. May God bless you!

“I am, dear brother,

“Yours, in the Lord Jesus,

“JOHN VALTON.”]

May 11th.—Since last Sunday, I have been greatly tempted and exercised concerning my expounding the Scriptures. We have public meetings three times a week, besides my visits to Rainham, Nookhouse, and Thurrock; and now our congregations, often, in times past, but ten or twenty, are so increased, that the Board will hear that I am become a preacher.

July 1st.—I propose, through the blessing of God, to be more minute in setting down my experience, as it may be useful to me at a future day. This day I have had hard conflicts with flesh and blood, and besought the Lord with earnest cries, that I might die rather than sin against Him. Yet I cannot say that I felt sin in my heart. May the Lord bless me with a watchful spirit, a pure heart, and a loving mind! When the thought comes, that it is expedient for me to marry, and that my soul might profit with a wife that truly loves the Lord; then the contrary thoughts come, that I should be unwilling to leave her when called to do good, and that I could not then be wholly devoted to God.

Lord, be my wisdom, and teach whatever is pleasing in Thy sight!

September 4th.—Being returned from Avey, where I had been to visit brother Evans, lying sick of a fever, I found a message from one of my officers, who was sick. To my great surprise, it was, that I should pray with him! I did so, and exhorted him as far as I durst proceed. I wonder what he will think of himself, in case he should recover. Will he not be ashamed? The Lord be gracious to his soul!

11th.—Since Wednesday, the 7th, last, my soul has been abundantly refreshed. I was then ready to fly from my place. To-day, though weak in body, and obliged to lie down, I have enjoyed much consolation, and a hope full of immortality. I had strength, however, at night, to invite the weary and heavy laden to come to Christ.

30th.—Last night, though still weak in body and very dull, to a room full of people I expounded 1 John ii. 12. I found much difficulty the former part of the time; but when I came to the state of fathers in Christ, O, how did the blessed Spirit fill my heart, and open my mouth! I know not what the strangers thought, but I know the Lord had thoughts of many of them.

October 19th.—This morning I had great joy from one of my class calling to say, that the Lord had given her the second blessing, a new and a clean heart. When I am dry and discouraged in preaching, I often hear of some good, which comforts my soul, and strengthens my hands.

November 23d.—This being my birthday, when I entered my thirtieth year, I set the preceding day apart for humiliation and prayer, and in the evening

met my friends at the usual hour. A circumstance, which I deemed rather remarkable, happened at this time. A letter was put into my hand, as follows:—

“LONDON, *November 21st*, 1769.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“It is a great thing to be open to the call of God. It really seems as if He were now calling you. When I wrote last, you was not willing to go out; and, probably, He is now thrusting you out into His harvest. If so, take care you be not disobedient to the heavenly calling. Otherwise, you may be permitted to fall lower than you now imagine.

“I am

“Your affectionate brother,

“J. WESLEY.”

It is not easy to conceive what dejection of spirit I was thrown into by this letter. I could neither think nor pray. But can God require me to make bricks without straw? O no, Lord! Thou art not an austere man. Besides, my weakness, my timidity, and want of gifts, are to me proofs that I am not called. Nor have I the least intimation that it is the will of God. O, what a dreadful apprehension of such an undertaking! It almost deprives me of life when I think of being thrust out!—Suffice to say, I gave Mr. Wesley my reasons; which for the present satisfied his mind, as appears from his reply:—

“LONDON, *December 2d*, 1769.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“CERTAINLY you are not called to go out now. I believe you will be by-and-by. Your inabilities are

no bar ; for, when you are sent, you will not be sent on a warfare at your own cost. Now improve the present hour where you are.

“ I am
 “ Your affectionate brother,
 “ J. WESLEY.”

This letter was as pleasant as the grapes of Eshcol to my soul.

January 1st, 1770.—I endeavoured to expound the parable of the Barren Fig-tree. The room was crowded, and we had a soul born of God,—sister Bayley, who sent to say that the Lord had set her soul at liberty. Mr. Pool, a brother of Mr. Weaver, came to me with evident marks of being awakened. He said, he would join the society on his return to London ; for which I gave him a letter.

We now divided our little society into four classes ; viz., seven with me, nine with brother Weaver, four with brother Cockran, and four with brother Healey : in all twenty-four members.

April 5th.—Last night I was enabled to make a very awful and close exposition of Rev. i. 7 : “ Behold, He cometh with clouds.” A stranger present seemed much broken down.

15th.—Being Easter-day, we met for morning service. Four strangers were present. I endeavoured to expound Acts v. 30-32 ; but was so tried and tempted, that I was obliged to stop, and beg the people to pray ; after which I went on with the discourse, and many were much refreshed.

[Mr. Valton's journal now assumes another character. Four or five times every week we find him publicly and zealously engaged, except when public business required his evening attendance.

Therefore the more particular meetings only are noticed here.]

25th.—This evening Mr. John Allen, a young preacher in the London Circuit, came to see me: an Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile. He preached on adding to our faith virtue. His word was made a blessing to all. I had a temptation of Satan, that nobody would now care to hear me, after hearing so lovely a young man as this. While I admired his eminent gifts, and profound experience, united to the simplicity of a child, I was thankful to God for what I did enjoy. I know, if He see good, He will give me more; and He even does crown my poor attempts with success.

May 23d.—Dr. Hugh Smith, being consulted on the state of my health, advised me to lay aside business for a time, and use exercise on horseback. In conformity to his advice, I arrived this evening at Mr. Whitbread's, a farmer at Kirksend, near Barnet. While staying with this obliging family, I had frequent opportunities of meeting the class at Bentley-Heath, and at Barnet, and also at Mr. Shewell's, an opulent family, that showed me much kindness.

June 3d.—This afternoon Mr. Allen preached at Bentley-Heath, on turning to the Strong-hold. It was a blessed time. In the evening he preached at Barnet. Next morning I rode with him to Whetstone, where he preached on the Trembling Gaoler.

29th.—To-day, after an absence of five weeks, I returned to Purfleet, having preached and met the classes at Barnet, Bentley-Heath, and Potter's-Bar, as my strength would admit; and the Lord has given us His blessing.

July 3d.—Last night I endeavoured to illustrate that passage, "Behold, I stand at the door, and

knock." The Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon me in a very remarkable manner, both in praying and preaching. Since my return from Barnet, I praise the Lord for His goodness: my health has been much improved, and my soul has been wonderfully favoured. I now lie down and rise with great comfort and joy. The temptation under which I so long groaned has now vanished away, and never appeared since my return. But, alas! my poor flock have felt the absence of their shepherd: three of them have been overtaken in liquor, and one grossly so.

August 10th.—The last few days I have attended the Conference in London, and found much of the gracious presence of the Lord. My eyes were drowned in tears, and my soul filled with humility, praise, and love. The Conference now sitting in London, Mr. Whitefield, prior to his embarking for America, preached at five in the morning, and sat with the preachers till breakfast, and very much encouraged them to go on in their plain and humble way. He dropped several expressions of disapprobation, that several ministers in connexion with him had begun to wear a gown and bands.

September 3d.—Last night, in a crowded room, I cried, "Acquaint now thyself with Him," &c., (Job xxii. 21,) but found no liberty; I was shut up and tried most of the time. My memory often failed me, so that I almost forgot the thread of the discourse. A thought darted across my mind,—“I will speak no more in the name of the Lord.” I began to reason about it, and thought it might partly be owing to the weakness of my body, but chiefly to the dealings of God, who had justly withdrawn from me those gifts of which He saw I was

unworthy. May the Lord humble my soul to the dust, and sanctify His paternal corrections !

6th.—A party of us walked this evening to Rainham, to hear the Rev. Mr. Elliott. He delivered a strong discourse on predestination. Some parts of it made me tremble, they were so pleasing to flesh and blood ; yet I could by no means accede to his opinions. I was, however, engaged in argument till one o'clock in the morning. How different are these debates, from the simplicity which usually follows our meetings at Purfleet !

October 8th.—This evening, in a room full of people, I asked, "Lord, are there few that be saved ?" The Lord gave me great power, and the word went to the heart. Some were greatly alarmed, and others much stirred up. It was a time that will be long remembered. One young man, acquainted with religion, though not with Methodism, received the word with meekness. Another declared he would leave his lodging, to come nearer to us.

18th.—This morning sister Weaver came to say, that she had no doubt that the Lord had given her, two days ago, the blessing she had been earnestly seeking for three months,—a pure heart, and a token that, having justified her, He would also glorify her. Her soul was in transports of joy while she related these things. It also encouraged me ; for having had a dry time in expounding the word, I found the Lord had made it a great blessing.

November 5th.—Last evening I endeavoured to expound the twenty-third Psalm : "The Lord is my Shepherd," &c. Most of us found the Lord very present, and great refreshment. After the meeting, four persons gave in their names to join

the society. This, in some sort, prepared us for the solemn intelligence, which presently followed, that the Lord had called home, to his great reward, that eminent servant of Christ, the Rev. George Whitefield, who died near Boston, in New-England. I wept before the Lord for our sins of ingratitude and unfaithfulness, which might have provoked the Lord to remove that burning and shining light from among us.

December 2d.—Last week I have been much engaged in the business of the office and magazine; so that I have gone to preach without time for meditation; and this Sabbath I have been all the day engaged for my heavenly Master, except a little time when I was obliged to lie down. I had this evening a blessed time while expounding Rev. i. 5: “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

25th.—This being the day of our Saviour’s nativity, in our morning meeting I expounded Luke ii. 14. Having read to our friends, in the preceding week, a discourse on the Lord’s Supper, a company of us walked to Thurrock church, and received the sacrament.

[On the last day of this year Mr. Valton writes: “How little have I done; and how small is the progress I have made during the past year! Lord, I fly to the arms of Thy mercy, and take shelter under the merits of redeeming love.” He had only, when at home, held public meetings twice every Sabbath, and three times on the week-evenings, meeting classes after preaching. On the other three evenings we find him often preaching and meeting the class at Rainham, at Renham, and Thurrock, Nookhouse, &c. In a district so thinly

populated his congregations were small, but mostly enough to fill the house. What a man of God, tried with a thorn in the flesh, and encompassed about with manifold infirmities!]

January 26th, 1771.—This evening I went to spend the Sabbath in London, and meet Mr. Wesley at brother Windsor's. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so does the countenance of a man his friend."

March 17th.—This morning I walked to Rainham, to meet the class, in brother Weaver's turn, he being sick: after dinner, I catechised the children; and in the evening addressed a crowded congregation, in which were many strangers; and one, having the appearance of a preacher, so embarrassed me, that I had no power. O, what I have suffered on this account, and times without number! I thought, if ever I went to Rainham or Dagenham after this, I should be ashamed to walk the street. However, two or three of the friends mentioned the comfort they had found under the word.

22d.—My mother having been many years absent in France, I had lately spent some time with her and my sister, and had often talked closely to her about religion. But it is hard to convince the Papists. They always fly off from the Bible to the Church. My mother being now taken ill, I spent four days in London, often talking to her, and left her much better in health than I found her.

September 10th.—This morning I set out again to spend a fortnight at Dugdale-Hill, near Barnet, for the benefit of my health, where I employ my time in meeting the class at Barnet. There I heard Mr. Gathercart on Mark xvi. 16: a better discourse surely I never heard.

December 25th.—I expounded Isaiah ix. 6, 7:

“Unto us a Child is born,” &c. It was a time of heavenly refreshing. The Lord out of Zion gave us His blessing. At Purfleet, it might indeed be said, The Saviour was born there.

31st.—To-day I dined with Mr. Wesley, at Bow, and heard him preach at night. We held a watch-night, and ushered in the new year with singing and prayer. My temptations and sufferings during the past year have been small compared with preceding years. I have been enabled to go on preaching, and visiting the sick, in a constant course. My greatest trials have been timidity: when any well-dressed strangers have come in, I have scarcely been able to speak; and often have been ready to say, “I will speak no more in Thy name.” But I could not recede: it was come to this, “Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.” However, the success I met with, and the comfort I felt in my own soul, encouraged me to go on; for a class was formed in most of the parishes within the compass of an easy walk from Purfleet.

January 1st, 1772.—This evening I was at the renewing of the covenant at Spitalfields. It was a solemn time, and the blessing and presence of the Lord accompanied the means. But now, what shall I say of myself? I confess it is of the Lord’s mercies I am not consumed. I do not think that I am either so lively in my own soul, or so zealous in the work, as I have been. I am also many times in doubt whether I have not lost the blessing of a pure heart which I once enjoyed. But glory be to Thee, O my God, that Thou hast not given me up as an unprofitable servant! Grant, O Lord, that the course of the ensuing year may be employed more to Thy glory than the past!

3d.—Yesterday I returned from town, in the passage-boat, as usual, full of wicked people. I delivered my soul of them, and am clear of their blood. This evening I expounded the Barren Fig-tree, after which we renewed the covenant, as in London; and I believe our meeting was not in vain.

5th.—This Sabbath morning I walked to Rainham to meet the class, where I found a man and his wife, who had been awakened under Mr. Maxfield. In the evening, after preaching, one of the chalk people met us, who had been brought under serious impressions by hearing his child read the New Testament.

23d.—A poor woman came to me to visit her husband, a labourer at the chalk-works. I found him in a burning fever, and scarcely any covering on his bed, in the depth of winter. I kneeled down to pray to the great Physician in his behalf. I gave him Dr. James's powders, and afterwards milder physic; so that the man, though weak, was at his work again in the course of the week.

27th.—This evening, according to appointment, I visited the sick man again, preached in his room, and prayed the people, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. The people being eager for the word, I told them, if they would get a room, I would come to them. On that, Mr. Watson, a lime-burner, offered me one that will hold a hundred people. We measured it for benches, and I promised to visit them twice a week. Glory be to Thee, O Lord, for this opening! O that Thou wouldest give me such gifts and such graces as I need, to be a blessing to this people!

February 23d.—This evening, to about fifty people, I had a blessed season while explaining Eph. v. 8:

"Ye were sometimes darkness," &c. But I am embarrassed what to do. Mr. Bell, the manager of these works, so far approves of our meetings, that he seems inclined to build us a chapel. In that case we must have a preacher. Here is the difficulty.

March 25th.—Being in London, I went to the Apothecaries' Hall to pay for some medicines; and, to my great surprise, found the bill to come to a guinea and a half! I was in a strait, not having money enough. However, I borrowed a little of a friend. On taking tea with brother Chambers, Mr. Dornford (a wine merchant) came in: we walked to the chapel together; and, after preaching, he took me home, and gave me two papers of James's powders, a bottle of spirits of wine, some Bibles, and a guinea to buy medicine with. This was surely the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in my eyes. This good has resulted from my giving medicine; and a door is opened for the Gospel among the poor chalk people. Add to this, on arriving at home, I found a guinea had been sent me by the Russian ambassador, for doing him a service about a year ago.

June 21st.—Mr. Allen paid us a second visit at Purfleet, and spent the Sabbath. His sermon in the morning, on the Sun of Righteousness, (Mal. iv. 2, 3,) and in the evening, on examining ourselves whether we are in the faith, were heard with much attention, and the approbation of the people.

August 12th.—I am now returned from Dover, where I have been for almost seven weeks for the benefit of the salt water. The preacher being absent, the Lord gave me power and courage to preach four times a week; and I have reason to believe the Lord made me of great use to the people. To Him be all the glory.

I had now an offer made me by the Earl of D——r to be page of the presence to the queen. I laid this overture, flattering in itself, before the Lord. The result was, my heart being on the sanctuary, that I was at Purfleet secluded and quiet; that I feared a post of honour, and at court, too; and having already a small clerkship under Government, which was quite sufficient for my support, I thankfully declined it in favour of Mr. Cooper, my sister's husband. Another reason was, that I had a few souls to care for; and, above all, a soul of my own; and I chose rather (yet not I, but the grace of God in me) to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the favour, honours, and riches of a court. Adieu, vain world, stand aloof with thy slighted charms! The Lord is my portion.

September 4th.—I received a letter of thanks from my brother C. for conceding the place, which to him was worth £200 per annum.

December 14th.—Last night I had a good time, and was enabled to discourse on the Beatitudes with great power. A self-righteous man, and one who had been of a bitter spirit, came up and thanked me for the sermon. This evening I and four of the brethren united to get an evening school for the poor children of the lime-burners, who are obliged to work by day. I trust we shall not only teach them to read and write, but also to be Christians. May the Lord succeed our work!

30th.—To-day I received a letter from my sister, acquainting me, that an officer had dined with my Lord D——r, and told him that I had got a congregation, and preached to them; and that I also kept a school. My lord had told my father of it,

adding, that those things would obstruct my promotion; which had made my father's mind very uneasy; and he requested me to leave off all those things, as it would augment the happiness of his family.

Satan always delights to afflict the afflicted. This letter came to hand at a moment when I was greatly tempted about preaching. I had also much temporal business on my hands; and was fearing that some of the gentry belonging to the chalk-works would drop in to hear me. May the Lord support me! for nothing but love glowing in the soul can make us zealous and persevering in every good work. If love decay, we shall soon become unfruitful. O Lord, in Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded!

At the close of the year, having preached on the end of all things being at hand, I was in some doubt, whether I still retained the pure and perfect love of God. O my God, do not suffer me to fall from the grace which Thou hast conferred; but do Thou establish me for ever in righteousness and true holiness!

January 1st, 1773.—Entering now on another year of grace, I sit down to consider my state. I now, through mercy, enjoy a measure of the fruits of the Spirit. I love the Lord my God above money, place, or preferment. Still I have reason to complain, as I do not now enjoy the love that casteth out fear; and have not the firm persuasion of the promise once given to me, that "I shall overcome at last."

Some time ago, I remember that, through very perplexing trials and temptations, I was led publicly to declare that I had lost the pure love of God. But

scarcely had I yielded to do this, before I became sensible that my unbelief at this juncture had effected what I before only supposed had been done; and the Lord has chastised my giving place to unbelief, as I have never since had a clear testimony of being saved from sin. However, for some years I have enjoyed almost a continued calm in my own breast, and felt a constant longing after my heavenly home.

June, 1774.—Towards the middle of this year my constitution was brought into a weak and reduced state; but, having changed the low and vapourish air of this place, I was, in the course of three months, enabled to return to the office.

For the last few years I have been fully employed, after the hours of office, in preaching, catechising, and teaching in the school every night in the week, with the exception of a Saturday, now and then; and there was a prospect of much good resulting from the school, had not the wicked parents of the children frustrated the hope, by allowing them to run wild on the Sabbaths.

Another thing I undertook, in compassion to the poor, was, the administering of medicine to the sick. This stripped me of money, exhausted my time, and involved me in debt. I bought an electrifying machine, and learned to bleed. I principally aimed at gaining access to sick-beds, and being useful to the souls of the people; and I must own, that the Lord most wonderfully prospered my undertakings. The blind, the halt, and the languid, came, and received relief or cure. This success brought a crowd of patients. Their diseases obliged me to study books, and the remedies exhausted my pockets. And though Providence remarkably assisted me, yet

the loss of time, and the want of adequate means, greatly hurt my soul. Thus it was, that in the zenith of my popularity and entanglements, God made a way for my escape, by removing me out of the place. And I humbly trust that the souls that have been convinced and converted will be my crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

These incessant labours, and the unwholesome air of Purfleet, so reduced my constitution, that the physician told me my employment was not fit for my health. Another eminent man spoke in stronger words, that I was murdering myself, and that no expedient would restore me but exercise on horseback.

In this strait and dilemma, I wrote to ask the advice of a few preachers eminent for wisdom and holiness; and they all with one voice advised me to give up all, and take a Circuit. Among these was Mr. Samuel Wells, with whom, in my visit to Gloucestershire, I had become acquainted. He was a lovely youth, of classical literature; and one who, I believe, enjoyed the pure love of God. He wrote in a very decisive manner; adding, "I do not know but God has spoken the word, **PREACH OR DIE.**" This last word turned the trembling balance.

After the reception of these letters, I calmly came to the conclusion to forsake all, and, like Jacob, set out with my staff in my hand. But for some weeks my temptations to *delay* and *recede* were more violent than ever. Unknown are the sufferings through which I then passed. Seldom had I more than two hours' sleep; all was weeping and wailing before the Lord. On the one hand were the opposition of my family, and all their disappointed hopes of my preferment; on the other, my natural timidity, my

health, and inability. Often did I retire to a neighbouring wood, and spend hours in bitter lamentations and cries before the Lord, praying for power to come forth. At length, early one morning, I rose, and, with the best preparation that haste could make, I came off to London. I there wrote my letter of resignation; and then, spreading it before the Lord, I fell on my knees, and said, "O Lord, I thank Thee for having given me this place for almost eighteen years. And now, seeing Thou requirest Thy own, lo! here I present to Thee that which is Thine, and cast myself on Thy providence." This I said with a melting heart, and with eyes deluged with tears.

1775.—After my letter of resignation, and all the way to the Leeds Conference, O, how was I assaulted by the enemy, for having made all these sacrifices for God, when, it was suggested, there was no God! For some days I was enveloped in a cloud of atheism. Surely had it not been for this sore temptation, I could not have known the strength and malignity of a fallen angel. But on arriving at Leeds, and lodging with a cheerful Christian family, all these bodings vanished away; nor have I ever since been assailed with the like injections of the enemy. None, however, but the Lord Himself can tell what I passed through for the last two months before I came to Leeds. This I can truly say, that the Lord has thrust me out into the work; for in no one's case, perhaps, did ever such a group of concurring circumstances meet to make manifest the will of God. And now, O Lord, seeing Thou hast brought me forth, do with me as seemeth good in Thy sight, and send me wheresoever Thou wilt.

One circumstance tended to humble me. A few evenings before the Conference, Mr. Pawson, the superintendent of the Leeds Circuit, desired me to preach. The congregation was unusually large, compared with the small groups in Essex, and two or three times my memory failed me; but the people professed to be much blessed under the word. Here my soul was exceedingly happy, being all the day engaged in spiritual exercises.

August 2d, 1775.—I was this day admitted on trial as a preacher, and appointed to the Oxfordshire Circuit, which comprised part of three other counties. My colleagues were Samuel Wells, jun., and George Shorter. It was joy to me to labour with a man that I knew and loved.

Another boon of equal joy seemed to drop from heaven. On arriving at Witney, the first place in the Circuit, I found a letter requiring my presence in London. Here, to my infinite surprise, I found all my relations very cordial, and not a word of reproach on my conduct: and during the few days I was in town, the most high God, in His providence, made a comfortable provision for me for life; so that I can preach without being burdensome, and have a tolerable competency for age, when infirmities may admonish me to retire. I was overwhelmed with this astonishing token of the goodness of God, for which I desire to praise Him for ever.

[Mr. Valton does not say what was the amount of the pension granted him for eighteen years' service; but it was not less than forty pounds a year. In consequence of this, he never would take any allowance from the Circuits, except his food. He travelled as a single man, and a gentleman; giving the surplus of his money to the poor.]

In the Oxfordshire Circuit I laboured for two years. It was a very hard Circuit, the rides were long, and fuel very scarce; but the Lord was my support. The first year was a pruning time; the second was a year in which we gathered many souls. It was a great trial to me to leave this loving people, and so many excellent families; but, as the Lord so required, I bowed to His will.

[Mrs. Weaver, whose husband succeeded Mr. Valton as leader of the classes in Purfleet, told me, that Mr. Valton came about this time to visit the little flock he had gathered with so many toils and tears, and strengthened their hands in the Lord. During this visit an officer came to see him, and, finding him now dressed in a plain suit of black, exclaimed, "What, is this the little gentleman that came to us in a cocked hat, and a gold-laced waistcoat?" "It is, sir," rejoined the other; "but the Lord, since that time, has done something under the waistcoat." After this, Mr. Whitbread, celebrated in parliamentary records, built a little chapel, and gave a Bible; but the preachers, on account of distance, often neglecting, and a Calvinistic schoolmaster settling there, who was a preacher, the Methodists were gradually superseded.]

At the Bristol Conference, 1777, I was appointed for the Gloucestershire Circuit; and, blessed be God, our labour was not in vain. Our rides were often long, travelling from Stourport, Worcester, and Stroud. The friends would have borne with me a second year, but my constitution was so impaired as not to be able to bear the extensive journeys. I cannot, however, omit naming the lovingkindness of the Lord to me this year. When seized with a bilious fever, which lasted some weeks, my lot

was cast at Stroud. Here I met with the tenderest of nurses and friends, in Mrs. Scudamore and her family, who had me removed to their house, and showed me no little kindness; where, with the help of God, and a skilful apothecary, I was soon restored to my labours. During the whole of this year I have found much peace in my own soul, which has the more supported me under the hardships of an itinerant life.

In 1778 I was appointed to the Bristol Circuit. As soon as I received the letter from Leeds, my soul was in the furnace; being awed at the idea of standing before so many wise and holy persons, as then were in Bristol and Bath. I wrote immediately to Mr. Wesley, praying to be sent anywhere rather than to those cities. But he still kept to his appointment, in spite of all remonstrances. My distress and timidity continued for some days; but, laying it before the Lord one evening, I was much relieved by two lines of a hymn, powerfully applied to my mind,—

“Wait thou His time; so shall this night
Soon end in joyous day.”

I came to Bristol in a weak state of health, and was presently obliged to retire to a kind friend's house, near Pensford, where Mr. and Mrs. Wait showed me every kindness for the restoration of my strength. Here I gave myself up to prayer, which increased my spiritual strength also, and enabled me to enter on my work with joy. I have cause to rejoice that I had in Mr. John Goodwin and Mr. James Wood the kindest of colleagues. In Paulton the work broke out wonderfully; and about eighty souls were added to the society, and a preaching-house was soon afterwards erected. The

effect of the word on the poor colliers was such as I had never witnessed before. At Fishponds, also, we had a blessed revival of religion. This was, indeed, a year of consolation; the people were uncommonly affectionate, and I should have been glad to end my days among them.

1779.—My second year in the Bristol Circuit was attended with some heavy trials, particularly the dispute which happened between the superintendent and the clergyman Mr. Wesley had stationed at the new chapel in Bath. The issues were, that Mr. M'Nab left the Connexion, and the clergyman set up for himself, in Dublin, taking with him above a hundred persons, amongst whom were the richer members of the Dublin society. This dispute gave a general wound to the cause. However, the time I was there, I enjoyed a heaven upon earth, and left the friends with many regrets. The last place I left was Amesbury, where I remained a fortnight for my health, and experienced every kindness from the lady of the house for her Master's sake. Mr. M'Nab, however, returned the next year; but did not continue long in the Circuit.

1780.—At the Bristol Conference I was ordered for the Manchester Circuit, as the assistant preacher. On arriving, my soul entered into great sufferings. The regrets at leaving my Bristol friends, and the dread I had upon my mind concerning the office that was laid upon me, quite drank up my spirit. However, I set my shoulders to the work, and endeavoured to lay out my soul in the discharge of every duty. God was so far pleased to own me, and Mr. George Snowden, my fellow-labourer, that nearly three hundred souls were added in the town; and there was a general revival throughout the

Circuit. At Stockport the chapel was enlarged, and at Ashton a new one erected, and a promising prospect of a great work in the ensuing year.

When I came first into this Circuit, I was quite a stranger to the habits and complexion of the people; and I construed their shyness to strangers into want of love. Some of the stronger trees and plants are slower in opening their bud and bloom. The issues were, that I found them a most affectionate, generous, and steady people; and, with tears in my eyes at parting, I could say, that they lie near my heart.

The main circumstance which encouraged me was, the breaking out of the work of God in different parts of the Circuit. My constitution I found too weak to bear the journeys, and was obliged to call for additional help in a third preacher. This set us at liberty to try and take in new places.

This work would have been more extensive, had it not been for two or three leading members of the Rochdale society, who demanded an unjust share of our labours. Their opposition was so strong, that it quite broke my spirit, and cramped my future usefulness. It obstructed all my intended visits to the populous villages.

Sometime during the winter I went with a few of my Oldham friends to a village called Gladwick, consisting of colliers and weavers. I preached in a house with comfort and joy to thirty or forty people, and many felt the power of the word. I visited the village a second time, and was favoured with the same blessing and presence of God. But on going the third time, and with a design to preach in the open air, as Satan's kingdom began to suffer, several being awakened and joined to the society, the enemy

collected his forces, armed with stones and noisy instruments, to make a furious attack. They literally gnashed upon me with their teeth, and so pelted me with stones and coals, that, after a while, I was obliged to retire into the house. Thank God, I was unhurt. We sung and praised the Lord in the house. Meanwhile, the mob was waiting without for another assault; and as soon as I and my few friends were out of doors, dirt and stones were poured amain: yet none of us were hurt, except a woman, who received a severe cut in the head.

These storms without were small, compared with the inward conflict I had from myself. When the large new chapel in Oldham-street was opened, and when I saw such large congregations, I suffered inconceivably from my old feelings of timidity. Standing in that pulpit was like standing to be shot. The good and gracious Lord, however, brought me through the year.

1781.—At the Leeds Conference I was appointed a second year for Manchester; but, fearing some extraordinary trials from different parts of the Circuit, and disapproving from my soul of some late things which had occurred, I entreated that I might be sent to Birstal. But my kind friends in Manchester were determined not to part with me without an answer to their petition: so I left the contest, having obtained leave to go and bathe at Liverpool; where I experienced every kindness from the people, and spent my time to much profit and comfort to my own soul.

My lot having fallen for Birstal, I was received with undeserved affection by the people. This encouraged me to undertake some difficult things with regard to discipline, at which my nature shrank.

And yet, through the help of God, I was brought through full as well as I expected. This I found a most easy and suitable Circuit to me, as I could not then, on account of pain in my breast, bear much riding. Yet, how favoured soever our lot may be, it is through much tribulation we are to enter the kingdom of God; and the path of suffering is the road to glory. I have learned lately a useful lesson,—to cease from man, and seek my all from God. Amidst all difficulties, I enjoy abundance of peace with God; and can sweetly appeal to Him, that His glory, the good of His church, and the salvation of my own soul, are the ruling principles of my heart: and, indeed, they are the sole objects that I have in view. I am a poor nothing in His sight. As to any warm and strong expressions, which may set individuals against me, I cannot help them. I must have liberty of speech, and deliver my soul, when speaking in the presence of the Lord and of His people.

I experienced the greatest kindness and support from my colleagues, Messrs. Briscoe and Shaw; through whose aid good has been done; besides a remarkable promise of a revival sealed upon my heart. The promise was given me on this wise:—I was at Dawgreen, the southern part of the town of Dewsbury. Being alone in my chamber, I prostrated myself before the Lord, to ask the outpouring of His Spirit on so populous a neighbourhood, while my eyes were suffused with tears. I then came down to engage in family prayer; and the power of God fell upon me, enabling me to pray with much enlargement, as the Spirit gave me utterance. I had a blessed revival before my eyes, and we praised God by way of anticipation; for I was fully assured

the Lord was about to work. My petitions were uttered in the assurance of faith; for I knew that God would make bare His holy arm. The family felt the Divine unction; and I continued till I could scarcely rise from my knees. I went up stairs; but could engage in no work, except prayer and praise. My soul was truly in travail for Zion to bring forth children.

I should not omit one unpromising check on the ardent wishes of my heart; a great loss to us, but not a damp on our hope. Mr. Fletcher, on the 12th of November, stole hallowed fire from my people, by taking away Miss Bosanquet to Madeley. I and a few friends accompanied them to Batley church. Surely such a blessed wedding I never knew before. By request, I improved the occasion in the evening from these words,—“What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon His name.” It was truly a refreshing time; and many prayers were offered, that eternal blessings might crown the devoted pair.

My soul shares in the divine joy of my honoured father and friend, Mr. Fletcher. My whole heart is engaged in the work of the Lord. But my spirit is often too active for my body. The weight of Saul's armour is a sore clog to my spirit. Hoping to live and die in my Master's cause, my frequent prayer has been that I might close my life and my work together. My soul is happy, and enjoys constant peace; and often Divine transports possess my breast. Jesus is the soul of all my joys; He is my theme of praise, and my all in all for ever. With confidence I can declare in the congregations of the people that crowd to hear His word,—

“Ye all may know that God is true,
Ye all may feel that God is love.”

October 28th, 1782.—This evening I preached at Hanging-Heaton, a village near Dewsbury, with much power; and many felt the mighty energy of the word. After preaching I met the society; and while singing the first hymn, the power of the Lord fell upon me, and, soon after, upon all the people. They were all in tears, and we scarcely knew how to conclude. I had never known such a night since I left Paulton, in Somerset. God was, indeed, in the midst of us, and we all rejoiced with unspeakable joy.

December 26th.—After preaching twice this day, and riding twenty miles, I walked to Hanging-Heaton to hold a watch-night. The service of preaching, prayer, and exhortations continued from seven o'clock to one in the morning. Here the work broke out in a very astonishing and extraordinary manner. The cries and agonies of the people were very moving. We sang and prayed till near twelve, and no deliverance was wrought. I then went to one who seemed to be agonizing in prayer. I kneeled down, and prayed with her for deliverance as far as my exhausted strength would permit; and presently she found peace. I then went to another; and she also, in a few minutes, found peace. Thus four or five were set at liberty in the same manner. In all, nine persons that night obtained a sense of God's forgiving love. I never knew such a time before. O that God may bless and keep them in His faith and fear!

31st.—This night I went to Earl's-Heaton, and had a good time. One young woman wept aloud for the disquietness of her soul. She was cruelly

handled by the enemy for a long time. I prayed and sang verses of hymns till my nature was exhausted ; but she still affected our hearts with her piercing cries and throes. At length I went to her, and kneeled down in earnest prayer. She soon became calm, and returned home with several friends rejoicing in the Lord. I trust the Lord will here also revive His work.

January 20th, 1783.—Two evenings ago we held a watch-night at Chidsill, and had an excellent time. It lasted for five hours. Four persons were very earnestly groaning and crying for mercy for a long time. Two or three of them were so deeply convinced that they trembled like a leaf in the wind. At last three of them obtained mercy, and went home rejoicing in the Lord. Another dropped down on the floor, and many were deeply wounded.

21st.—Last night, at Hanging-Heaton, we had a wonderful time ; and the power of the Lord was present both to wound and heal. After the sermon we continued in prayer for two or three hours, amid the groans and cries of many in distress. We told the Lord that we would not depart without their deliverance ; and God was graciously pleased to grant our importunate requests. We then gave thanks, and sang joyful hymns of praise.

23d.—This evening I preached at Danbrook, on Dewsbury-Bank. As soon as I began giving out the first hymn, I felt the power of God descend upon me ; and gave notice to the people that we should have a glorious time. Presently cries, and groans, and agonizing prayers were heard all around ; and several were in distress. In a while the anguish of their hearts was removed, and their souls entered the glorious liberty of the children of God. How

marvellous are Thy ways, O King of Saints! Ride on in Thy chariot, and with Thy great and strong sword strike the head of Leviathan, that crooked serpent! Amen, Lord Jesus; Amen.

27th.—This evening we held a watch-night at Ruth Williamson's, near Tingley-Moor. The congregation was large; and the Lord made it a time of refreshing from His presence. Cries, tears, and prayers were poured out for some hours. Three found peace with God, and were made remarkably happy in His love. Two of them experienced much anguish, and uttered the most moving prayers.

February 1st.—At Chidsill this evening we had an awful time with the people. Three were under strong convictions of sin. One young woman was roughly handled. At length she cried out, "Let me lie prostrate at my Saviour's feet," and immediately was made happy in God. We had reason to believe that three of those under conviction found peace.

3d.—I called this morning, by request, to pray with a sick woman at a public-house, in Shaycross, who had been no friend to religion. Presently, several of the neighbours were gathered into the house. While I was at prayer, violent convictions seized the sick woman, which communicated to others who were present. They cried earnestly for mercy, and with many tears. I continued in prayer till two of them were set at liberty. This was indeed a solemn and awful hour. But my poor body fails under the pressure of these ardours and fatigues. Yet I rejoice in spending my whole strength for my Master, and bemoan the insufficiency of my frame to support the energies of the mind.

12th.—This evening, after preaching at Dawgreen, I desired the bands to meet, to speak their experience as usual; but our attention was presently called off to assist a young person who had been under conviction during the sermon. Several others soon felt the power of grace; while some made it known in the village, that the work was broken out in the chapel. They came rushing in, and were seized with Divine solemnity and awe. About ten o'clock the prayers began to subside, when it appeared four or five persons had found peace.

13th.—This evening I preached at Batley, but with little power, my nature being exhausted with the exertions of the three former nights. However, it was soon found necessary to continue the service, as several "were pricked in their heart," and, after some conflicts, professed to have obtained comfort from the Lord. In all these watch-nights I have been assisted by the leaders of these classes; for God has been pleased to employ plain and weak instruments in the accomplishment of His great work. Blessed be His great and glorious name for ever!

March 3d.—This afternoon I catechised the children at Hanging-Heaton; and while in prayer, many of them began to cry aloud for mercy, and continued for the space of two hours. I believe that they all, for the time, felt a good influence on their hearts. Thus, "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings the Lord has ordained strength."

4th.—This forenoon was spent in visiting the people from house to house, and the afternoon in meeting classes to renew the tickets. After sermon at night we continued in prayer till midnight. The Divine presence descended on the people, exciting

them to weep and pray. Nine persons found peace and comfort, while many others remained under conviction.

11th and 12th.—At Ardsley and Morley I held watch-nights the preceding evenings; while many have wept aloud in distress, and some found peace with God.

13th.—We had a watch-night at Birstal, and on the 14th at Gildersome; and the Lord was in the midst of our assembly. I was nearly worn out; but, thanks be to God, towards the close of the meeting my lamp was replenished with fresh oil, and I was amazed at my support during the week.

24th.—After visiting the society at Hanging-Heaton, from house to house, most of the day, I preached in Joseph Bennett's room, with great power; and many were deeply wounded under the word. We continued in prayer, singing short hymns at intervals, for about three hours, amid the cries and groans of the contrite. Some found peace, and others went home in deep distress. The next morning I went to see two poor mourners. Others came into the room, and, while singing and praying, one found peace; but several others were left in distress.

25th.—This evening I preached at Earl's-Heaton, in a rather dull manner; being much disturbed by the constant coming in of the people. However, when we began singing and prayer, at the close of the sermon, the Spirit of the Lord was poured down upon us. The cries were so strong and loud that we could not be distinctly heard, while others fainted and were convulsed. We continued these exercises and wrestlings for the space of five hours. Here the enemy of souls made the most violent

opposition to our work that I had ever seen. O, how did it endear the Saviour to me, who hears prayer, and delivers His people from the cruel tortures of the foe! It was an awful time; but the cries of the people were cheered with verses of praise, sung for those who had found peace. I trust many will have cause to bless God for ever for having brought them to that place.

29th.—This evening I preached a funeral sermon at Chidsill, and afterwards kept a watch-night. The whole of the services were in the open air; a lantern supplying the absence of the sun and the moon. It was a very solemn time indeed, and attended with a general blessing. Some hundreds of people were present; and four, I was told, found peace with God.

April 1st.—I was obliged to spend nearly three hours out of doors at Tingley-Moor. The crowd was very large; and the Lord owned the means by the conversion of a few who came to hear.

12th.—At Chidsill we again prolonged our worship, with a very large crowd in the open air. Some were deeply distressed, and a few were set at liberty.

14th.—This evening, the crowd being great, we got into a barn, at Hanging-Heaton. Ten, I was told, among whom was a backslider, found peace with God. These wrestlings and intercessions continued for five hours. Like the gay world, in their balls, we stayed till the midnight hour.

15th.—This evening we had a wonderful time at Batley-Carr. The rich, as well as the poor, mingled in the crowd. Misses Kitty and Nancy Wooller were the chief mourners. Miss Newsome found peace with God, and is since taken to paradise.

16th.—At Morley we had another watch-night;

and had it not been for the unbecoming prayers of two young converts, I believe we should have had a wonderful time. This was the first appearance of wildfire that we have had; and I was sorely distressed about it. I feared to speak, lest I should do harm. But Morley being a Presbyterian town, ordinary means perhaps cannot affect them. I felt a great want of wisdom, and entreated the Lord to teach me how to manage these appearances of disorder. We closed the meeting, leaving two or three in distress.

25th.—Having changed with the Huddersfield preacher, I went to Mirfield, and met the society after preaching. I advised them to hold prayer-meetings after sermons; and, above all things, to pray for the promise of the Father. I proved that the work in the Birstal Circuit was scriptural; adding my belief, that the reason why we did not see more conversions after sermons was, because we knew not the Scriptures, nor the power of God. While I was speaking, the power of God fell upon two or three persons; and presently there was a loud cry. We continued in prayer for two hours; and one soul found favour with the Lord.

May 7th.—We held another watch-night at Dawgreen. Soon after the close of the sermon, we heard a cry for pardon and peace. The spirit of contrition was poured upon us. Some found peace and joy through believing; while others went away in distress, being advised to lay their case before the Lord at home.

8th.—We had a large congregation in a barn at Batley; for the *laythes*, or barns, at this season were empty. Many were cut down under the word; and two cried aloud for mercy, “and were heard in that they feared.”

14th.—Last night we had a watch-night at Heckmondwike; and we had, in the issue, a very awful time. A small company stopped behind, to whom I spoke on laying hold of the promises. The word was like lightning. Some were deeply affected. We continued in prayer till midnight, when four persons found redemption through the blood of Christ.

I am quite astonished how my poor body bears up under these exercises and fatigues. But all things are possible to God. Surely an omnipotent arm is displayed in this work. My breast is torn with a cough, and I am often more fit to go to bed than to pray night and day, as I am obliged to do in this revival of religion: yet I get through my work. O God, I bless Thee for Thy grace! My soul is all on fire to save poor sinners from the miseries of the fall. My life to me is nothing; though I would not purposely kill myself: yet, be the consequences what they may, souls I will endeavour to save.

It is amazing what untruths and false reports are spread abroad concerning this revival of religion. Many hard reflections are personally cast on me. I can, however, praise the Lord, that my eye is single, and my intentions are pure. These reproaches tend to deaden me to the praise of men, and even to the esteem of good people. I will seek my all in God, and take as many with me to glory as I can. O God, "give unto Thy servant a wise and understanding heart, that he may go in and out before so great a people!" Here I am; do with me and my frail body as seemeth good in Thy sight!

" My life—if Thou preserve my life—
 Thy sacrifice shall be ;
 And death—if death shall be my doom—
 Shall join my soul to Thee."

July 1st.—Sister Briscoe expecting to remove, I met her class, in order to divide it, and to appoint fresh leaders. We had a full room; and in my last prayer, the Lord visited us indeed. Such a night I scarcely ever knew. Heaven seemed to come down to earth. Now it was that the promise given me, nearly a year and a half ago, was fulfilled to the letter; and in the very spot where it was first applied to my heart. Many, and at the same instant, cried aloud for mercy, and all seemed to attest the refreshing power of the Divine presence. One young woman was much distressed. I pleaded the promise (John xvi. 23) in her behalf, that God would give us whatsoever we should ask in the name of Christ; and she rose calm and serene. The watch-night kept here the ensuing evening was attended by a crowd of people, equal to a Sabbath-evening congregation.

3d.—This night, at Hanging-Heaton, I was six hours on my legs. The crowd was large, and we had a wonderful time. One aged man dropped down on the floor, and many cried aloud, and were comforted. Some of the brethren continued in prayer till three in the morning. This was truly one of the days of the Son of Man.

7th.—Being on my way to the Bristol Conference, I called on my old friends at Ashton, among whom I had laboured when in the Manchester Circuit. After preaching I met the society, and gave them an account of the great work of God in the Birstal Circuit. I then particularly insisted on the doctrine I had lately enforced, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Presently, the cries, groans, and prayers of the people drowned my voice, and the power of God rested on

us in a wonderful manner. One received pardon, another perfect love, and a backslider was restored. Much more good was done, I believe, than was known. We continued some time in prayer; for it seemed as if the people could not leave the throne of grace.

[Mr. Valton does not give any particulars of the Bristol Conference. Being the clerk, and without any assistance, he would be much taken up with the duties of his office.]

August 20th.—This year I returned from Bristol to labour another year in the Birstal Circuit. But, in looking over my journal, I find my accounts this year much the same as in the past. Our watch-nights, prayer-meetings, and lovefeasts were owned of God. The work of the Lord went on prosperously, and many were convinced and converted to God. A new and beautiful chapel was begun at Dewsbury; and it is with great pleasure I add, that the young converts remained steadfast in religion. But the heavy burden of being assistant (to Mr. Wesley) in the care of two thousand people in society, and the many watch-nights that I kept, with all the fears and anxieties that I felt for my Circuit, sensibly sapped my constitution. Violent headaches, often accompanied with giddiness, almost overcame me. Nevertheless, through a great flow of natural spirits, and the daily help I received from the Lord, I was enabled to bear up through the year. I need not say what I felt, and what the people suffered, when I took my leave of them.

August 3d, 1784.—This day our Conference at Leeds ended in much harmony and love. My appointment was for Bradford, in Yorkshire; only a few miles from the scenes of my former labours.

But having a slight enlargement in my ankle indicating a scrofulous affection, my health required the use of sea-bathing; and on the next day I set out for Hartlepool, and preached at Ripon and Stockton in my way. I remained there about a fortnight, and often preached in the town and villages round about. The Lord graciously assisted me, and I hope my labours were not in vain.

26th.—This day I returned to my new Circuit at Bradford [which then comprised the three Circuits of Bradford, Halifax, and Sowerby-Bridge]. My first care was to lay the people before the Lord, and implore His presence and blessing; and here the Lord gave me a promise, and very encouraging tokens in my own soul, that He would, in a glorious manner, revive His work. Mr. John Shaw, my colleague in the Birstal Circuit, accompanied me to this place. He was a holy man, and a powerful preacher, and concurred in all my measures for the good of the work; though, from his very corpulent habit of body, he could not move out of his ordinary course.

28th.—Being at Elland, the first place at which I preached, my spirits were very low. At night, however, we had a good time, and a general blessing was poured on the people. Two or three were deeply affected, and wept much before the Lord. This I could not but regard as a pledge of future good.

In this new sphere of labour I continued preaching, and often holding prayer-meetings, till the beginning of October, when I was prevailed upon, by the advice of a physician, to cease from speaking, and for a time to retire from all public labours. I felt great regrets at this; as the fields already

began to ripen for the harvest. I found afterwards that I had just retreated in time: had I gone on a few weeks longer, I had gone beyond the reach of medicine. My head and breast were sorely afflicted. I frequently lost my memory, and my understanding was often beclouded. In short, I was reduced so low that I scarcely durst read a chapter in the family before prayer. At this juncture, I received a kind invitation from brother and sister Beecroft, of Kirkstal Forge, to make their house my home.

[It was on the first Sabbath that Mr. Valton came to Bradford, I had the pleasure to see and hear this man of God; and from the time that he knew me, he became my father and friend. Like him, I had exhorted a whole year without taking a text. He encouraged me in the work, made me the leader of a class, and nearly at the same time sent me a Plan, as a local preacher. At the end of the two years, in 1786, he recommended me at the Bristol Conference to Mr. Wesley, by whom I was sent to Redruth, in Cornwall. This to me was utterly unexpected; for, judging myself inadequate to such a work, I was then turning my views towards a school, which I thought would be my lot for life.

[The first time Mr. Valton met the society in Bradford, he told us of the promise he had received of the Lord concerning a revival of the work in the Bradford Circuit; and though afflictions checked the ardour of his soul, yet the presence of the Lord everywhere so accompanied his labours, that, at the end of two years, there was a great increase of members, besides the erection and enlargement of chapels.

[His method of preaching very much resembled that of Mr. Wesley. It was clear in ideas, earnest in address, and his word was often accompanied with such powerful strokes as reached the hearts of the people. The gentleman of polished manners, and the classical scholar, were all lost in his bold attacks on error and vice, and in his warm and earnest exhortations to the people. He set about his Master's work as a workman that needed not to be ashamed. His voice was clear and sonorous; just strong enough to be distinctly heard in the larger chapels; yet he was best heard in the large rooms, which Methodism at that time was thankful to enjoy. Here he shone, while every sentence opened with instruction, and every stroke seemed as the hammer to drive the nail. He eminently possessed what Erasmus requires in a minister,—a fountain of eloquence in his own breast. No wonder he should in most places always be attended with a crowded auditory.]

[It was his lively manner of preaching, and his good and healthy appearance in the pulpit, which operated against him in the estimation of his hearers, when they understood that he must retire for a time: they could scarcely be persuaded that he ailed anything. His physician, however, having superior knowledge of his infirmities, as superinduced by excess of speaking, restricted him, as Mr. Shaw told me, to a *total silence*. He did not allow him even to articulate *yes* or *no*, till he should find the pain removed from his lungs and vocal powers. This medical opinion was correct, as will appear from Mr. Valton's own words.]

After being a few weeks at the Forge, I yielded to the importunity of the people, and met the class;

but even this small exertion brought on all my former pains, in such a degree, that I thought I should have died during the night. However, in the beginning of November, I returned to my Circuit; for the people said, they would excuse my preaching if I would reside among them. So I left my Kirkstal friends in tears; but was obliged to be silent in all for many months.

May 18th, 1785.—For the last few months I have only ventured to pray and exhort, as the Lord gave me strength; and yet my word has been owned, much the same as if I had preached, in the conviction and conversion of several souls. But, alas! even these exertions occasion a return of all my former pains. I am therefore advised again to retire, and shall set out this morning for Scarborough.

June 25th.—This day I returned to Bradford, having found relief by bathing in the sea; but have preached several times in different places, and attended prayer-meetings; and the Lord has blessed my own soul and the souls of the people; to whom be glory for ever! O that I might now spend and be spent in the service of souls, and of my blessed Redeemer! I long to see the dawning of the latter day. May the Lord hasten it in His time! Amen.

July 16th.—Having arrived in London in order to attend the Conference, I consulted that pious and eminent physician, Dr. John Whitehead, on the infirmities under which I laboured in my breast. He advises me to give up morning preaching at five o'clock, and to preach but little in the evenings. But my honoured and much-esteemed friend, Mr. Fletcher, gives me advice of another kind; namely, to follow his example, and look out for a suitable

companion to nurse me in the retreat, and under the infirmities, of life. That, however, must be a subject of prayer.

August 5th.—To-day I set out a second time for the Bradford Circuit. O that the presence of God might accompany me in His word and work among that people! On arriving safe, I can say that the Lord has accompanied me. He gave me great power and success at several places where I preached, and souls were brought to God.

23d.—By the advice of physicians I am again obliged to leave my Circuit, and go to the sea; the salt water being beneficial to a scorbutic complaint with which I am afflicted. I spent a fortnight at Bridlington, and at the Quay. At both these places I preached several times; and it may be that the bread cast on the waters shall be found after many days.

September 9th.—My dear friend, Mr. Coulson, of Scarborough, met me to-day at Wold-Newton, and took me to his house, where I continued almost every night to be engaged in preaching or exhortation: and God was pleased to own my poor labours; to whom be glory for ever! On the 15th I preached a funeral sermon on the death of Captain James Smith, a young man not quite twenty-one. I think I never saw so neat, attentive, and serious a congregation before. They were almost all in tears; and the young people, in particular, were deeply affected. It was indeed a very solemn occasion.

October 1st.—This day I arrived safe at Bradford, having been accompanied part of the way by my dear friend, Mr. Coulson; and preached at Malton, York, &c., on my return. I find my health much

improved, and hope to devote my new acquisition of strength wholly to the glory of God.

In opening the new chapel at Wichfield, half-way between Bradford and Halifax, we had a very serious alarm by the breaking of an old bench. It was some time before the noise and terror subsided. As not half the crowd could get in, I took occasion to preach out of doors; and was happy to remark, that the whole could hear the word, and the Divine blessing implored on the assembled multitude.

At the close of this year I can give but a summary of my labours in the Lord. They have been much the same as in the Birstal Circuit, only my declining state of health did not allow me to hold many watch-nights. I have therefore bowed to the Divine restraints, and held frequent prayer-meetings after preaching, and been favoured with the power of the Holy Ghost. In these exercises, many souls have been converted during the last two years, and several hundreds added to the different societies. The thorn in the flesh has checked the ardours of my mind. The sharp returns of pain in my breast and head, accompanied with dizziness in the pulpit, have often obliged me to hold myself by the desk, to keep me from falling down. Sometimes, indeed, I must have declined the work altogether, had not the rides in this Circuit been short, and had I not been favoured with many vacant nights.

[In addition to what Mr. Valton states here, I have to add, that in lovefeasts, and on other occasions, he held fast the confidence of the pure and perfect love of God. He pressed this liberty more or less in most of his sermons, in the society meetings, and in visiting the classes. In discipline, he

was a pattern of paternal vigilance and care. He would not allow the men to commit any nuisance near the house of God, nor allow any member to lend a ticket to other persons to enable them to obtain admission into the lovefeasts; as this was silently telling the stewards at the door a double lie,—“This is my name; I am in the society.” A man from the country had bought a cake for his child on the Sabbath-day: the circumstance having reached Mr. Valton’s ears, in renewing the tickets, he required him to promise not to do it again; which not being complied with, he tore the ticket. To rich men who prospered in trade, and conformed to the world, his voice was often strong: he menaced them with the loss of their souls. I once saw an opulent friend come out of the chapel, very much moved by what he had just heard. Mr. V., however, got well over those difficulties, because the offended soon knew that he practised the duties of charity which he pressed upon others.]

July 19th.—Having taken my leave of the dear people in my Circuit on the 3d of this month, I proceeded, by easy rides, to the Bristol Conference, preaching almost every night among my old friends. On some occasions, the Lord favoured me with remarkable enlargement, both in prayer and in preaching.

August 1st.—This day our Conference closed; and, by an overruling Providence, I was appointed assistant (we now say superintendent) of the Bristol Circuit; and yet with the grace to be a supernumerary, which indulgently allowed me to preach just as much as I was able.

[Mr. Valton, when in the Bristol Circuit, eight

years before, had found the kindest of Christian friends in Mr. and Mrs. Purnel, who lived at the Fort. They had also a country house at Almondsbury, seven miles north of Bristol. Mr. Purnel was now dead, and the family had, in consequence of considerable losses in mercantile life, laid aside their carriage. The widow now lived entirely at Almondsbury, with a view to foster the infant cause in that parish. She, and Miss Johnson, and Mrs. Wait, of Belton, were reckoned three of the most pious women among the Methodists in the west of England. Of the connexion that follows, Mr. Valton writes:—]

It was now that a correspondence was begun between me and Mrs. Purnel; in which procedure I met with the concurrence of Messrs. John and Charles Wesley. Mr. Charles, then living in Bristol, cordially approved, as did also the particular circle of our religious friends. After receiving the approbation of Mr. Wesley and a few select friends, I wrote to her, proposing marriage, and retired to Brean, a very lonely place, within a hundred yards of the sea. Here I gave myself up anew to the Lord, and cannot but adore and praise my Lord who directed me to so retired a place. I know not where I could have found so agreeable a situation for health and solitude. Here I was much engaged in prayer, and my God was with me. I deprecated all the sins of my single life, and cried to God to interpose with regard to the issues of my letter. I particularly implored an increase of His Holy Spirit, and that I might return to the labours of the Circuit with strength renewed. Many weeping and happy times I had; and, I believe, my soul sunk into a

deeper state of pure and humble love than I had enjoyed for some years past. The day on which I left Brean, while walking on the sea-shore, I entered into a most solemn covenant with the Lord. I repeatedly, and with my whole heart, avouched the Lord to be my God, and my portion for ever. I found myself perfectly free from all creatures, sensible that all my riches, honours, and blessedness must come from Him. My soul did indeed rejoice in the God of my salvation; whose name be blessed for ever!

September 30th.—This day Mrs. P. gave her full consent to marry me. On this subject we have both had severe trials; but a kind Providence seems to have cleared our way.

[Mr. Valton, ever mindful of his paternal cares over me in the work, favoured me with a very encouraging letter; which I transcribe for the good of others.

“BRISTOL, *November 2d*, 1786.

“DEAR JOSEPH,

“I WAS comforted when I received your letter; and am overjoyed that the Lord blesses you with success in your work. This you may consider as a token of the Divine approbation, and that you are now where Providence has appointed.

“My dear Joseph, take no thought for the morrow: live and labour to-day, and God will bless you. As your day may be, so shall be your strength. He will not send you a warfare at your own charge. He will help and uphold you, and make you like a new threshing instrument. In all your troubles, have respect unto the recompense of reward; and for

the joy that is set before you, endure the pain and shame of the cross. Remember, afflictions are but for a moment; but the rewards are a weight of glory.

“You must not be discouraged at the loss of seventy members the first quarter-day. I have generally found a loss after Conference, which the Lord makes up in the course of the year.

“And now, my dear youth, let me entreat you to give yourself wholly up to God, and to prayer. Do not seek so much for the art, as for the unction, of preaching. If you have the art, you will please: if you have the unction, you will save men. Cry to God, my brother, that you may be filled with the Holy Ghost; and that the Spirit may accompany all your studies. You well know the method that I use, and how God has owned my labours. Was my success obtained by seeking to gain admiration? No. You know how familiar and plain my discourses were; and how much prayer I used for the help of the Lord’s arm. Beware that you do not give yourself up to such studies as may only enable you to decorate your sermons, and inform your hearers that you are not one of those ‘weak things’ that God has chosen to confound the wisdom of the wise. O Joseph, be simple and humble; and both God and man will love and honour you. Never aim to appear the gentleman, but the Christian. Be ready to clean your own shoes, and to do anything else for yourself and others that may be proper.

“Be not forgetful of the servants where you go; but speak to them, as well as their masters; for with God there is no respect of persons. Beware of high living, especially drinking much beer or wine.

Let your moderation be known to all men; and let all your hearers see that your kingdom is not of this world. Wear your own hair, and buy nothing that is ornamental. Let no man despise you.

“And now, my dear brother, you will be thankful to God for these lines, and take them in good part. God bless you, and make you illustrious as the sun! May you be a burning and shining light in your day and generation; and may you at last finish your course with joy! Pray for me, my dear boy. My heart salutes you. Give my love to dear Jonathan and Penny, [cousins,] also to Mr. Wrigley. Let me hear from you now and then; and believe me, now and ever, your affectionate brother and fellow-labourer,

“JOHN VALTON.”]

Wednesday, December 1st, 1786.—This memorable day I received the hand of Judith Purnel at the altar in St. James’s church, Bristol. It was a solemn time, and God was present with us. The Lord gave me courage to behave as became the occasion. My grateful heart said, “Surely I have not been a petitioner in vain at the throne of grace.” Such a pious and suitable person, in all respects, I do not know where else I could have found. While I was able to keep a Circuit, I sought not for a wife; being determined to have full freedom in serving the church. But now, being disabled, I have sought and found a faithful companion for the retreat of life. Just before I went to church, I fell on my knees, and entreated the Lord for a blessing. I could appeal to Him that I made His will my law; and could then have given her up, had it been His

pleasure. These words were applied with power to my mind, "Go, and I will bless thee." Lord, be it so! My soul embraced the promise, "My presence shall go with thee." It is enough, enough, O my God! And now, I beseech Thee, O Lord, fulfil Thy gracious word; and let Thy presence attend us in all the walks of life! Keep us ever humble, loving, and simple, at Thy feet; and make us truly helpful to each other, that we may meet at last where pain and parting shall be no more!

July 2d, 1787.—I this day closed my year of labours in the Bristol Circuit. The superintendency did not obstruct my going to visit new places. I took in Thornbury, and several villages, forming classes in every place. In the city of Bristol also we had a clear increase of one hundred members; and between one and two hundred souls found peace with God. The people truly live in my heart; and I can rejoice to waste my life away in doing them service. I preached on the road at several places, and had remarkable times: several were convinced of sin, and some found peace with God. At two or three of the places persons were heard crying aloud for mercy. Glory for ever be ascribed to Thee, O Lord!

August 18th.—This day I reached home from the Manchester Conference. Mr. Wesley having been so kind as to ease me of the duties of superintending the Circuit, I shall be at liberty to comply with invitations from the country, and to visit the villages.

Some time in October, by desire of Mr. and Mrs. Goodfellow, I visited Ditchat, where the Lord much blessed the word to the hearers. Some, from that night, were awakened, and brought into the society.

I had promised, on my return, to visit Shepton-Mallet, and give them a sermon on the following Sabbath, in the evening. Having had a very disagreeable representation of the state of religion in that town, I felt my spirits low, and experienced much depression as I was riding thither. But a text was forcibly brought to my mind: (Isa. liv. 1, 2:) "Sing, O barren," &c. I thanked the Lord; and, finding the congregation large, ventured to read the words which had been given to me on the road. Many, I perceived, were affected, and wept bitterly under the word. I met the society; but the crowd stayed behind, and I thought more than once that we should have had a general cry. When I came down from the pulpit, I found many in great distress, and could not leave them without prayer. Mr. Coulson, an aged class-leader, told me afterwards, that he believed about one hundred persons were more or less awakened under that discourse.

In the beginning of November I spent two or three nights more with that people; and many seemed truly convinced, and in earnest for salvation. The mornings I spent at my lodgings, to receive and advise those who came in distress, inquiring what they must do to be saved. The congregations increased every night, and a general spirit of alarm and inquiry was spread through the town and neighbourhood. That week many found peace, and forty-four were admitted on trial into the society. How soon did the Lord fulfil the gracious words given me for a text, "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear!" &c.

In my next visit I had another wonderful night, and returned thanks for about twenty-two that had lately found peace with God. The preachers

in the Circuit had fostered and encouraged the work. I may truly say, I never saw such a general awakening, and without the least appearance of wild fire. One morning, I think not less than twenty came to my chamber in distress, and two of them found peace with God. Among the many who were convinced and converted in this revival, was a very intelligent-looking boy, deaf and dumb, who stood up in the lovefeast, and by signs, which others interpreted, expressed how happy he was in God.

On the last day of this year, I preached again at Ditchat, to a crowded auditory; and God sent the word to the hearts of many. We continued the services till near midnight. Three that were near me were in great distress, especially a young man that was born without arms. He had been a notorious sinner, and was wonderful in the use of his teeth and feet. This youth roared aloud for the disquietude of his soul.

In one of my former visits to Ditchat, a woman, who had been awakened, desired her husband to come and hear me. "No," said he, "I would rather go to hell than hear the Methodists." He was presently after seized with a pain in his side, took to his bed, and died in a few days. One of our friends visited him, and proposed prayer. "No," said he, "it is too late. You should have come before." In a little while he was heard to exclaim, "What, is it for ever! for ever!" and presently died.

July 13th, 1788.—This day I set out for the London Conference, having finished my second year at Bristol; my first care being to thank the Lord for the success with which He has favoured me in the past year. About one hundred members have been

added in Shepton-Mallet, and the chapel has been considerably enlarged.

[About this time, the case of George Lukins attracted considerable notice in Bristol, and in all the public papers. I personally knew him; a youth about eighteen, short in stature, and meagre in aspect. He had frequent fits or paroxysms, and was sometimes affected like the Pythonesses, or rather like the Furies, mentioned often by Herodotus and ancient writers. He was cruelly distorted, and uttered foul language; but was often heard to say, that he should be delivered, if seven ministers should pray with him. His words, at length, attracted notice, and the Rev. Mr. Easterbrook, Vicar of Temple church, collected that number to pray with Lukins in the vestry, and see what the Lord would do. They were gentlemen of superior education, and able ministers. Suffice to say, after the prayers of that morning, Lukins had no more of those horrid distortions, but was employed by Mr. R. Edwards, and others, as a bill-sticker. Mr. Easterbrook published a plain narrative of the case, an extract of which was published by Mr. Wesley in his Magazine. A physician of Bristol replied to Mr. Easterbrook, contending that Lukins was altogether an impostor. The Rev. Thomas M'Geary, A.M., principal of the Kingswood School, and one of the seven, was, as he himself told me, very much of the physician's mind; but, knowing Lukins to be altogether illiterate, he asked him a question in Latin, and Lukins at once replied in Latin. This carried conviction to the minds of all the gentlemen, that the contortions of the young man were effectuated by an evil influence; and, by consequence,

that Lukins was a demoniac. Of this Mr. Valton writes :—]

Some time ago I had a letter requesting me to make one of the seven ministers to pray over George Lukins. I cried out before God, "Lord, I am not fit for such a work; I have not faith to encounter a demoniac." It was powerfully applied, "Go in this thy might." The day before we were to meet, I went to see Lukins, and found such faith, that I could then encounter the seven devils which he said tormented him. I did not doubt but deliverance would come. Suffice to say, when we met, the Lord heard prayer, and delivered the poor man.

April 22d.—At Lady-day I was providentially removed from Almondsbury to a house adjacent to St. George's church, at Kingswood; a central abode to a little sphere of labour. Here we fitted up the best part of the house for a chapel; a beautiful large room, comfortable and commodious. We have preaching every Tuesday, and Mrs. Valton meets a class: thus, through mercy, good has already been done. I would gladly infer, that it is the earnest of a much greater work. My chief infirmities during the year have been a vertigo in my head, and an old infirmity in my ankle. If I walk much, it sometimes deprives me of sleep at night. Glory be to God that He does not quite lay me aside!

July 6th, 1789.—I this day set out for the Leeds Conference. My bodily infirmities still continue, especially in my ankle; so that now I can walk but little. Sometimes the loss of memory in the pulpit has obliged me to stop, and I have been ready to fall down. Under all my weaknesses, the Lord

still blesses my word in the conviction and conversion of souls.

My Methodistical year having closed, I would wish, like the cautious tradesman, to take stock, and see whether I have been a gainer or a loser in the past year. I trust, in the fear of God, I can say, that I have been, in some small degree, a gainer. I have reason to believe that love to my God has increased. Some humbling trials have exercised my patience, and proved it to be more than it was. I feel more indifferent to the praise or dispraise of men, and seem to be more loose than ever to the world. I feel the same love to souls, and desire to lay out my life to do them good, and advance the Redeemer's kingdom. I have no desire, no notion, of living for anything but to serve the church. Thus, through grace, I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me. To see the vineyard of the Lord flourish, and the vines send forth their tender grapes, is the joy and delight of my heart. I have no greater joy than to see the children of Zion walk in the truth. I can indeed say,

"Zion,—my first, my latest care,
The burden of my dying prayer,—
Shall live within my heart."

August 5th.—This day our Conference ended at Leeds. We had a very brotherly and affectionate Conference, and seemed perfectly united one to another. I still remained a supernumerary, being unable to resume the labours of a Circuit.

While at Leeds I consulted the good Dr. James Hamilton [who afterwards removed to practise in London] on my infirmities. He, as others, advised me to go to Scarborough. I did so, and was com-

fortably entertained at my old friend's, Mr Coulson's; whom I now found actively engaged for God as a leader and Circuit-steward. I received benefit from bathing, and drinking the water; and preached in the town and villages; but think the people were not so lively as before.

September 16th.—I this day arrived safe at home, and felt much thankfulness to God. On my journey, I was much assisted while preaching at York, Leeds, and other places. To God be praise and glory for ever! Amen.

On making my estimate towards the close of the year, I feel grateful that the Lord does not take His word from my lips. Though I cannot take a Circuit, through infirmities, yet, in general, I am enabled to preach about twenty times in a month: often indeed, with much pain and difficulty. I bless the Lord, that my heart is still in the work; I cannot forget the former days; and, if it were in my power, I would again go forth into the full work of saving souls. But known unto my God are the painful nights that I frequently have, as well as wearisome days. But all is for good. The Lord cannot err; nor can I choose. Glory be to His name for ever!

MR. VALTON'S Journal ends here. He did not write much in later years; and the greater part of what he wrote relates to places, and the texts on which he preached.

May 11th, 1790.—He opened the new chapel at Trowbridge, while I took his place in Bristol. On my return, I found the most grateful sentiments, that so blessed a man had been sent amongst them.

In the chamber, at Mr. Knapp's, where the preachers lodged, was a Bible placed for their use. On the blank leaf, between the Old and the New Testament, I found in Mr. Valton's own hand three texts:—

“Cursed be the man that doeth the work of the Lord negligently.” (Jeremiah xlvi. 10.)

“Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest My soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate.” (Jeremiah vi. 8.)

“My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” (Genesis vi. 3.)

At the Bristol Conference, 1790, Mr. Richard Andrews, of Redruth, having come on some Cornish affairs, Mr. Valton was requested, as indeed he had often been desired before, to spend a little time among the generous-hearted people of that county. The visit was very refreshing both to them and to him. The ground was new, and it seemed as if he could hardly leave it. Of this extended visit he wrote to Miss Knapp, of Worcester, as follows:—

“KINGSWOOD, *October 28th*, 1790.

“MY DEAR MISS KNAPP,

“THIS day I arrived at home, after being absent above eleven weeks in Cornwall. I was desired by Mr. Wesley, and the friends at the last Conference, to visit the Cornwall Circuits, which I have now done; and, I trust, with some profit to myself and others.

“I did not receive your letter till this afternoon, or I should most gratefully have acknowledged your favour before this time. I am exceedingly obliged to you, and your dear father, for taking so much thought about such an unworthy creature. It pains me that I cannot comply with your kind proposals [to come and reside among them]. We have in the

Bristol Circuit a greater prospect of good than ever ; so that I dare not move from this place. I can do nothing without the Lord. The cloudy pillar must move before me. Pray give my sincerest love to the friends at Stoke ; and say, that it would afford me great satisfaction to have them for neighbours, but Providence has ordered it otherwise.

“ And now, O Sukey, what a vain thing is life, without the enjoyment of God and of real religion ! Can anything here below supply the wants, and fill the vast desires, of an immortal spirit ? O, no ! See then that you desire, and seek, and labour for that precious pearl,—the love of God. All short of this leaves the soul under the anathema of a righteous God. The love of God is the life of the soul, the kernel of all true religion. Possessed of this, you may smile amid the wreck of nature and the crash of worlds. Do not rest short of this love. Preaching is good ; class-meeting is good, and so are all the means of grace ; but if we do not attain to love, through faith in the atoning blood, we shall never be admitted into the presence of God. My dear Sukey, have you justifying faith ? Have you peace with God ? Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart ? If not, O that you may now set out afresh, and never rest till you can say, ‘ Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee ! ’ May God bless and keep you from the snare of the fowler ! May He adorn your soul with every grace of His Holy Spirit, and give you a place at last among the honourable women !

“ I am, dear Miss Knapp,

“ Your most obliged and affectionate friend,

“ JOHN VALTON.”

This holy and venerable man, suffering under many infirmities, felt no decay of love and zeal. We find him making excursions for twelve or fourteen miles from home, to Bath, Paulton, Clutton, Pensford, &c. To Nailsea he often went. The Rev. Mr. Baddily and he were very intimate. This clergyman received the preachers, and attended the Bristol Conference. He and Dr. Coke gave us the sacrament at the close of the Conference, in 1790; Mr. Wesley, being fatigued, received the elements as the officiating ministers trod among the crowd. In the latter end of the next year, we find Mr. Valton paying his annual visit to his Gloucester and Worcester friends, as he writes to Mr. Knapp, of Worcester. This letter, as a cloud of others, is a specimen of his faithful dealing with his best friends:—

“September 21st, 1791.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“I INTEND, if the Lord permit, on the 29th instant, to occupy your bed-chamber. Give my love to the preacher in town, and, if it be agreeable, I will endeavour to preach that night. I hope also to be at Bewdley and at Tewkesbury.

“My dear friend, you are growing rich: do you also grow good? Beware that you be not surfeited with the cares of this world. Your life waxes old as doth a garment, and very soon all before you will be eternity. Beware, lest that day come upon you unawares. Christ says, ‘I come as a thief.’ O that you and I may be found ready! Look to it, my dear John, that you be pursuing after holiness. If we are found at death in a lukewarm state, the Redeemer will spue us out of His mouth. The

Lord stir us up to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Then, when Christ shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory.

“I am

“Your truly affectionate brother,

“JOHN VALTON.”

The next year he paid another visit to his numerous friends in Worcestershire, &c., &c. His letter, on his return, to the same friend, breathes the same spirit:—

“KINGSWOOD, *October 3d*, 1792.

“MY DEAR BROTHER KNAPP,

“THROUGH the kind mercy of God, I arrived safe at home yesterday, and found my family in health and peace; for which I desire to be unfeignedly thankful. It was a pleasure that Miss Knapp came to us in the evening, accompanied by our two nieces. May the Lord bless her coming to the profit of her soul!

“I found myself very comfortable while I was at Worcester: the appearance of good days rejoiced my heart. I believe you will see both an increase of the work, and an increase of grace in the people. And may I not hope that my dear brother will come in for his share? You are deeply immersed in worldly avocations and cares, and have need to pray, and to fear lest you should be overcharged with them, and the day of the Lord come upon you unawares. Your care for the temporal interests of your family is highly commendable; only there is danger lest it should absorb the needful care of your soul. I would recommend you to lessen those cares as much and as soon as you can, that you may attend the more to your spiritual interests.

“O my dear brother, you are now very far advanced on your journey; and eternity is suspended on a very few uncertain moments of time. You are clearly convinced, that without holiness you cannot see the Lord. Let it then be your chief care to secure an inheritance among all those that are sanctified; yea, as far as possible, recommend it, and promote it in your family. Call them together every morning and evening, for reading and prayer. The eyes of men are on you, and your children, and your servants. In so doing, you may leave a lasting impression on their minds, which may do them good in future years. And the God of peace and love bless both you and them with present and everlasting mercies!

“I am, dear Sir,

“Your affectionate friend and brother,

“JOHN VALTON.”

About this time a strong feeling was revived in the nation in favour of the West India slaves; and the religious world began to express their sentiments by abstaining from the use of sugar and rum. Mr. Valton, as was most likely, joined in this feeling, and in a pamphlet recommended abstinence from those articles.

While I was stationed in the west of England, I called two or three times to see him, and generally found him in apparent health and good spirits. He had learned to bear the thorn in the flesh with silent meekness. The last time I called was, perhaps, eight months before he died. Mrs. Valton now told me what I had no idea of before, that he sometimes lay for whole nights sleepless, and sweating with anguish and pain, from a carious ankle. When he came into

the parlour, he looked only a little impaired in his face, but was still able to preach. He seemed to regret a want of resolution to suffer amputation. The pains, meanwhile, superinduced a fever, which gradually consumed a good constitution. So silent and secret were his sufferings, that I did not hear of immediate danger till I heard of his death.

His dear wife, running a race, as it were, to the tomb with her husband, died a happy death on the 16th of November, 1793. No notes were taken of his last moments, except general testimonies of his faith and love, patience and resignation. From brother Viner, steward of the Portland chapel in Bristol, I gained the most satisfactory intelligence. Hearing that his exit was near, he went over to see him, and saw a glorious sight,—a dying worm as happy as grace could make him on earth. “Brother,” said he, “my soul for the last four days has been in a state of inward glory.” It was the river of life which watered his spirit with a constant stream of glory, peace, and joy. So John Valton, of blessed memory in the church, fell asleep in the Lord, on the 23d of March, 1794. At his death and funeral, all men seemed to feel but one sentiment, and to utter one wish,—to die as Mr. Valton died.

THE LIFE
OF
MR. GEORGE SHADFORD.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

I WAS born at Scotter, near Kirton in Lindsey, Lincolnshire, January 19th, 1739. When I was very young I was uncommonly afraid of death. At about eight or nine years of age, being very ill of a sore throat, and likely to die, I was awfully afraid of another world; for I felt my heart very wicked, and my conscience smote me for many things that I had done amiss.

As I grew up I was very prone to speak bad words, and often to perform wicked actions. We lived by a river side, where a part of my cruel sport was to hurt or kill the poor innocent fowls. One day, seeing a large flock of ducks sitting close together, I threw a stick with great violence, killed one of them upon the spot, and was highly diverted at seeing it die, till I saw the owner of it come out of his house, and threaten me severely. I was then sorely troubled, and knew not where to run. I knew I had sinned, and was greatly afraid lest it should come to my father's knowledge; therefore I durst not go home for a long time.

I was very prone to break the Sabbath, and, being fond of play, took every opportunity on Sunday to steal away from my father. In the forenoon, indeed, he always made me go to church with him; and when dinner was over, he made me and my sister read a chapter or two in the Bible, and charged me not to play in the afternoon; but notwithstanding all he said, if any person came in to talk with him, I took that opportunity to steal away, and he saw me not till evening, when he called me to an account.

I wished many times that the Rev. Mr. Smith, the minister of the parish, was dead, because he hindered our sports on the Lord's day. On Sunday, finding me and several others at football, he pursued me near a quarter of a mile. I ran until I was just ready to fall down; but coming to a bank, over which I tumbled, I escaped his hands for that time. My conscience always troubled me for these sins; but having a flow of animal spirits, and being tempted of the devil, and drawn by my companions and evil desires, I was always carried captive by them.

My mother insisted on my saying my prayers every night and morning, at least; and sent me to be catechised by the minister every Sunday. At fourteen years of age my parents sent me to the bishop to be confirmed; and at sixteen they desired me to prepare to receive the blessed sacrament. For about a month before it, I retired from all vain company, prayed, and read alone; whilst the Spirit of God set home what I read to my heart. I wept much in secret, was ashamed of my past life, and thought I would never spend my time on Sundays as I had done. When I approached the table of the Lord, it appeared so awful to me, that I was likely

to fall down, as if I was going to the judgment-seat of Christ. However, very soon my heart was melted down like wax before the fire. These good impressions continued about three months. For I often thought, "If I sin any more, I shall have eaten and drunk my own damnation, not discerning the Lord's body."

I broke off from all my companions, and retired to read on the Lord's day; sometimes into my chamber, at other times into the field; but very frequently into the churchyard, near which my father lived. I have spent among the graves two or three hours at a time, sometimes reading, and sometimes praying, until my mind seemed transported in tasting the powers of the world to come. So that I verily believe, had I been acquainted with the Methodists at that time, I should have soon found remission of sins, and peace with God. But I had not a single companion that feared God; all were light and trifling. Nay, I believe at that time the whole town was covered with darkness, and sat in the shadow of death.

Having none to guide or direct me, the devil soon persuaded me to take more liberty; and suggested that I had repented and reformed enough; that there was no need to be always so precise; that there were no young people in the town who did as I did; and that I might take a walk amongst them on Sundays in the afternoon without being wicked. I gave way to this fatal device of Satan, and, by little and little, lost all my good desires and resolutions, and soon became weak as in times past.

After this I became intimate with two young men that lived about a mile off, who were very often reading books that were entertaining to youth of a

carnal mind; such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and his *Art of Love*, &c.; which soon had a tendency to corrupt and debauch my mind. Now religious books became tasteless and insipid to me; my corruptions grew stronger and stronger, and, the blessed Spirit being grieved, my propensity to sin increased more than ever.

I was fond of wrestling, running, leaping, football, dancing, and such like sports; and I gloried in them, because I could excel most in the town and parish. At the age of twenty I was so active, that I seemed a compound of life and fire; and had such a flow of animal spirits, that I was never in my element, but when employed in such kind of sports.

About this time the Militia Act took place, and I thought I would learn the manual exercise; and, as we had no expectation of marching from home, it would be pretty employment for me at Easter or Whitsuntide. Four persons were allotted to serve in the militia at the place of my nativity. One of them, a young man, was much afraid to go. I asked him what he would give me to take his place. He thought at first I was only in jest; but when he saw I was in earnest, he gave all I asked, which was seven guineas. When my parents heard I was enlisted, they were almost distracted, especially my father. I was greatly afflicted in my mind, when I saw my parents in such trouble on my account. At their desire, therefore, I went back to undo what I had done; but to no purpose: so at the time appointed I was sworn in.

At the end of the year the militia was called off to Manchester, where we lay most of the winter. While we lay here I was taken ill of a fever, and found myself horribly afraid of death; but when I

recovered, my distress soon wore off again. One night, about nine o'clock, just as I was going to bed, I heard the drums beat to arms! We soon understood that an express was come to town for our company to march immediately to Liverpool; and that Thurot had landed at Carrickfergus, in Ireland. We were under arms immediately, marched all night, and arrived at Warrington about break of day, and at Liverpool the next evening.

My chief concern now was, for fear (if we should have an engagement) that my life and soul should be lost together; for I knew very well I was not prepared for death. The next summer we were quartered at Chester and Knutsford; and the winter following we lay at Gainsborough in Lincolnshire. This year I was often very miserable and unhappy. I well remember one day, when being exceedingly provoked by one of my comrades, I swore at him two bitter oaths by the name of God; a practice I had not been guilty of. Immediately I was, as it were, stabbed to the heart by a sword. I was sensible I had grievously sinned against God, and stopped directly. I believe I never swore another oath afterward.

I was often tempted this year to put an end to my life; for it was a year of sinning, and a year of misery. I was afraid to stand by a deep river, lest I should throw myself in. If I was on the edge of a great rock, I trembled, and thought I must cast myself down, and therefore was obliged to retreat suddenly. When I have been in the front gallery at church, I have many times been forced to withdraw backward, being horribly tempted to cast myself down headlong. It seemed as if Satan was permitted to wreak his malice upon me in an

uncommon manner, to make me miserable; but, glory be to God, I was wonderfully preserved by an invisible hand, in the midst of such dreadful temptations. At other times, when at prayer, or walking alone meditating, God hath graciously given me to taste of the powers of the world to come.

I always had a strong natural affection for my parents, and would do anything that was in my power for them. It happened, a little before I went from home in the militia, that my father was in some distress in temporal circumstances. This moved me much: I therefore gave him all the money I had received in order to go into the militia. Very frequently, during my absence from them, when the minister read over the fifth commandment in the church, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land," &c., with tears in my eyes I have said, "Lord, incline my heart to keep this law;" always believing a curse would attend disobedient, undutiful children.

When our company lay in quarters at Gainsborough, I went with a sergeant to the place where the Methodists frequently preached, which was the old hall belonging to Sir Nevil Hickman. We did not go with a design of getting any good for our souls; but to meet two young women, (who sometimes frequented that place at one o'clock,) in order to walk with them in the afternoon. When we came there, we found the persons we wanted; but I soon forgot them after the preacher began public worship. I was much struck with his manner. He took out his hymn-book, and the people sang a hymn. After this he began to pray extempore, in such a manner as I had never heard or been used to before. I thought it to be a most excellent

prayer. After this he took his little Bible out of his pocket, read over his text, and put it into his pocket again. I marvelled at this, and thought within myself, "Will he preach without a book too?"

He began immediately to open the Scriptures; and compared spiritual things with spiritual, in such a light as I had never heard before. I did not suppose he had very learned abilities, or that he had studied either at Oxford or Cambridge; but something struck me, "This is the gift of God; this is the gift of God." I thought it was the Lord's doing, and marvellous in my eyes.

The preacher spoke much against drunkenness, swearing, &c.; but I thought I was not much guilty of such sins. At last he spoke very closely against pleasure-takers, and proved that such were dead while they live. I thought, "If what he says be true, I am in a most dreadful condition." I thought again, "This must be true; for he proves it from the word of God." Immediately I found a kind of judgment-seat set up in my conscience, where I was tried, cast, and condemned; for I knew I had been seeking happiness in the pleasures of the world and in the creature all my days, not in the Creator and Redeemer of my soul, the only central point of bliss. I revolved over and over what I had heard, as I went from the preaching; and resolved, "If this be Methodist preaching, I will come again;" for I received more light from that single sermon, than from all that ever I heard in my life before.

I thought no more about the girls whom I went to meet; and found I had work enough to take care of my own soul. I now went every Sunday

when there was preaching, at half-past one, to the same place; and continued so to do most of the time we lay at Gainsborough. It was not long before my comrades and acquaintance took notice of my religious turn of mind, and began to ridicule me. I was surprised at this; for I (ignorantly) thought, "If I become serious, every one will love and admire." I still continued to go to the preaching, till the soldiers and others having repeatedly reproached and laughed at me, I began to think I had not sufficient strength to travel to heaven, as I was connected with such a set of sinners.

I then made a vow to Almighty God, that if He would spare me until that time twelvemonth, (at which time I should be at liberty from the militia, and intended to return home,) I would then serve Him. So I resolved to venture another year in the old way, damned or saved. O, what a mercy that I am not in hell! that God did not take me at my word, and cut me off immediately! From this time the Spirit of God was grieved; and consequently I was left to fall into sin as bad or worse than ever.

After this we marched, and were quartered near Dartford, in Kent, where we continued eleven weeks. This place seemed to me the most profane for swearing, cursing, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, &c., that ever I saw in any part of England. I was so affected, that I went to the minister of the parish, and let him know what wretched work of drinking and fighting we had in the taverns in service-time on Sunday; and desired him to see to it. He did so, and strictly forbade any liquor to be sold during church-service for the future. It was at this place

the Lord arrested me again with strong convictions ; so that I was obliged to leave my comrades at noon-day, and ran up into my chamber, where I threw myself upon my knees, and wept bitterly. I thought, "Sin, cursed sin, will be my ruin." I was ready to tear the very hair from my head, thinking I must perish at last, and that my sins would sink me lower than the grave.

While I was in this agony in my chamber about noon, the landlady came into it, as she was passing into her own, and found me upon my knees. I was not in the least ashamed. She said nothing to me then ; but at night took me to task, and asked me if I was a Wesleyan, or Whitefieldite. I said, "Madam, what do you mean ? Do you reproach me because I pray, because I pray ?" She paused. I said again, "Madam, do you never pray to God ? I think I never saw you at church, or any other place of worship, these ten weeks I have been at your house." She answered, "No, the parson and I have quarrelled, and therefore I do not choose to go to hear him." I replied, "A poor excuse, madam ! And will you also quarrel with God ?" Wherever I travelled, I found the Methodists were everywhere spoken against by wicked and ungodly persons of every denomination ; and the more I looked into the Bible, I was convinced that they were the people of God.

Our next route was to Dover, where we tarried a month. Here the soldiers laughed me out of the little form of prayer I had ; for I used always to kneel down by the bed side before I got into it. This form I dropped, and only said my prayers in bed. Our next remove was to Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, where we abode the winter ; and in spring went to Epworth, in which place I was discharged.

Soon after my arrival at home, several young persons seemed extremely glad to see me, and proposed a dance, to express their joy at our first meeting. Though I was not fond of this, yet, to oblige them, I complied, much against my conscience. We danced until break of day; and as I was walking from the tavern to my father's house, (about a hundred yards,) a thought came to my mind, "What have I been doing this night? Serving the devil!" I considered what it had cost me; and, upon the whole, I thought, "The ways of the devil are more expensive than the ways of the Lord. It will cost a man more to damn his soul than to save it." I had not walked many steps farther before something spoke to my heart, "Remember thy promise." Immediately it came strongly into my mind, "It is now a year ago since that promise was made, 'If Thou wilt spare me until I get home, I will serve Thee.'" Then that passage of Solomon came to my mind, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for He hath no pleasure in fools: pay that thou vowest." I thought, "I will. I will serve the devil no more." But then it was suggested to my mind, "Stay another year, until thou art married, and settled in the world, and then thou mayest be religious." That was directly followed with, "If I do, God will surely cut me off, and send my soul to hell, after so solemn a vow made." From that time I never danced more, but immediately began to seek happiness in God.

A circumstance happened which tended to fix me in this resolution. Before I went into the militia, I was somewhat engaged to a young woman that lived in Nottinghamshire; and when I was at Manchester I wrote to her, but received no answer, which much

surprised me. After I returned home, I went to see her, but found she was dead and buried. This shocked me very much. I desired a friend to show me the place where she was interred. When I came to it, and was musing, I turned my eye to the left hand, and saw a new stone with this inscription:—

“In bloom of youth into this town I came.
Reader, repent; thy lot may be the same.”

I felt as if something thrilled through me. I read and wept, and read and wept again. I looked at the stone, and understood it was a young woman aged twenty-one. Upon inquiry, I found she had made great preparations, in gay clothing, in order to have a good dance, as she called it, at the fair held here. She talked much of the pleasure she expected before the time came. At last it arrived, and as she was tripping over the room with her companions, until twelve o'clock at night, she was suddenly taken ill. And, behold, how unexpected! O, how unwelcome! death struck her. She was put immediately to bed, and never left it until brought to this spot to be buried. No one can conceive how I felt, while I was meditating on the death of these two young women. The one I had tenderly loved. The other, although a stranger to me, had lived about two miles from the place of my nativity. “Well,” thought I, “a little while ago, these were talking, walking, pieces of clay, like myself; but now they are gone to the house appointed for all living.” I wept, and turned my back; but I never forgot that call to the day of my conversion to God.

At this time both my parents were taken very ill, which was cause of great trouble to me; for I was much afraid they would die. One day while I was

greatly distressed about them, and knew not what to do, at last it came into my mind, "Go to prayer for them." I went upstairs, shut myself in, and, if ever I prayed in my life from my heart, I did it at this time. I remember in particular, that I prayed to the Lord to raise them up again, and spare them four or five years longer. This prayer He graciously condescended both to hear and answer; for the one lived about four, the other near five, years afterward, and were truly converted to God.

I have looked upon it as a kind providence that brought a Methodist farmer to the place of my nativity, while I was absent in the militia, who received the Methodist preachers, and had formed a little society just ready for me when I got home. I was now determined to seek happiness in God; and therefore went constantly to church and sacrament, and to hear the Methodist preachers, to pray, and read the Scriptures. I thought, "I will be good. I am determined to be good." But, alas! in about six or eight weeks, instead of being very good, I saw my heart was corrupt, and nothing but sin. I read at night different prayers. Sometimes I prayed for humility or meekness; at other times, for faith, patience, or chastity: whatever I thought I wanted most. I was thus employed, when the family were in bed, for hours together. And many times, whilst reading, the tears ran from my eyes, so that I could read no further; and when I found my heart softened, and could open it to Almighty God, there seemed a secret pleasure in repentance itself; with a hope springing up that God would save me, and bestow His pardoning mercy. While I was thus employed in seeking the Lord, and drawn by the Spirit of God, I esteemed it more than my necessary food.

A little after this, I went to see an uncle at East-Ferry; and as we were reading the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he asked me if the latter part of that chapter belonged to St. Paul in his converted state. I said, I could not tell. "But if it was St. Paul's converted state," I said, "it is exactly mine. 'For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.'" I then began to flatter myself, saying, "Surely I am converted. I trust I am in a safe state." And it is well if hundreds do not rest here.

But the Lord did not suffer me to take convictions for conversion. After those pleasant drawings, I had sorrow and deep distress. My sins pressed me sore, and the hand of the Lord was very heavy upon me. Thus I continued until Sunday, May 5th, 1762: coming out of church, the farmer that received the preachers told me a stranger was to preach at his house. I went to hear him, and was pleased and much affected. He gave notice that he would preach again in the evening. In the meantime I persuaded as many neighbours as I could to go. We had a full house, and several were greatly affected while he published his crucified Master. Toward the latter part of the sermon I trembled; I shook; I wept. I thought, "I cannot stand it: I shall fall down amidst all this people." O, how gladly would I have been alone to weep! for I was tempted with shame.

I well remember he called out at last, and said, "Is there any young man here about my age willing to give up all and come to Christ? Let him come, and welcome; for all things are now ready." I

thought before this he was preaching to me ; but now I was sure he spoke to me in particular. I stood guilty and condemned, like the publican in the temple. I cried out, (so that others might hear, being pierced to the heart with the sword of the Spirit,) "God be merciful to me a sinner!" No sooner had I expressed these words, but by the eye of faith (not with my bodily eyes) I saw Christ, my Advocate, at the right hand of God, making intercession for me. I believed He loved me, and gave Himself for me. In an instant the Lord filled my soul with Divine love, as quick as lightning ; so suddenly did the Lord, whom I sought, come to His temple. Immediately my eyes flowed with tears, and my heart with love. Tears of joy and sorrow ran mingled down my cheeks. O, what sweet distress was this ! I seemed as if I could weep my life away in tears of love. I sat down in a chair ; for I could stand no longer. And these words ran through my mind twenty times over : "Marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." I knew not then that these words were in the Scripture, until I opened on them in the Psalms, when I got home.

As I walked home along the streets, I seemed to be in paradise. When I read my Bible, it seemed an entirely new book. When I meditated on God and Christ, angels or spirits ; when I considered good or bad men, any or all the creatures which surrounded me on every side ; everything appeared new, and stood in a new relation to me. I was in Christ a new creature ; old things were done away, and all things become new. I lay down at night in peace with a thankful heart, because the Lord had redeemed me, and given me peace with God and all

mankind. I thought I never should be troubled with the sin that did most easily beset me; and said within myself, "The enemies I have seen this day, I shall see them no more for ever." I felt the truth of those words:—

"How happy are they
Who the Saviour obey,
And have laid up their treasure above!
Tongue cannot express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love.

"On the wings of His love
I was carried above
All sin, and temptation, and pain;
I could not believe
I ever should grieve,
I ever should suffer again."

But no sooner had I peace within, than the devil and wicked men began to roar without, and pour forth floods of lies and scandal, in order to drown the young child. And no marvel; for the devil had lost one of the main pillars of his kingdom in that parish; and therefore he did not leave a stone unturned, that he might cast an odium upon the work of God in that place. But none of these things moved me; for I was happy, happy in my God; clothed with the sun, and the moon under my feet; raised up, and made to sit in heavenly, holy, happy places in Christ Jesus.

In a fortnight after I was joined in society. When I joined, there were twelve in the society, chiefly old people. This was a little trial to me at first: but I thought it my duty to cast in my lot amongst them; for I was certain the Methodists, under God, were the happy instruments of my salvation. Therefore I knew I could not better recommend the good cause

to others, than by joining them, and letting my light shine before men, that others might take knowledge I had been with Jesus. It is really marvellous, that all who are awakened have not resolution enough heartily to unite in fellowship with the people of God. It is very rare that such make any progress. The blessed Spirit is grieved, and they remain barren and unfruitful. Were they faithful in obeying the Spirit of God, in taking up their cross, and setting an example to others, they might bring much glory to God, as well as obtain great peace and happiness to their own souls.

My greatest concern now was for my relations. I had a father and mother, sister and brother, all strangers to God. My father was sixty years old, and my mother near it. I scarcely ever went to the throne of grace without bearing them before the Lord in earnest prayer, and found great encouragement so to do. One night I took courage to speak to them, in as humble a manner as I could, with respect to family prayer. I told them, I believed they had brought us up in the fear of God as far as they knew, but we never had any family prayer. I added, "If it is agreeable to you, I will endeavour to pray in the best manner I can." On their consenting, we went into another room. I had not spoken many words in prayer before they were both in tears. When we arose from prayer, we wept over one another; and what seemed to affect them most was, to be taught by their child, when they ought to have taught me.

I continued to pray for them every night and morning for half a year. My father at length began to be in deep distress. I have listened, and heard him in private crying for mercy, like David out of

the horrible pit and miry clay, "O Lord, deliver my soul!" I began to reprove, exhort, and warn others wherever I came. My father was sometimes afraid, if I reproved the customers who came to our shop, it would give offence, and we should lose all our business. Upon which I said, "Father, let us trust God for once with all our concerns, and let us do this in the way of our duty, from a right principle; and if He deceives us, we will never trust Him more; for none ever trusted the Lord that were confounded." In less than a twelvemonth, instead of losing, we had more business than ever we had before.

I began now to pray in all our meetings, private and public; and the Lord mercifully heard, to the conviction and conversion of several, who were savingly brought to God, before I regularly attempted to exhort or preach. I had then no notion of being a preacher. I only thought it my duty to do good, and all the good I could; to occupy or use my one talent, until my Lord should come. I believed that was the religion of Jesus Christ, who went about doing good, and worked while it was day. Indeed, the love of God constrained me to speak. I had such a view of the fallen, miserable state of lost, perishing sinners, that I thought if I could be an instrument of saving but one soul, it would be worth all my pains, even all my life long. Our society increased from twelve to forty members in a short time; for the Lord gave me several of my companions in sin to walk with me in the ways of holiness.

The first time I exhorted was in the society. The class-leader put a hymn-book into my hand, and desired me to give a word of exhortation. The moment he did this I was seized with trembling;

but instantly my soul was filled with the love and power of God. I believe the few simple words that I spoke were made a blessing, more or less, to every one there. An old man, one of the first converts in the town, advised me to give myself much to reading and prayer, for he believed God had some work for me to do. The preacher had appointed me to meet a class before this, which often proved both a cross and a blessing to my soul. I now exhorted my friends, neighbours, enemies, and whosoever fell in my way, to flee from the wrath which is to come.

One Sunday morning, as I was exhorting in the farmer's house, some word cut my father to the heart. He fell back into the chair by which he stood, and wept, and was much distressed. On the evening of the same day he said to me, "I know not what is the matter with me. I seem quite stupid and foolish; nay, I seem lost." I answered, "Then you will not be long before you are found. Father, you are not far from the kingdom of God. Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost."

The next day, about twelve o'clock, I came into the room where he was sitting, with a Bible upon his knee. He was reading in the Psalms of David. I saw the tears running down his cheeks; yet there appeared a joy in his countenance. I said, "Pray, father, what now? What now? What is the matter?" He instantly answered, "I have found Christ; I have found Christ at last. Upwards of sixty years I have lived without Him in the world, in sin and ignorance. I have been all the day idle, and entered not into His vineyard till the eleventh hour. O, how merciful was He to spare me, and hire me at last! He hath set my soul at liberty. O, praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul;

and all that is within me, bless His holy name!" I left him rejoicing in God his Saviour, and retired to praise God for answering my prayers.

My mother was convinced, by hearing me and an old man converse about our souls together in private. She used to listen to our conversation, and the Lord showed her the state she was in: She had been a moral woman, and had the fear of God, so as to act conscientiously in what she did as far as she knew. But when she was thoroughly awakened, her convictions were very deep: so that many times, when I have been praying for her, she hath been like a person convulsed; at other times like a woman in labour, travailing through the pangs of the new birth. At last the Lord gave her an assurance of His pardoning love under the preaching of Mr. Samuel Meggitt.

About this time I went to see my sister, near Epworth, to inform her what the Lord had done for my soul. At first, when I conversed with her, she thought I was out of my mind; but at length hearkened to me. She told me a remarkable dream she had some time before, in which she had been warned to lay aside the vain practice of card-playing, which she had been fond of. After I had returned home, she began to revolve in her mind what I had said; and thought, "How can my brother have any view to deceive me? What interest can he have in so doing? Certainly my state is worse than I imagine. He sees my danger, and I do not. Besides, he seems to be another man; he does not look, or speak, or act as he used to do." She therefore could not rest until she came to my father's house; and before she returned, was thoroughly convinced she was a miserable sinner.

In a short time I visited her again, and asked her to go to hear Samuel Meggitt preach. She heard him with great satisfaction. Afterward there was a lovefeast, and she, being desirous to stay, at my request, was admitted. As the people were singing a hymn on Christ's coming to judgment, she looked up, and saw all the people singing with a smile upon their countenance. She thought, "If Christ was to come to judgment now, I shall go to hell, and they will all go to heaven." Instantly she sunk down as if she was dying, and lay some time before she was able to walk home. She continued praying and waiting upon God for about a fortnight; when one day going to the well to fetch water, (like the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well,) she found the God of Jacob open to her thirsty soul His love, as a well of water springing up within her unto everlasting life; and as she returned from the well, her soul magnified the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced in God her Saviour.

So merciful was the Lord to my family, that four of them were brought to God in less than a year. My mother lived a happy witness of the love and favour of God three years, and died in great peace. My father lived upwards of four years, happy in God his Saviour, and used to say, "Now I am a little child turned of four years old:" meaning (although near sixty-five) that he had never lived to any good purpose, or to the glory of God, before. About half a year before his death, the Lord circumcised his heart, so that I believe he loved God with all his heart, and received a constant abiding witness that the blood of Christ had cleansed him from all sin.

When he was taken ill, I was preaching in Yorkshire; and as I returned home, it was impressed upon

my mind that my father was sick or dying. When I came near home, I met two friends, one of whom told me, he believed my father lay a-dying. As soon as he saw me, he was much affected; for he longed to see me before he died. He said to me, "Son, I am glad to see thee; but I am going to leave thee; I am going to God; I am going to heaven." I said, "Father, are you sure of it?" "Yes," said he, "I am sure of it. I know that my Redeemer liveth. Upward of four years ago the Lord pardoned all my sins; and half a year ago He gave me that perfect love that casts out all fear. At present I feel a heaven within me. Surely this heaven below must lead to heaven above." When I perceived he was departing, I kneeled down by him, and with fervent prayer commended his soul to God; and I praise His holy name that he died in the full assurance of faith.

My sister lived a faithful witness of the love of Jesus sixteen years. She was remarkable for faith and prayer; and enjoyed the perfect love of God several years before her death. She had eight or nine children; had nothing of this world's goods to leave them; but left them a good example, and sent up prayers to heaven for them; and wished more to see grace in their hearts, than that she had thousands of gold and silver to leave them. She used to say to me, "Brother, I believe all my children will be saved." When I seemed to doubt it, she answered, "But I pray in faith; and whatsoever we ask in prayer, believing, we shall receive." Her eldest daughter died before her a little, aged twenty-one, in the triumph of faith. And it is remarkable, since her death, her children, as they grow up, one after another, are convinced of sin, brought to God, and join the society.

I had a relation, Alice Shadford, who continued in earnest prayer for my conversion for twenty years, as she told me; and I believe that God heard and answered her prayers in my behalf. She was indeed a mother in Israel, lived a single life, and enjoyed the fear and love of God above fifty years. She died full of days, and full of grace, aged ninety-six years. I often think there is scarcely a person converted upon earth, but it is in answer to some pious person's prayer, whom the Lord hath stirred up to plead for them.

I had many doubts of my call to preach at first. I knew it was my duty to do good in the little way I began with. But the important work of going forth publicly to call sinners to repentance made me tremble. After a great struggle in my mind, at last I resolved to make the trial. The first place I went to from home was a little place called Wildsworth. I believe there were not any there that knew God at that time. On Saturday night I continued three or four hours, until past midnight, in fervent prayer, that the Lord might point out my way. On Sunday morning I set out to the little village alone; only I believed the Friend of sinners was with me. As soon as I came near there, I gave notice of my errand; and quickly we had near a house full of people. In the first prayer I was much assisted, and some present began to drop tears. Under the preaching several appeared cut to the heart; and the Lord blessed His word to many. As soon as I had done, I gave notice that I would preach in the street at East-Ferry. Several attended me thither; and when I had concluded, I went home perfectly satisfied that God had called me to the work.

But very soon I was sadly discouraged, seeing my

own ignorance, and feeling my weakness. I reasoned with myself and Satan, until I thought the Lord required impossibilities; that He gathered where He had not strewed. I would go to preach His word, but He had not given me a talent sufficient for the important work. "How happy," thought I, "are they in a private capacity, who have nothing to do but to be faithful in their little sphere, and have not the charge of the souls of others!" I gave way to this kind of reasoning for a month; till at times I made myself almost as miserable as a demon. Then the Lord laid His chastening rod upon me, and afflicted me for a season, and showed me the worth of poor souls perishing in the broad way to destruction. After this I was made willing to go wherever He pleased to send me. So that when I began again to speak for Him, His word was like the flaming sword, which turned every way, to every heart; for sinners trembled and fell before it, and were both convinced and converted to God. I was often amazed at the condescension of God, and His favour to me in all my weakness. I was like Gideon. I required token after token. As soon as the Lord made way, and opened a door in any place, I formed a society, and got the travelling preachers to take it under their care as soon as I could.

But by loud and long preaching, by walking more and farther than my strength could bear, by sitting up praying and reading many times until morning, I was soon worn down, and appeared to be in a swift decline. At last I fell into a severe fever that continued seven weeks; and I expected to die, as did most that saw me. I never had any affliction in which I enjoyed so much of the presence of God as

this. He was with me every moment night and day. I continually saw Him who is invisible, and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. O, how did I desire to depart and to be with Christ! I had such views of my Father's house, the glory and happiness of that place, that I longed to be there. But one day as I was in bed, full of the love of God, I had a visionary sight of two prodigious fields, in which I saw thousands of living creatures praying and wrestling in different places, in little companies. It appeared to me that I must be employed in that work too, and must go to help them. Whilst I was considering what this could mean, I took up my Bible, and opened on these words in the Psalms, "Thou shalt not die, but live, and declare the work of the Lord." I now believed I should recover, but was not so resigned to live as to die. I compared myself to a ship tossed upon the tempestuous ocean, for weeks and months together in great danger; at last I get in sight of the wished-for haven; when suddenly a contrary wind drives me back to sea again. From this time I began gradually to recover.

After this I preached occasionally for part of two years in the Epworth Circuit; and was encouraged by my friends, and by seeing the work of God prosper. When Mr. Wesley came into that part of the country, he asked me if I was willing to give myself up wholly to the great work of saving souls from death. I replied that it was my desire so to do. Accordingly, at the Bristol Conference following, I was appointed to labour in the west of Cornwall for the year 1768. This was a good year to me. I often wondered how the people could bear with my weakness; but the Lord owned His poor servant, and gave me to see the fruit of my labours. I was

one day in great danger of losing my life, the first time I crossed Hale ; but two men at a little distance suddenly called aloud, bidding me stop and come back. Had I gone a few yards further, myself and my horse must inevitably have been swallowed up in a quicksand. I felt thankful, and went on admiring and adoring the watchful providence of God, my gracious and almighty Deliverer.

I was much affected this year with a remarkable instance of the sudden death of a backslider, who lived between Truro and Redruth. He had known the love of God, and walked circumspectly in the light of His countenance for seven years, and was diligent in every means of grace. But he began to give way to lightness and a trifling spirit. After this he refused to meet his brethren in band, and seldom met in class, until at length he entirely gave up both. He came to preaching sometimes, but began to be very free with his carnal neighbours, and shy with the people of God ; till at last he fell into his old besetting sin, drunkenness, which he had conquered for seven years. One Sabbath-day he went with some carnal men to an ale-house, or gin-shop, and continued there until they all got drunk. At last they resolved to go home, though it was dark. Two of them lay down in the road ; but the backslider was determined to go home alone ; and as there were pits along the road-side about fifteen or twenty fathoms deep, he dropped into one of them, and was crushed to death, leaving a wife and children in deep distress. Many were greatly affected at this alarming case, and some backsliders who were acquainted with him were stirred up to return to Him from whom they had revolted.

The next year I laboured in Kent with Mr. Jaco.

God gave me spiritual children here also: it was indeed a very trying year, but very profitable to my own soul.

In 1770 I was sent to Norwich, and appointed to be the assistant; which was a great exercise of my mind, and hath been so ever since. We had a revival in Norwich, where several were converted to God. I went to Lynn occasionally this year, and stayed a fortnight or three weeks at a time, where the Lord blessed my labours, so that I joined thirty in society, of whom sixteen or eighteen had experienced the goodness of God to their souls.

After staying two years at Norwich, I went to the Leeds Conference, where I first saw Captain Webb. When he warmly exhorted preachers to go to America, I felt my spirit stirred within me to go; more especially when I understood that many hundreds of precious souls were perishing through lack of knowledge, scattered up and down in various parts of the woods, and had none to warn them of their danger. When I considered that we had in England many men of grace and gifts far superior to mine, but few seemed to offer themselves willingly, I then saw my call the more clearly. Accordingly, Mr. Rankin and I offered ourselves to go the spring following; when I received a letter from Mr. Wesley, informing me that I was to embark with Captain Webb at Bristol.

When I arrived at Peel, where the ship lay, an awful dream I had six years before was brought to my mind. I thought in my sleep I received a letter from God, which I opened and read, the substance of which was as follows:—"You must go to preach the Gospel in a foreign land, unto a fallen people, a mixture of nations." I thought I was conveyed to

the place where the ship lay, in which I was to embark, in an instant. The wharf and ship appeared as plain to me as if I were awake. I replied, "Lord, I am willing to go in Thy name; but I am afraid a people of different nations and languages will not understand me." An answer to this was given: "Fear not; for I am with thee." I awoke, awfully impressed with the presence of God upon my mind, and was really full of Divine love; and a relish of it remained upon my spirit for many days. I could not tell what this meant, and revolved these things in my mind for a long time. But when I came to Peel, and saw the ship and wharf, then all came fresh to my mind. I said to brother Rankin, "This is the ship, the place, and the wharf, which I saw in my dream six years ago." All these things were a means of strengthening and confirming me that my way was of God.

We took leave of our native land, and set sail on Good-Friday; often singing in our passage these words,

"The watery deep I pass,
With Jesus in my view;"

and after a comfortable passage of eight weeks we arrived safe at Philadelphia, where we were kindly received by a hospitable and loving people. In a few days I crossed the river Delaware, and went to Trenton; and laboured in the Jerseys with success for a month, adding thirty-five to the society, many of whom were much comforted with the presence of the Lord.

In my tour through the Jerseys, coming to a place called Mount-Holly, I met John Brainerd, brother to the devoted pious David Brainerd, missionary to the Indians. He appeared to be a very humble,

erious man. He heard me preach twice in his preaching-house in that place, and asked me to go to an Indian town which lay twenty miles from thence, and said he would collect together all the Indians and white people he could from different parts. I fully purposed in my mind to go the first opportunity; but, being suddenly called to labour at New York, was prevented. We conversed about two hours very profitably, about his brother David, and the Indians he had the care of; about Methodism and inward religion. He heartily wished us good luck, and said he believed the Lord had sent us upon the continent to revive inward religion amongst them.

One day a friend took me to see a hermit in the woods. After some difficulty we found his hermitage, which was a little place like a hogstye, built of several pieces of wood, covered with bark of trees; and his bed consisted of dry leaves. There was a narrow beaten path, about twenty or thirty yards in length, by the side of it, where he frequently walked to meditate. If one offered him food, he would take it; but if money was offered him, he would be very angry. If anything was spoken to him which he did not like, he broke out into a violent passion. He had lived in this cell seven cold winters; and after all his prayers, counting his beads, and separating from the rest of mankind, still corrupt nature was all alive within him. Alas! alas! what will it avail us whether we are in England or Ireland, Scotland or America; whether we live amongst mankind, or retire into a hermitage; if we still carry with us our own hell, our corrupt evil tempers? The devil will only laugh at us, while we are strangers to true repentance, and living faith in the blood of the

Redeemer. It is this alone that can remove our guilt, purify the soul, and give us victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; and make us comfortable in our own souls, and useful to others. As no man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel, so neither doth God bestow upon us any talent to hide it in the earth, in a cave, or cell.

My next remove was to New York, where I spent four months with great satisfaction. I went thither with fear and trembling; and was much cast down from a sense of my unworthiness, and inability to preach the Gospel to a polite and sensible people. But the Lord, who hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are wise, and weak things to confound the things which are mighty, condescended to make use of His poor weak servant for the revival of religion at that city. I added fifty members in those four months; about twenty of whom found the pardoning love of God, and several backsliders were restored to their first love. A vehement desire was excited in the hearts of believers after all the mind of Christ, or the whole image of God. I left in New York two hundred and four members in society.

I had a very comfortable time for four or five months that I spent in Philadelphia with a loving, teachable people. The blessing of the Lord was with us of a truth, and many were really converted to God. There was a sweet loving spirit in this society; for nothing appeared amongst them but peace and brotherly love. They had kept prayer-meetings in different parts of the city for some time before I went to it, which had been a great means of begetting life amongst the people of God as well as others. I left in society, when I went

from this place, two hundred and twenty-four members.

A remarkable circumstance happened just as I was leaving Philadelphia. When I went to the inn where my horse was, and had just entered into the yard, I observed a man fixing his eyes upon me, and looking earnestly until he seemed ashamed, and blushed very much. At length he came up to me, and abruptly said, "Sir, I saw you in a dream last night. When I saw your back, as you came into the yard, I thought it was you; but now that I see your face, I am sure you are the person. I have been wandering up and down this morning until now seeking you." "Saw me in a dream," said I: "what do you mean?" "Sir," said he, "I did. I am sure I did. And yet I never saw you with my bodily eyes before. Yesterday in the afternoon I left this city, and went as far as Schuylkill river, intending to cross it; but began to be very uneasy, and could not go over it: I therefore returned to this place, and last night, in my sleep, saw you stand before me; when a person from another world bade me seek for you until I found you, and said, you would tell me what I must do to be saved. He said also that one particular mark by which I might know you was, that you preached in the streets and lanes in the city." Having spoken this, he immediately asked, "Pray, sir, are not you a minister?" (By which name they frequently call the preachers in America.) I said, "Yes, I am a preacher of the Gospel; and it is true that I preach in the streets and lanes of the city, which no other preacher in Philadelphia does. I preach also every Sunday morning at nine o'clock in Newmarket." I then asked him to step across the way to a friend's house;

where I asked him from whence he came. He answered, "From the Jerseys." I asked, had he any family. He said, "Yes, a wife and children." I asked, where he was going. He said he did not know. I likewise asked, "Does your wife know where you are?" He said, "No. The only reason why I left home was, I had been very uneasy and unhappy for half a year past, and could not rest any longer, but must come to Philadelphia."

I replied, "I first advise you to go back to your wife and children, and take care of them by obeying God in the order of His providence. It is unnatural to leave them in this manner; for even the birds of the air provide for their young. Secondly, you say you are unhappy: therefore the thing you want is religion, the love of God, and of all mankind; righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. When this takes possession of your heart, so as to destroy your evil tempers, and root out the love of the world, anger, pride, self-will, and unbelief, then you will be happy. The way to obtain this is, you must forsake all your sins, and heartily believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. When you return to the Jerseys, go to hear the Methodist preachers constantly, and pray to the Lord to bless the word; and if you heartily embrace it, you will become a happy man."

While I was exhorting him, the tears ran plentifully from his eyes. We then all kneeled down to pray; and I was enabled to plead and intercede with much earnestness for his soul, and to commend them all to God. When we arose from our knees, I shook him by the hand: he wept much, and had a broken heart; but did not know how to part with me. He then set out to go to his wife in the Jerseys; and I

for Baltimore, in Maryland: and I saw him no more; but I trust I shall meet him in heaven.

I cannot but remark here, that God sometimes steps out of the common way of His providence to help some souls; especially a poor ignorant person, who wants to serve Him, but knows not how, and hath a degree of His fear. When such persons pray sincerely to the Lord, He will direct, by His providence, to some person or book, to some means or other, by which they may be instructed and brought to the knowledge of the truth.

That night I preached at Chester, and in two days I arrived on the borders of Maryland. I then crossed Susquehannah river, and preached to a loving congregation of blacks and whites, who were remarkably affected; and the next day at Deer-Creek, to a large company of negroes and others. I had hurt my leg by a fall, and was obliged to preach sitting; but the Lord made His word spirit and life to the people.

Soon after this I came to Baltimore; where I had not been many weeks before a young man came to me with two horses, and entreated me to go to his father's house, about four miles from Baltimore, to visit his poor distressed brother, who was chained in bed, and whose case they did not understand, supposing him to be mad, or possessed with a devil. When I entered the room, I found the young man in the depth of despair. I told him Christ died for sinners; that He came to seek and to save lost sinners; yea, that He received the chief of sinners; and added, "There is no other name given under heaven, whereby men can be saved, but in and through our Lord Jesus Christ." The young man laid hold of those words, "The name of Jesus Christ;" and said he would call upon Jesus Christ.

as long as he lived; and found some little hope within him, but knew no more how he must be saved than an Indian.

I sang a verse or two of a hymn, and then his father, and mother, and brethren joined me in prayer. The power of God was amongst us of a truth: we had melted hearts, and weeping eyes, and indeed there was a shower of tears amongst us. I know not when I have felt more of the Divine presence, or power to wrestle with God in prayer, than at this time. After we rose from our knees, I gave an exhortation; and continued to go to preach in their house every week or fortnight for some time. They loosed the young man that was bound; and the Lord shortly after loosed him from the chain of his sins, and set him at perfect liberty. He soon began to warn his neighbours, and to exhort sinners to flee from the wrath which is to come; and before I left the country, he began to travel a Circuit, and was remarkably successful. I followed him in Kent in Delaware; and verily believe he was instrumental in awakening a hundred sinners that year.

I was appointed the next year for Virginia, and was much dejected in spirit. I often felt much of this before a remarkable manifestation of the power and presence of God. In preaching and prayer the Lord strips and empties before He fills. I saw myself so vile and worthless as I cannot express; and wondered that God should employ me in His work. I was amazed when I first began to preach in Virginia! for I seldom preached a sermon but some were convinced and converted, often three or four at a time. I could scarcely believe them when they told me.

Among these was a dancing-master, who came first to hear on a week-day dressed in scarlet; and came several miles again on Sunday dressed in green. After preaching he spoke to me, and asked if I could come to that part where he lived some day in the week. I told him I could not, as I was engaged every day. I saw him at preaching again that week, and another man of his profession. When I was going to preach one morning, a friend said to me, "Mr. Shadford, you spoiled a fine dancing-master last week. He was so cut under preaching, and feels such a load of sin upon his conscience, that he moves very heavily; nay, he cannot shake his heels at all. He had a large profitable school; but hath given it up, and is determined to dance no more. He intends now to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic." I said, "It is very well. What is his name?" He said, "He is called Madcap." I said, "A very proper name for a dancing-master;" but I found that this was only a nickname, for his real name was Metcalf. He began to teach a school, joined our society, found the guilt and load of sin removed from his conscience, and the pardoning love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him. He lived six or seven years after, and died a great witness for God, having been one of the most devoted men in our Connexion.

Going to preach one day, I was stopped by a large flood of water, and could not come at the bridge. I therefore turned back about half a mile to a large plantation; and having found the planter, I told him my case, and asked if I could sleep at his house. He said, I was welcome. After I had taken a little refreshment, I asked if that part of

the country was well inhabited; and on his answering in the affirmative, I said, "If it is agreeable, and you will send out to acquaint your neighbours, I will preach to them in the evening." He sent out, and we had many hearers; but they were as wild as boars. After I reprov'd them, they behaved very well under preaching. When I conversed with the planter and his wife, I found them entirely ignorant of themselves and of God. I laboured to convince them both, but it seemed to little purpose. Next morning I was stopped again, when he kindly offered to show me a way, some miles about, and go with me to preaching. I thanked him, and accepted his offer. As I was preaching that day I saw him weeping much. The Spirit of God opened the poor creature's eyes, and he saw the wretched state he was in. He stayed with me that night, and made me promise to go again to preach at his house. In a short time he and his wife became deep penitents, and soundly converted by the power of God. A very remarkable work began from that little circumstance; and before I left Virginia, there were sixty or seventy raised up in society in that settlement. There were four travelling preachers that year in the Circuit. We added eighteen hundred members, and had good reason to believe that a thousand of them were converted to God.

The spirit of the people began now to be agitated with regard to politics. They threatened me with imprisonment when I prayed for the king; took me up, and examined me, and pressed me to take the test-oath to renounce him for ever. I thought then I had done my work there, and set out, after I had been a year and a half amongst them, for Maryland.

But it being in the depth of winter, I was one night lost in the woods, when it was very cold, and the snow a foot deep on the ground. I could find no house, nor see any traveller; and I knew I must perish if I continued there all night. I alighted from my horse, kneeled down upon the snow, and prayed earnestly to God to direct me. When I arose I believed I should have something to direct me. I stood listening a short space, and at last heard a dog barking at some distance; so I followed the sound, and after some time found a house and plantation.

The next summer and winter I spent in Maryland; the winter on the eastern shore, where I could labour and be at peace; but as the test-oath must take place there also, I was brought to a strait. I had sworn allegiance to the king twice, and could not swear to renounce him for ever. I dare not play with fast-and-loose oaths, and swallow them in such a manner. We could not travel safe without a pass, nor have a pass without taking the oaths.

At our Quarterly Meeting I said to brother Asbury, "Let us have a day of fasting and prayer, that the Lord may direct us; for we never were in such circumstances as now since we were Methodist preachers." We did so, and in the evening I asked him how he found his mind. He said, he did not see his way clear to go to England. I told him I could not stay, as I believed I had done my work here at present; and that it was as much impressed upon my mind to go home now as it had been to come over to America. He replied, "Then one of us must be under a delusion." I said, "Not so; I may have a call to go, and you to stay;" and I believed we both obeyed the call of Providence. We

saw we must part, though we loved as David and Jonathan. And indeed these times made us love one another in a peculiar manner. O, how glad were we to meet, and pour our grief into each other's bosom!

Myself and another set off, having procured a pass from a colonel to travel to the general; and arriving at the head-quarters, we inquired for General Smallwood's apartments. Being admitted to his presence, and asked our business, we told his excellency that we were Englishmen, and both Methodist preachers; and as we considered ourselves subjects of Great Britain, we could not take the test-oaths: therefore we should be very glad to return home to our native land. "We cast ourselves," we added, "wholly upon your excellency's generosity; and hope, as you profess to be fighting for your liberties, you will grant us a pass to have liberty to return to our own land in peace." He answered roughly, "Now you have done us all the hurt you can, you want to go home." I told him our motive had been to do good: for this end we left our own country, and had been travelling through the woods for several years, to seek and to save that which was lost. It was true we could not beat the political drum in the pulpit, preaching bloody sermons; because we considered ourselves messengers of peace, and called to preach the Gospel of peace. At last he told us he would give us a pass to the English, if we would swear we would go directly to Philadelphia, and from thence embark to Great Britain. He then swore us, and generously gave us our liberty without any further trouble.

That evening, however, I was in great danger of

losing my life. A man leaped from behind a bush with his gun loaded, cocked, and presented at my breast, and swore like a fiend, and said, if I did not stop I should be a dead man; and called out as if he had more men in ambush. I stopped, and said very boldly, "Where are your men? If you will take us, let them come up." He swore again, if I did not dismount he would shoot me dead upon the spot. I dismounted, and said boldly to him again, "You have no right to stop me; I have a pass from the general." All this while he had his piece at my breast, yet I had no fear or dread; but I have often thought since, what a mercy it was that the piece did not go off, while he kept me so long at the end of it. At last he was struck with fear; and as no one came to his help, and we were two, and he did not know but we might have pistols, he said, "I will drop my gun, if you will not hurt me." I said, "I have not threatened to hurt you; I do not want to hurt a hair of your head: but why do you stop me on the road, and threaten my life, when I told you I had a pass from the general?" The fellow seemed ashamed and confounded. If he had any design to rob us, his heart failed him; and the Lord delivered us out of his hands.

We left our horses at a poor little inn, (for they had taken down the end of the large bridge that goes into Chester,) and with our saddle-bags upon our backs, we crept on our hands and knees on a narrow plank to that part of the great bridge that remained standing, and got our horses over the next morning. Thus, through the mercy and goodness of God, we got safe into Chester that night, and the next night into Philadelphia. Here we met three or four of our preachers, who, like ourselves,

were all refugees. I continued near six weeks before I got a passage, and then embarked for Cork in Ireland; from thence to Wales, and then crossed the passage to Bristol. I felt a very thankful heart, when I set my foot on English ground, in a land of peace and liberty, where was no alarm of war and bloodshed. They who have never been sick do not properly know the value of health. Neither are we in this land sufficiently thankful for the laws which protect our persons and property; and, above all, for our religious liberty to worship God according to our conscience, in the beauty of holiness.

I have received abundant mercies from a kind and indulgent Father since I came home; but have made small returns for them all, and feel greatly ashamed of myself, and deeply humbled for my coming short and living beneath my privilege for years that are past. I am now determined, through grace, to give my whole heart to God more than ever; to be more constant and regular in my walk; and to cast all my care upon Him who careth for me.

Last year indeed was a year of afflictions and trials to me. I was poorly in body most of the year, often very unable to travel, and sometimes had thoughts of desisting on that account. But, I bless God, things are changed: it seems as if the Lord hath given me a new commission, and added strength to body and mind. Since I came into the Kent Circuit, I set apart some hours in order to pray, that God might deepen the work of grace in my own soul, and make me more useful to others. He soon heard and answered, and hath brought my soul into such a liberty and fellowship with Himself, that He is always present. There is no

time when my Beloved is absent by day or by night; neither do I feel that propensity within me to sin as before. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after God; yea, thirsteth for the living God."

I see more than ever the preciousness of time; and the wisdom of improving it to the best purposes; the living every moment for God, the buying up every opportunity; the necessity of being more spiritual in my conversation, in order to grow in grace; the talking in company not about worldly things, but about our souls, God and Christ, heaven and eternal glory. O, how sad a case is it when we go to visit, to eat and drink with our friends, and say nothing, or that which is next to nothing, about their souls! If we had more of God in our hearts, there would be more of Him on our tongues, and shining in our lives; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. We should be often speaking, reprovng sin, and labouring to bring souls to God, when we are out of the pulpit, as well as when we are in. Lord, make me more faithful in this, and in every respect, than ever I have been, for Christ's sake! Amen.

GEORGE SHADFORD.

CANTERBURY, *October 15th*, 1785.

FURTHER ACCOUNT OF MR. SHADFORD:

BY THE REV. JOHN RILES.

MR. SHADFORD prayed and preached, till disease and infirmity arrested him in his career. After having travelled for twenty-three years, he became

a supernumerary; but, instead of burying himself in obscurity, or sinking into indolence, he evinced the same unabated love for the souls of men, and the prosperity of the church of God, which he had done during the vigour of his health. He neither outlived his piety nor his usefulness. It was evident to all who had an intimate acquaintance with him, that he enjoyed communion and fellowship with God, and was ripening for eternal glory. The members of his two classes had a high opinion of his piety, and, when assembled round him, hung upon his lips, eagerly expecting some word of instruction or comfort; for they had no doubt that God would make him an honoured instrument for their good. His method of meeting his classes was remarkably conciliating: there was nothing rough or austere in his manner; he blended the most benevolent feelings with faithfulness, and never appeared satisfied unless all the people under his care loved God with all their hearts, with all their strength, and with all their might. To these his advice was, "Grow in grace."

On Monday, February 28th, Mr. Shadford dined with his affectionate friend Mr. Blunt, in company with his brethren. He then appeared in tolerable health, and ate a hearty dinner. In the course of the week he felt indisposed, from a complication of diseases. He was under no apprehension at this time that his departure was so near, as he had frequently felt similar affections; and by timely applications to his medical friend, Mr. Bush, had been relieved. On Friday, March 1st, he with some difficulty met his class; and afterwards said, it was impressed on his mind that he should never meet it more. On the Sunday afternoon I called to

inquire about his health; when he said with unusual fervour,

“ To patient faith the prize is sure;
And all that to the end endure
The cross shall wear the crown.”

His mind seemed fully occupied with the great and interesting realities of eternity, and he had no greater pleasure than in meditating and talking of the dying love of Christ. On the Lord's-day morning, March 10th, before I went to the chapel, I called to see him, and found he had slept most of the night: from this we flattered ourselves the complaint had taken a favourable turn, and were in hopes of his recovery. But when the doctor called, he said the disease was fast approaching to a crisis, and it was impossible for him to recover. Upon this information Mr. Shadford broke out in a rapture, and exclaimed, “ Glory be to God!” Upon the subject of his acceptance with God, and assurance of eternal glory, he had not the shadow of a doubt. While he lay in view of an eternal world, and was asked if all was clear before him, he replied, “ I bless God it is;” and added, “ Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb!” When Mrs. Shadford was sitting by him, he repeated, “ What surprise! what surprise!” I suppose he was reflecting upon his deliverance from a corruptible body, and his entrance into the presence of his God and Saviour, where every scene surpasses all imagination, and the boldest fancy returns weary and unsatisfied in its loftiest flights. Two friends, who were anxious for his recovery, called upon him; and when they inquired how he was, he replied, “ I am going to my Father's house, and find religion to be an angel in death.”

A pious lady in the course of the day was particularly desirous of seeing him, and she asked him to pray for her: he inquired, "What shall I pray for?" She said, "That I may meet you in heaven, to cast my blood-bought crown at the feet of my Redeemer." He said with great energy, "The prize is sure." His pious sayings were numerous, and will long live in the recollection of many; but a collection of them all would swell this article beyond due limits. His last words were, "I'll praise, I'll praise, I'll praise!" and a little after he fell asleep in Jesus, on March 11th, 1816, in the seventy-eighth year of his age.

For nearly fifty-four years Mr. Shadford had enjoyed a sense of the Divine favour. His conduct and conversation sufficiently evinced the truth of his profession. For many years he had professed to enjoy that perfect love which excludes all slavish fear: and if Christian tempers and a holy walk are proofs of it, his claims were legitimate. Maintaining an humble dependence upon the merits of the Redeemer, he steered clear of both Pharisaism and Antinomianism: his faith worked by love. Truly happy himself, there was nothing forbidding in his countenance, sour in his manners, or severe in his observations. His company was always agreeable, and his conversation profitable. If there was anything stern in his behaviour, it was assumed to silence calumniators and religious gossips. In short, he was a man of prayer and a man of God.

His abilities as a preacher were not above mediocrity; yet he was a very useful labourer in the vineyard of the Lord. In illustrating the doctrines of the Gospel, he was simple, plain, and clear. His discourses, though not laboured, were methodical,

full of scriptural phraseology, delivered with pathos, and accompanied with the blessing of God. He did not perplex his hearers with abstruse reasoning, and metaphysical distinctions, but aimed to feed them with the bread of life; and instead of sending them to a dictionary for an explanation of a difficult word, he pointed them to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

Mr. Shadford was free and generous. His little annual income, managed with a strict regard to economy, supplied his wants, and left a portion for the poor and needy. In visiting the sick, while he assisted them by his prayers and advice, he cheerfully administered to their wants. He spent no idle time in needless visits and unmeaning chit-chat; and though many of his friends in Frome would have considered it a high favour if he could have been prevailed upon to partake of their bounty, yet he always declined it, except once a week, at the hospitable table of his generous friend, Mr. Blunt, where he generally met the preachers with some part of their families. He loved his brethren in the ministry; and, like an old soldier who had survived many a campaign, he felt a pleasure in retracing the work of God, in which he had been engaged for more than half a century. He claimed it as a right, and deemed it a privilege, to have the preachers to take tea with him every Saturday afternoon. There was nothing sordid in his disposition; and, as far as I could ever observe, covetousness formed no part of his character. He considered the rule of his Saviour as having a peculiar claim upon his attention: "Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven."

His patience and resignation to the will of God

were such, that he has left few superior in those passive graces. Some years since he lost his eyesight, and continued in this state of affliction for several years; but, instead of murmuring at this dispensation of Providence, he bore it with Christian fortitude. This did not altogether prevent his usefulness; for, though the sphere of his action was circumscribed by it, he could still pray with the afflicted, converse with the pious, and meet several classes in the week. In this state he was advised to submit to an operation for the recovery of his sight. The trial proved successful; and when the surgeon said, "Sir, now you will have the pleasure of seeing to use your knife and fork," Mr. Shadford feelingly replied, "Doctor, I shall have a greater pleasure: that of seeing to read my Bible." This luxury he enjoyed; for when he was permitted to use his eyesight, the first thing he did was to read the word of life for three hours, reading and weeping with inexpressible joy. During the whole of his last short illness, he betrayed no symptoms of uneasiness, but cheerfully submitted to the will of God. Through the last few years of his life he glided smoothly down the stream of time. The assiduous attention of Mrs. Shadford to all his wants, her sympathy in the moments of pain, and unwearied attempts either to prevent his sufferings or lessen their force, greatly tended to soften them down. She has lost a pious and an affectionate husband, and the Methodist society in Frome one of its best members.

THE LIFE
OF
MR. JASPER ROBINSON.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

I WAS born at Wooburn-Green, near High-Wycombe, in December, 1727. My parents dying when I was about twelve years old, I was left to the care of a good grandmother, who kept me at school till I was fifteen years of age, at which time I went as an apprentice to London. A few years after my apprenticeship was out I went to Worcester, and wrought at the china-factory about two years, and afterwards went to Liverpool. My whole life hitherto had been spent in youthful vanities and amusements, sometimes mixed with sin and iniquity of the grosser sort, which I now hate, and am ashamed to mention.

In the year 1759, being at Liverpool, I began to consider that if I went on in sin it would be my destruction; and I thought if there was a judgment to come, it would be my wisdom to prepare for it. I therefore began to break off all my known sins at a stroke, and took to fasting and prayer; and soon found the happy difference between serving God and

serving the devil. In the year 1760 I removed to Leeds in Yorkshire, where I got acquainted with the people called Methodists, and joined them, attended diligently to my class, and missed no other means of grace. In the summer of that year I heard Mr. Wesley preach, under one of whose sermons I was enabled to believe that my sins were forgiven. In the year 1763 I received a large effusion of the Holy Spirit, and seemed changed throughout the whole man. I then joined the select band, enjoyed much peace, and walked agreeable to the Gospel. In 1765, after conversing with a friend, I again felt a blessed change in my heart; but, through unbelief, soon let go my hold. Some time after, at a morning preaching, it appeared as if every evil was taken out of my heart; but I soon gave way to unbelief, and became as I was before. In the year 1770 it pleased God to bless several persons at Leeds, and I received a sweet, mild, and child-like spirit; but after a while, through unbelief, my corrupt nature prevailed again.

In 1776 I set out as a travelling preacher, and was appointed for Manchester, where I preached in great weakness and fear. However, I was encouraged much from the Lord, and from many of the poorer people; but some of the rich showed great indifferency toward me. I believe I was of some use there, and in general that year was in pursuit of holiness; but though I received many marks of it, I put it off, and did not believe. In 1777 I went to Epworth Circuit. Here also holiness and usefulness were my chief aim. I received many tokens for good in my own heart, and trust I was somewhat profitable to the people. In 1778 I went to Lynn; and in 1779, to Aberdeen and Inverness. Here I was supported

with an uncommon degree of cheerfulness, and found Scotland a happy place for me, notwithstanding some inconveniences. In the latter end of the year, at Aberdeen, I was much tried, and much supported. In 1780 I came to Dundee, where I had a peaceful year, and was all for holiness. Yet I was tempted in an extraordinary manner, especially at Arbroath. I fasted and prayed night and day, but could get no rest. One day upon a mount, where I ran up to pray, a tremor seized me, and I thought the devil would become visible; but on a sudden I was sensible that Jesus was my Advocate, the Holy Spirit my Comforter, and God the Father my reconciled God. Now again I received such comfort in my mind, that nothing was wanting but faith to make me a partaker of full sanctification.

In 1781 I was appointed for Barnard-Castle; and in 1782 was sent to the Isle of Man, where I minuted down, at times, the occurrences of the day, an extract from which here follows:—

April 5th, 1783.—My mind was somewhat strengthened by reading Matthew xxi. 22: “All things, whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” Lord, help me! I believe He does help me; for now I believe He has purified my heart by faith. I believe He has cast out all my enemies, and, through believing, they may be kept out. Glory be to God! I feel my spirit meek and pleasant. I am nothing, and wholly depend upon God, and desire nothing but Him.

“All my wants are lost in one:
Father, Thy only will be done.”

April 9th.—I have been kept without sin in my heart this day. I grow more and more confident.

that God has cleansed my heart from all unrighteousness. As I was riding yesterday, a thought passed through my mind, why I was not sanctified before. And it appeared it was because I would not believe; and if I would not, then it is plain I might if I would. Is not this the case with many? Instead of simply believing, they are looking out for some extraordinary thing formed in their own imagination. This, I believe, has been the case with me for twenty years past. Many times in the course of these years, God gave me reason to believe it; but instead of believing He had done it, I thought now I was in such a way that I could not well miss it; and, Naaman-like, I expected God would lay His hand very powerfully upon me, and manifest Himself in such an extraordinary manner, that my soul would be immediately swallowed up in a holy flame of love. But finding not what I expected, I soon flagged in my pursuit, and my vile corruption returned again to my heart. And though in general I had power over all sin, inward and outward, and peace with God, and still sought after a clean heart; yet I often thought that, according to His word, He was willing to give it to others, but had some particular exceptions against me.

I thought I strove more for it in every good word and work than many others that received it; and yet the more I strove, the harder it seemed to be attained; yea, I frequently thought the more I sought God, the more He withdrew from me. Upon which, I used to fall into such weakness of mind, that I could scarce conceive anything at all of God, or of Christ. At other times, when I was earnest for purity, there would appear such a huge bar, or such a huge something, that it was impossible for

me to get any farther. Then I thought I might be contented with what I had got ; and, resting here, I used to enjoy a tolerable degree of peace ; though envy, lust, and barrenness frequently harassed me within. But O, how contrary to my expectation hath God dealt with me !

Two days before I received it, I was telling a brother, I could not see that I have grown in grace for twenty years past ; because, when I would sail forward in the Divine life, there rose up always such a sand-bank, that my poor vessel could not make any way. But as I was reading the fore-mentioned passage, "All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive ;" I thought I would once more pray for sanctification, because it is God's will, according to His word : and I thought I would depend upon Him, as I would upon the faithfulness of a friend ; and should be as much disappointed in my expectation if He were not as good as His word, as if I were deceived by a man. I soon found my soul sink down into a kind of nothingness before God, and presently was persuaded that no sin remained in my heart, and that through believing I might ever keep it out. I thought, If this is the way to be sanctified, any one that has grace may believe to be sanctified, if he will ; for none can be more weak in faith than myself, and yet I have no doubt but my heart is purified.

Thus, contrary to my former expectation of being something extraordinary when sanctified, I am emptied of self, and sink into an unfeigned nothingness, that Christ may be my all in all. I can only admire the goodness of God, respecting the manner in which He has been pleased to bestow this blessing upon me. For, had He given it in my own way, that is, in

rapturous joy, perhaps upon those transports subsiding, I should have immediately thought that all was gone, and then have fallen into unbelief. But now, if I am ever so low, or ever so elevated, I continue believing in the Lord, who is my aim and end. I desire nothing, I seek nothing, but God. He is my refuge, my rest, my portion, and my all.

“O how wonderful His ways!
 All in love begin and end:
 Whom His mercy means to raise,
 First His justice bids descend.”

April 12th.—This day I find the Lord very gracious. Upon a trial that used to make me very hasty in spirit, I found not the least shadow of it in my heart. The state of my soul at present cannot be better expressed than by this verse,—

“Let the waves around thee rise,
 Let the tempest threat the skies;
 Calm thou ever art within,
 All unruffled, all serene;
 Thy sure anchor cannot fail,
 Enter'd now within the veil.”

April 14th.—I find the refreshing springs of grace purifying my heart more and more. Blessed be God, the Father of mercies! He is my God, my portion, and my all. This night I found Him very gracious to me in preaching.

April 16th.—I am more and more clear that my heart is entirely changed. The word of God, the Spirit of God, and my soul's experience, agree together. This morning I was elevated in my mind; but I see it is dangerous, and that I have need to watch against it. My soul chooses Christ above ecstatic joy or transport, before everything that

tends to alienate my mind from Him, yea, above all gifts without Him; for, was it possible to be in heaven without Him, I had rather be on earth with Him.

April 17th.—The Lord is still gracious. Satan tempts, but I get the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Friday, 25th.—I have been in such a heavy state this day, that it renders me very unprofitable: but, blessed be God, I find that whether heavy or alert, weak or strong, he that believeth shall be saved. So that I still hope my heart is clean, though sometimes I am hardly sure.

April 16th to 29th.—My state is pretty even, with some particular spiritual satisfaction. Blessed be God, I have reason to judge the root of sin is out of my heart; because when I am tempted, nothing within takes hold of it. I find it easier to keep sin out, than conquer it when in.

May 12th.—I hope the Lord is establishing my heart in grace more and more. This morning I have had glorious conceptions of the blessed Trinity. So that my soul can say, "O God, Thou art my God: glory be to Thee, O Thou Most High."

May 17th.—Blessed be God, I am kept in peace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Happy is the man that has the God of Jacob for his help; whose hope is in the Lord his God.

October 17th.—For three days past I have been much encouraged to hope for all the fulness of God. The promise as well as command is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;" and I hope I shall not rest short of it. O my God, give me power now, and continue it to my life's end, for Jesus Christ's sake!

“The promise is sure
To the helpless and poor,
Their souls as their bodies Thou surely canst cure.”

October 30th.—Thou blestest me much, O my God ; but I shall never be satisfied until I awake up after Thy likeness.

November 1st.—I fasted and prayed for purity of heart. O, when shall I be perfectly free, and all my soul unreservedly devoted to God! I am day by day pursuing holiness, and hate every appearance to the contrary.

November 7th.—I appear to myself little better than an atheist ; so dark and ignorant is my heart. I can hardly think well of any religion, short of all light, all love, and holiness ; and the more I seek for it, the more dark and distracted my mind appears. What can I do? I am tempted to dispute the truth of God's word. O that He would answer for Himself, in love and faithfulness to my heart ! Who can deliver me? O, I read that One can : but I fear His willingness. Yet, Thou knowest, Lord, I should gladly be delivered now. Why tarriest Thou, O my God ?

December 10th.—The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. Blessed be the Lord for this !

“'Tis all my hope, and all my plea,
That Jesu's blood was shed for me.”

January 7th, 1784.—Glory be to God in the highest ! The latter part of the old year ended, as the new one begins,—well. I overcome all my sin by the blood of the Lamb. For these three or four weeks past, I have walked in blessed liberty through believing. Lord, increase my faith, for there is nothing like living by faith.

April 2d.—I was waked this morning with a loud

voice sounding in my ears, "Say unto Zion, Thy God reigneth." It was repeated again very sharply, "Tell Zion, Thy God reigneth." Lord, help me so to do. I have several times had such solemn views of Zion's prosperity, that I am in hopes the Gospel will bear all before it in this island.

April 19th.—Ah! what is this life to him that is born to die? I wonder that Methodists will have anything to do with the pleasures, fashions, or riches of this world. How few cry out in their counting-house, "In all time of our wealth, good Lord, deliver us!"

In July I left the Isle of Man, in a very prosperous way, and was appointed for Whitehaven.

In 1785 I went to Bolton Circuit, where I spent an agreeable year. Here also I made a few remarks of my experience:—

Monday morning, September 2d.—I waked about four o'clock with my soul breathing after God. All evil seemed removed from my mind, and I was like a morning without clouds. I had a clear view of living by faith, and of being freed from everything but God; to have Him the only portion of my soul. These words ran in my mind till my eyes gushed out with tears,

"Never shall my triumphs end."

This state brings us into all calmness and serenity, and shields the mind against every temptation.

On Tuesday morning also I had a satisfying sense of faith. I see it is no matter what I am beside, in the esteem of men, whether wise or ignorant, honoured or abased; or how many my sins have been, or how encompassed about with present infirmities. If I can believe God is reconciled unto me in Jesus, all is well. I stand by faith, and not by

works. I have felt a few temptations since ; but I find my privilege is to look unto Jesus, and be saved.

September 10th.—I hear Mr. Fletcher is dead. May I follow him as he followed Christ ! He was a star of the first magnitude in God's church ; but now he is gone to shine in glory, and to set no more for ever : a fixed star to all eternity. The wise shall inherit glory ; and I think, if there was a wise man in the world, he was one.

September 13th.—I was discouraged this day ; but I prayed unto God, who comforted and delivered me from all my fears. Glory be to Thee, O Lord, who never failest them that seek Thee ! When man discourages, how clear it makes our faith, that God does help ! Discouragement from man weans us from man ; and help from God draws nearer to God.

November 23d.—I waked this morning at four o'clock. I thought much about believing, and what many assert, that you must believe now, and you have what you believe for, whether pardon or holiness. I fear this has led many, of a warm imagination, to believe they are sanctified, when a little time has proved they have been mistaken. I was much perplexed about their manner of speaking, and considered our Lord's words, "Whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing ye receive it, ye shall have." This I could not well understand, how I was to believe I receive, before it was really given unto me. And it came into my mind, that God speaketh of things that are not, as though they were. Faith in like manner says, "I have it, though it is not yet given ;" that is, believes in the certainty of it, as if already come to pass. Thus faith anticipates the blessing, and makes us as sure of it as if it were already accomplished. In this manner, a believer may go

on, from strength to strength, and from grace to grace; believing and rejoicing in the sure word of God's promise, until he believes himself to heaven. Thus faith lays hold on every blessing, yea, glory itself; but leaves the time and manner unto God.

November 28th.—In meditating, I had a very satisfying view of the covenant of grace, in contradistinction to the covenant of works; namely, As all have sinned, the covenant of works shows no mercy. The covenant of grace is full of compassion. In this God is reconciled to us by the blood of His dear Son; and waits to be gracious to every returning sinner, in blotting out his sins, and remembering his iniquities no more. He has promised to write His law in our hearts, even His law of love. Whosoever lives in obedience to this law of love, sinneth not; for, having always a loving intention to please God, he never offends Him, neither is God offended with him. In this covenant of grace, confirmed by the blood of Jesus, all involuntary ignorances, mistakes, and infirmities, God does not charge upon him as sin; nothing but wilful acts. Thus: he that is born of God, and lives in this covenant under the law to Christ, does not commit sin, neither can he sin, because his loving intention is always to please God, His seed remaining in him. He loves his neighbour, and love worketh no evil; but contrariwise—good. Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. According to the tenor of the first covenant, no man is free from sin; but he that fulfils the law of love, the love of God and his neighbour, is as free from it, according to the new covenant, as he would be, according to the old, were he to fulfil the utmost demand of the moral law.

In the eye of the law, every man is a sinner; but

in the covenant of grace, he that loveth is free. To reason upon the law is bringing a man into bondage; but to believe according to grace, is living in the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Many who are continually harping upon the purity of the law, and viewing Christian liberty in this mirror, grow blinder and blinder, and cannot see how a man can live without sin. But how unwise is this! If the Father of all mercies, the God of love, in consideration of the impossibility (through weakness of the flesh) of being made perfect by the law, has substituted a milder covenant, full of grace, mercy, and love, whereby we may thus live, why should we not immediately embrace it? One would think we should encourage one another, by saying, "Well, brother, though you cannot, by the law, obtain the perfection of the law; yet by the grace of God you may obtain the perfection of the Gospel, even the depth of humble love." But, instead of this, the law is frequently made use of to discourage the expectation of obtaining holiness by the Gospel. One says, "The law is so pure, that I do not see how I can be free from sin." Another, "If I was clean from sin, what need should I have for the atonement?" A third reasons, "Sin is in the flesh which covers my bones; and therefore this putrefied cask will make all that comes out of it impure." By this way of reasoning they conclude, they can never be made clean from sin on this side the grave; and they discourage those who desire it according to the Gospel. O, what a pity it is, that we are so slow in believing, or looking into the glorious law of liberty and love, and continuing therein, that we may be happy!

J. B.

*Account of the Death of Mr. Jasper Robinson,
Minister of the Gospel; in a Letter from Mr.
Dermott to Mr. Pawson.*

HORNCASTLE, *December 14th, 1797.*

MY DEAR FRIEND;

WE may now add to the number of those faithful servants of the Lord, whom He hath called to their reward since the last Conference, our highly-valued friend and brother Mr. Jasper Robinson, whose happy spirit took its flight to the paradise of God the 6th instant. Never since the death of our reverend father, Mr. Wesley, have I seen so many tears shed by the survivors as at Mr. Robinson's funeral. He will live long in the esteem of many who knew his worth; and I am sure his memory must be precious to me as long as I retain a sense of the Divine goodness, of which he was a living and a dying witness. I have gone to many to learn how to live, but I went to Mr. Robinson to learn both to live and to die.

In the latter end of October he was seized, while going about his Master's business in the Circuit, with the gout in his feet. He struggled forward till he came to Mr. Robinson's at Langham-row, where he delivered his last public discourse. Here I met with my dear friend, and found him full of faith and love, as usual. He kindly inquired into the state of my mind, and spoke of the communion which he had enjoyed with God while under affliction. We had some profitable conversation respecting the Divine presence with the followers of the Lord Jesus, and we spent some time together in serious solemn prayer. When we parted, he earnestly

entreated me to pray that his patience might hold out to the end of his race.

He so far recovered as to be able to walk about a little, and expressed a strong desire to go home to Horncastle. Accordingly, he set forwards, and got as far as brother Abbot's, where, on the 20th, he wrote me the following letter :—

“LAST Monday Mr. George Robinson came with me to this place. I got here with great ease, and was not much fatigued. I intended to proceed on my journey, but was afflicted with such a shortness of breath, that I could not sit upon my horse. Last Friday night I was almost suffocated, so that I felt my life in danger ; but in a moment it pleased God to relieve me, and I breathed very easy till morning. When I got up, my breath was much affected, and I sent for the doctor, who told me it was a spasm upon my lungs, which obstructed my breathing. His prescription gave me relief, and I slept well at night. Yesterday I was better, but at night the spasm returned. I was again relieved ; but still I breathe with difficulty.

“I want, if it shall please God, to get to you ; but sometimes I doubt that I shall not be able. I am not able to preach at present. My dear friend, pray for me. I am sometimes very comfortable. The Lord give me submission to His will. Brother and sister Abbot are exceedingly kind to me. The Lord reward them for their labour of love. I cannot tell whether to subscribe myself your living or your dying brother, but I will subscribe myself

“Your affectionate brother,

“J. ROBINSON.”

On the 24th we got him home, and I found him labouring under a very great difficulty of breathing, and evidently sinking under his affliction, but perfectly resigned to the will of God, whether for life or death. Not a single murmur was ever heard from him at any time. A friend asked him how he felt when he thought himself dying at brother Abbot's. He answered, "I felt something of apprehension respecting the pains and feelings of nature; but I had no fear at all beyond death."

A little while before he was taken ill, he dreamed one night, that the chariot of Israel was come to convey him away, in which was the happy spirit of the late venerable Mr. Hanby, and another old preacher who is gone to glory.

He expressed himself infinitely thankful that he had only his bodily affliction to endure, and heartily praised God for all His mercies; especially for the strong confidence he had in the Redeemer, and the blessed prospect, through faith in His name, of a glorious immortality.

On Saturday, 26th, I was obliged to leave my highly-esteemed friend, after spending a little time with him in prayer, in which his whole soul appeared to be drawn out after God. On the 28th his weakness greatly increased; but our friends rendered him every assistance in their power; for which he expressed the deepest gratitude both to God and them. Not the shadow of discontent ever made its appearance in him at any time.

December 2d.—Several of our friends came in along with brother Aikenhead. They all kneeled down around his bed, and employed some time in solemn prayer. The room seemed to be filled with the glory of God, and their hearts were as melting

wax while bowed before Him. Mr. Robinson continued for some time with his hands lifted up to heaven, as if deeply engaged with the Lord in silent prayer, as had been frequently the case before. He then desired to be left alone for a little time.

I was obliged to leave him for a few days ; and upon my return found him exceedingly weak, but still able to converse a little. My wife and daughter read to him the 31st and 36th Psalms, and John xiv. He said to me, "Who could have thought that I should have such ease of body and mind in such circumstances?" He was restless by reason of his heavy afflictions, but at the same time accounted them light, and only for a moment. He said, "I have often thought where I shall die;" and added, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

On the last day of his life he joined in prayer with great fervency of spirit. His Amens pierced our very hearts ; and his soul was filled with the love of God. He said, "I am quite clear from all distressing doubts respecting my acceptance with God. I feel as free from condemnation as if I had never sinned at all." Indeed, throughout his affliction, he was wonderfully preserved from the power of the enemy, who was never permitted to approach him ; but the Lord blessed him with the utmost tranquillity. "The Lord," said he, "encompasses me about with mercies, and He makes all my bed in my sickness. I have no uneasiness respecting my soul : it is my bodily trouble only that I feel."

Towards evening he repeated,

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath," &c.

And, looking up, he said to my daughter, "Remem-

ber, you must die!" The next morning, December 6th, about five o'clock, his happy soul took its flight to the kingdom of glory without a sigh or groan.

His memory will long be precious to all the churches where he has laboured. He was always the Christian, and lived and died a witness of the full salvation of God. The last words he had written in his journal were, "Thanks be to the Lord for all His mercies!" O, may I live and die like Jasper Robinson!

I am your affectionate brother,

GEORGE DERMOTT.

I HAVE been well acquainted with brother Robinson for near forty years. When I first knew him, he lived at Leeds. He was then a pattern of solid piety and serious godliness, and remarkably zealous for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. He was exceedingly useful as a class-leader, and likewise in visiting the sick and the poor. Very few have excelled him in these labours of love; for which reason some of his friends have always thought that he could not be more useful as a travelling preacher than he was in the discharge of those duties.

While he laboured as a local preacher in Leeds Circuit, he was much respected for his Christian simplicity, sincerity, and unaffected piety; and since he commenced itinerant preacher, his conduct has, perhaps, been as unblamable in every respect, as any one who ever laboured among us. He was of a meek and quiet spirit, and remarkably humble, patient, and teachable; yet truly zealous and active.

His ministerial abilities were not so great as some others; yet upon the whole he was an acceptable preacher. I have heard him with much satisfaction publish the glad tidings of salvation, with such an holy fervour of soul, mixed with zeal, life, and power, as I always wish those to feel who speak in the name of the Lord. His whole heart was in the work; and he was in very deed a man of one business. And at all times he discovered himself to be a faithful advocate for a present, free, and full salvation. He followed after, till he attained, this glorious liberty; and lived and died in the enjoyment of it.

It is undoubtedly the fervent desire of all who consider the vast importance of spiritual mercies and everlasting happiness, to live the life, in order to die the death, of the righteous; and it affords us unspeakable satisfaction when we can with propriety apply the words of the psalmist, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."

J. PAWSON.

THE following character of Mr. Robinson was given by the Conference:—

JASPER ROBINSON, "an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile." He was a travelling preacher three-and-twenty years, during which his unaffected simplicity of manners, his steady and upright conduct, his mild and gentle spirit, never failed to gain him the affectionate regard of all the pious people who knew him. His whole heart was in the

work of God, and many will praise the Lord for his labours. He was remarkably patient in suffering, and entirely resigned to the will of his heavenly Father. His memory will long be precious to the people among whom he laboured. He lived and died a happy witness of the full salvation of God. He fell asleep in Jesus, December 6th, 1797, aged seventy-three years.

THE LIFE
OF
MR. THOMAS HANSON.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

CROWAN, *March 11th*, 1780.

It is very difficult to write where self is concerned. But as I am requested, I shall endeavour to give a brief account of those circumstances in my life which particularly discover the Divine pity towards me.

I was born of honest parents, in Horbury, near Wakefield, in the county of York, I think in May, 1733, the youngest of two sons at a birth; my parents having had six sons and two daughters. He that was born with me died in his childhood. My father died when I was near eleven years old. Six out of the seven of us that lived have found mercy and forgiveness through Christ. My truly pious mother had the happiness to see it before she died, though she has been dead above twenty years. Two of my elder brothers fell into sin, and turned back; but one is restored, I hope, to favour and to heaven: the other is not yet recovered; but O, may he be soon!

We always lived in love and harmony. I never had, to my knowledge, twenty angry words with

either brother or sister in my life. I do not remember to have heard an oath in all the family. About thirty-four years ago my mother and three elder brothers were brought to God. I was then convinced and a little awakened, by hearing Mr. Francis Scott: the very man, I think, by whom my ever-dear mother had been awakened and brought to God. From that time my good desires did not quite leave me. I hope my mother's prayers, tears, and advice will never leave my mind and heart. I was a thoughtless, careless, Christless son, before that time, and had no fear of God before my eyes.

I was placed, at about thirteen years of age, in the profession which my father and brothers had followed; namely, a clothier. I now often went to hear the Methodist preachers, though we had some miles to go. Many of those that are now, I doubt not, singing in heaven, used to go and come with me in the evenings through the woods; often singing those sweet words,—

“Break forth into singing, ye trees of the wood;
For Jesus is bringing lost sinners to God.”

I used to pray inwardly in my way to the preaching; yea, and often turned aside to pray. I was afraid to be seen or known to pray alone: so I sought out every private place that I could.

We had much persecution then, and a great deal of talk about false prophets in sheep's clothing. But the most common name for them was, “the damnation preachers,” which I thought was far from sheep's clothing: so that did not hinder me much. But I was greatly troubled with horrid suggestions, and had many fears, no doubt from the wicked one, in private prayer; that I was for quite laying it aside. I was afraid to go to it; and yet I durst not

give it over. I was in a strait on another account,— I was ashamed of the Gospel: I did not stand firm on God's side; and yet I durst not be on the devil's side. I was very fearful of being deceived, reasoning and doubting for several years, whether the knowledge of pardon was attainable here. I thought, God did forgive men their sin; but that none could know it for himself. But, afterwards, I was clearly convinced by hearing my brother's experience, and weighing the scriptures that he urged for it. And I had then a comfortable hope of one day finding it; but for some years I was between hope and fear. When I was about nineteen years old, in 1752, by my eldest brother's advice, I went to Mr. Byrries, at the Deighn-house, near Netherthong. Here I stayed for near four years. Divine Providence certainly cast me here, where I had all the advantages I could wish for, having two schoolmasters near at hand. I wrought seven or eight hours a day, with my book before me, and spent the rest of the day and part of the night in learning. This I did during the whole time I was here. Mr. Hinslif taught me to write and cast accounts for above a year; and Mr. Wood, of Netherthong, the Latin master, taught me a little Latin and Greek. I got what I could by heart in the day, and said it to him at night. But as soon as I left this place, I laid these studies aside, and re-assumed them no more to this day. I have since had other work, and could not see any absolute need of these in the particular service to which I was providentially called.

We had no Methodist preachers here. I did not hear ten sermons, except at church, for nearly four years. Here I was greatly beloved by those that had any seriousness, and greatly hated by those that

had none; for I could not hold my tongue about religion: my conscience would not let me be quiet many a time. I told them we must get our sins forgiven, or perish for ever. And frequently I wept with some of them about it. Several thereabouts came to me for advice concerning their souls; though I, poor creature, was ignorant enough, and well nigh lost in my book.

My conscience during these years often alarmed me. But now it would give me no rest for want of Christ and pardon. So I determined, notwithstanding many offered me favours in worldly things, to go home to my mother and brothers. Several wept, and entreated me to stay. I told them, "I cannot save my soul here: I have not the means suitable for it."

Home I came, in 1756, with a full resolution to seek Christ till I found Him, or die in the seeking of Him. Then I sold, or gave away, nearly all my books, and through grace began to be as diligent in the ways of God as I had been in study.

I now added fasting to all the other means of grace. Soon after this, the tempter told me, "Thou art good enough." But a sermon of honest brother Ash, on Gal. ii. 21, and the words of my dear mother, who said, "Though I bore you, if you do not come to Christ stripped of all, you will never be saved," tore away my self-righteousness. God now taught me to expect Christ and pardon every hour. My burden was too great to be expressed, when God had, by various means, (particularly by reading the Bible, and the extract of Ambrose on the New Birth, on my knees,) brought me, for three weeks, to the brink of despair. Just before I found pardon I was miserable beyond description.

On July 16th, at night, 1757, under my brother Joseph's prayer, I yielded, sunk, and, as it were, died away. My heart, with a kind, sweet struggle, melted into the hands of God. I was for some hours lost in wonder, by the astonishing peace, love, and joy which flowed into my heart like a mighty torrent. When I came to recollect myself, I asked, "What hast Thou done?" It was sweetly but deeply impressed, "I have made thee Mine." No tongue can tell what peace, love, joy, and assurance I then felt. My willing heart and tongue replied, "Hast Thou thus loved me? Here I am, willing to spend and be spent for Thee." God now gave me to see all creation, redemption, grace, and glory in a new light; and everything led me to love and praise Him.

From this night I could not hold my tongue from speaking of the things of God. A few days after my happy conversion, I felt anger at one who persecuted us. Soon after my peace left me. Then the tempter said, "He that is born of God sinneth not. But thou hast sinned: therefore thou art not born of God. Thou hast deceived thyself." I was then in a great measure ignorant of his devices; so gave up my shield, and was in the depth of distress, ready to choose strangling, for nearly two hours. It then came to my mind, "What if I had deceived myself? pardon is free, and given in an instant. It is ready for needy, lost sinners: I will go as I am, cast myself on the ground, and on Christ at once." My former peace, love, and joy returned in a moment. This sore trial taught me more watchfulness. After this I walked in great love and peace for nearly two years, buying up every opportunity for prayer, hearing, and reading. I read the chief part of the Christian Library, with Mr. Wesley's Works that

were then published, and several other books, to my great help, instruction, and comfort.

Now the same Spirit that witnessed my adoption, cried in me, night and day, "Spend and be spent for God!" Yet never was anyone more timorous: I thought the work so great, and my abilities so small. I cried, "I am not fit;" I wept, and kept it to myself for months. O, what a struggle had I between my unfitness, and my love to God and souls! After this, the Osset people, by earnest entreaties, prevailed on me to pray in public. And it pleased God to make this the means of awakening some sinners. Then I was persuaded to exhort. God blessed this also to the conversion of several in the neighbouring towns. Now began my warfare with the various sects about us, who came, when I had preached at Osset, to dispute with me often till midnight. But I was soon heartily weary of dispute; for it caused a decay in my peace and love.

My inbred corruptions now began to perplex me more than ever, and to be a heavy load indeed for some time. But one day meeting with a few young men, as I often did, God gave me such a deliverance, and such a weight of love, as I had not heretofore. I seemed too happy to live on earth, and thought God was going to take me home. My joy allowed me little sleep for weeks. I told it to none but my brother; and to him only, when I could keep it no longer from him.

Not long after this, a letter came from Mr. Thomas Olivers, (who afterwards behaved with the tenderness and wisdom of a father to me,) to let me know that I was appointed by the Conference to travel in the then York Circuit. This was done wholly without my knowledge. No one had spoken

to me about it, nor I to anyone. I already preached four or five times a week about home, and loved the people too well to desire to leave them. In my answer to Mr. Olivers, I said, "I have no doubt of my call to preach; but have no desire to be a travelling preacher. I am not fit for it. I cannot come." He replied, "If your father was dead, and your mother lay a dying, you must come and preach the Gospel." I wept a fortnight about it. I said to my brother, "Go you: you are more fit than I am." He said, "God knows who is fit. He has called you: therefore go." The gracious Spirit working in me a willingness to spend and be spent for God, and my brother persuading me, I went in 1760, and through grace have continued unto this day. In all this time, I call the all-seeing God and His people to bear witness, that I have sought nothing but His glory in my own salvation and that of others.

I have been in most of the Circuits in the kingdom. And, I trust, God has been pleased to use me, and those with me, during these twenty years, to unite thousands to the societies. But it is better to leave this to God and His people. They are our epistle, written by Christ to the rejoicing of our hearts. May their conversion be known and read by all that know them!

I have been in dangers by snow-drifts, by land-floods, by falls from my horse, and by persecution: I have been in sickness, cold, pain, weakness, and weariness often; in joyful comforts often; in daily love and peace, but not enough; in grief and heaviness through manifold temptations often. I have had abundance of trials, with my heart, with my understanding and judgment, with various reason-

ings among friends and foes, with men and devils, and most with myself. But in all these, God in mercy has hitherto so kept me, that I believe none can with justice lay any single immoral act to my charge, since the day when God through Christ forgave my sins.

All my design in preaching has been, and is, to bring sinners to Christ; and to build up saints in their most holy faith, hope, and love, to a perfect man.

To this end the chief matter of my preaching has been the essentials of religion; such as, the lost state of man, depraved, guilty, and miserable by nature; his justification through the alone merit of Christ by faith only, together with the witness and fruits of it; the new birth, the necessity, benefits, and fruits of it, in all inward and outward holiness. I have endeavoured to explain the new covenant in its benefits, condition, precepts, threats, and rewards. I have shown that perfect love is attainable here, by those that press for it with their whole heart. I teach piety to God, justice and mercy to men, and sobriety in ourselves, endeavouring to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and man, in every station of life and in all relations. I also endeavour to guard souls against the temptations from the world, the flesh, and the devil; against the hurtful opinions that surround them; and against the hindrances of their repentance, faith, hope, love, and holiness. I have also shown them the danger of delay, of refusal, or of drawing back to sin, death, and hell.

In the pulpit I have seldom meddled with the decrees, or the five points of debate. I suffered so much loss by them before I set out to travel, that I

determined not to meddle with them, but when my brethren were in danger of being led aside or hurt by them. So far as I see clear evidence for any of these things, I hold and prove them as occasion offers. But where I see no sufficient proof of a proposition, I leave the discussion of them to those that are wiser. But yet I cannot help thinking, that many of these disputes are not much more than a learned play: and if wise men would but play with these in good humour, it would not much grieve one. But when they grow angry, and call each other by vile names, because they differ from them herein, no doubt the devil has a great hand in it. He aims to undo, by the non-essentials in religion, the good that is done by insisting on the essentials. This has often been a cause of fear and grief to me. But having resolved to take Christ for my sufficient Teacher, I am now contented to know what He has revealed, and to leave the rest to another world. I have from my beginning thought myself the poor man's preacher; having nothing of politeness in my language, address, or anything else. I am but a brown-bread preacher, that seeks to help all I can to heaven, in the best manner I can. O that in the day of Christ's judgment I may rejoice, not only in the sincerity of my labour, but in knowing that I have not preached and laboured and suffered without fruit, but have been the instrument of gaining souls to, and of keeping them with, Christ! And O that He may present them to the Father, without blame, in perfect love! This is the real desire of

THOMAS HANSON.

THE following character of Mr. Hanson is given by the Methodist Conference :—

THOMAS HANSON departed this life October 18th, 1804, in the seventy-second year of his age, and forty-fifth of his ministry. He spent about twenty-two years in the vineyard of the Lord, as an itinerant preacher; and when able to bear the fatigues of itinerancy no longer, he retired to Horbury, near Wakefield, the place of his nativity, where he spent the last twenty years of his life, copying the example of his Lord and Master, “who went about doing good.” He was a plain, honest, faithful, zealous man. His death was a comment on the words of the Psalmist: “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.”

THE LIFE
OF
MR. ROBERT WILKINSON.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

BEFORE hearing the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, I was often terrified in dreams and visions of the night. Sometimes I thought I was falling down steep precipices; at others, that the devil was standing over me to take me away immediately.

At such times I have often waked, shrieking in such a manner as terrified all who heard me. Afterwards I heard the Gospel for a season, at Rookhope, in the county of Durham; but the people not receiving the joyful sound, the servants of God forsook the place. I was left with much uneasiness on my mind: what I formerly delighted in was now hateful to me. I could play no more on the violin, or at cards, nor sing vain songs; neither had I a desire to speak any more than I was forced to. The people saw my distress, but, not knowing God, could not point out a cure.

In this condition I continued for some weeks. I began to read religious books, and likewise to bow

my knees before God in secret. Sometimes I could weep much; but, having no one to direct me, after a time I got back into folly, and pursued my evil practices with more eagerness than before. About four years after, I was called to live near Weardale chapel. I then heard the Methodists very frequently. I was often softened under the word. I never found a desire to mock the people, as many do; but rather stood in awe of them. But all this while I continued in my sins. The first Sunday in Lent, 1767, I heard, as usual, a Methodist preacher in the afternoon. I did not then find that the word made any impression upon me. But at night on my bed the Lord cut me to the heart, and I could not help roaring for the disquietness of my soul. I then felt I must perish eternally, unless some way to escape were found which I knew not of. Immediately I wished for the Methodists to pray with me; but in particular for a young man, Stephen Watson, who is now in glory. From the time he knew Jesus, he was a pattern to all the society. And after having walked four years in the light of God's countenance, he departed in the full assurance of faith; having testified for many months before his death, that the blood of Jesus had cleansed him from all sin. His last words were, "Glory be to God, for ever and ever! Amen, and Amen!"

One morning I fell down on my knees to ask forgiveness for my many offences, and continued to cry night and day. My burden increased, and temptations were very strong. I then began to compare myself with the most sinful of my companions, and with other notorious sinners I had heard of; but I could find no equal. I said, from the ground of my heart, "Of all the sinners under heaven, I am the

chief." The enemy then suggested, that I was guilty of a sin which God never would pardon.

Tongue cannot express the distress I then felt. The heart knoweth its own bitterness. I thought, never man suffered what I did. That saying, "A dreadful sound in his ears," continually followed me. I found the enemy ready, day and night, to devour me. When in private prayer, I thought he had hold of my clothes. For many nights he suggested, if I prayed, he would appear and tear me in pieces. Yet I durst not but pray, though my prayers were mostly made up of sighs and groans. One day, drawing towards evening, the enemy came in as a flood, and the temptation was to put an end to a wretched life. I resisted, but it continued to come as quick as lightning; and I was afraid that the tempter would prevail, so that I durst not carry a penknife about me. That was the only time I was banished from private prayer, because I durst not stay alone. That night we met our class: I then cried out to one of my brethren, who was waiting for me to go with him to the meeting, "O Cuthbert, I am driven to distraction!" He spake to me as comfortably as he could, but, as we walked together, I found as if one was hanging on the skirts of my clothes. After the first prayer was over, it was with difficulty I rose from my knees. When the leader asked how I found the state of my soul, I answered, "I am left without one spark of hope that God will ever have mercy on me." "No," said he, "you are not; for if you were, you would not now be using the means of grace."

He encouraged me to follow on; but I still found no comfort. All the time of my convictions I had but very little ease; and when I had, I had a fear

almost equal to my pain, lest I should fall back into sin, or speak peace when God did not. O, how I longed for deliverance from sin! I often cried, "Lord, if I am for ever banished from Thy presence, let me not sin again!"

Not long after, that text in Psalm li. followed me, "Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." I thought, if God did pardon me, He could refuse none, but the foulest on this side hell might come and welcome. But this was the sting,—I thought He would not. However, I kept using the means, and went frequently among the Methodists, to get them to pray with me. And I would have been glad if they had asked me to stay all night, but shame would not let me tell them so. I often thought I never could get over another night. My neighbours said I was beside myself, for I could not rest in my bed. I often rose and wandered in the fields, weeping and bewailing my desperate state. But, blessed be God! He that wounds can heal.

In the beginning of July, as Stephen Watson and I were sitting together, he had a volume of the Christian Library in his hand, out of which he read one of Mr. Rutherford's Letters. When he had done, "Stephen," said I, "I find, as it were, a melting warmth in my breast." "So do I too," said he. He then asked, "Cannot you believe that God has pardoned your sins?" "No," said I, "I dare not:" on which I immediately lost my comfort.

Sunday, July 12th.—Joseph Watson preached in the chapel in Weardale. He gave out that hymn,—

"All ye that pass by,
 To Jesus draw nigh:
 To you is it nothing that Jesus should die?
 Your ransom and peace,
 Your surety He is;
 Come, see if there ever was sorrow like His.

"For you and for me
 He pray'd on the tree:
 The prayer is accepted, the sinner is free."

Then all within me cried out,

"That sinner am I,
 Who on Jesus rely,
 And come for the pardon God cannot deny."

I then believed that God for Christ's sake had forgiven all my sins, and found that peace which arises from a sense of reconciliation. The people of God who knew my distress perceived by my countenance that the Lord was gracious to me, before I had the opportunity to tell them. I then went rejoicing home, and could not help telling what God had done for my soul.

It was not long before my faith was tried. One of our brethren, a Calvinist, lent me a book. As I read, I thought Mr. Wesley was quite in the wrong, and I found something in me that rose against him; yet one thing I remember I could not swallow, which was, the author asserted that a sense of inbred sin would reconcile us to death. "No," said Mr. Wesley, "nothing but perfect love." Indeed I could not persuade myself that the sting of death could reconcile us to death itself! However, I read and reasoned myself miserable. Yet the Lord gave me grace to wrestle with Him in prayer; and every day I found, more or less, the witness of my sonship. I

was then afraid, if I sought after holiness, I should rob Christ of His glory. Some of our people hearing that I read that book, and conversed with the man who lent it, took it for granted that I was prejudiced against the doctrine of perfection and those that preached it. They told this to my band-leader. I went one Sunday morning, as usual, at seven o'clock, to meet my band, and found myself in a peaceable frame of mind. No sooner did the leader begin to pray, than he cried, "Lord, never suffer us to be prejudiced against Thy servants, seeing that Thy will is our sanctification!" I found, as it were, something in me, saying, "He means me." When he spoke his experience, he expressed the same thing; on which I said, "Is it me you mean?" He answered, "What I have said, I have said." I then found violent prejudice against him. My peace was gone. My soul was torn in pieces within me. I told one of our people as we went home, how my leader had behaved towards me. I did not regard breaking the band-rules, because I was determined never to meet in a band any more. I had no rest: though I could not give up my confidence in God, nevertheless my corruptions boiled so within me that I could have fought with a feather.

On Friday night we had preaching. I went to it like one possessed with a legion of devils. Afterwards the bands met, and the preacher earnestly exhorted all present to look for the second blessing, and insisted that it might be received. "Now," thought I, "if there is such a thing, none can stand in more need of it than I do." But the enemy suggested, "There are those that have known God several years, and have not attained; and shalt thou be delivered who hast been justified only a few.

months?" Immediately I found power to resist the temptation, and said within myself, "God is not tied to time." No sooner did that thought pass through my heart, than the power of God seized me. I found I could not resist, and therefore turned myself over upon the seat; I cannot express how I was. I found such a travail in my soul, as if it would burst from the body. I continued so, till I was motionless and insensible for a season. But as I was coming to myself, I found such an emptying, and then such a heaven of love springing up in my soul, as I had never felt before; with an application of these blessed words, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." If possible, I could have put my hand-leader into my heart. The book I mentioned before had pleased me so well that I had given orders to him that lent it me, to buy me one of them. But no sooner did God work this change in my soul, than I found an utter aversion to it, and told the man, "You must not buy it; for I shall never read it more."

In the year 1768 I was sent to call sinners to repentance, in and about the city of Carlisle. Here I was much persecuted; but, blessed be God, He delivered me out of the hands of all my enemies, and gave me several seals to my ministry.

Thus far Mr. Wilkinson lived to write himself. One of his fellow-labourers added what follows:—

My acquaintance with Mr. Wilkinson was very short. The first time I ever saw him was a little

above three years ago. The next time was after last Bristol Conference. He was there appointed to labour with me in and about Grimsby.

When we met in the Circuit, we were both in health; but the day before our Quarterly Meeting I was taken very ill of a fever: however, the next morning I ventured to set out for the meeting; but, having fifteen miles to ride, it was with much difficulty I got safe thither. And then I was unable to attend either the lovefeast or the watch-night.

But I shall never forget the prayer Mr. Wilkinson put up for me at the close of the lovefeast, that the Lord would spare me a little longer, and raise me up again to labour in His vineyard. His prayer pierced the heavens: the power of God came down upon the people like a torrent of rain. They were so affected that they wept and rejoiced abundantly. Immediately I shared with them, although I was not in the same room: the Divine presence broke my heart to pieces. My soul overflowed with love, and my eyes with tears. I know not that I was ever so powerfully and suddenly affected under any person's prayer, except on the day I was converted to God. Immediately I had faith to believe the Lord would raise me up again, and for several minutes it appeared to me as if I was perfectly well. The next day I went along with him to Louth; and in that time we had a good deal of conversation together, which chiefly turned upon these two points, namely, predestination and Christian perfection.

He told me, with sorrow of heart, how often he had been grieved for the immense hurt that he had seen done by the preaching of unconditional predestination, as it blocked up the way of repentance,

weakened the foundation of diligence, damped the fervour of believers after holiness, and had a tendency to destroy it root and branch. He likewise very warmly expressed his love for Bible-holiness; saying, it was the delight of his soul to press after it himself, and to enforce it upon others; and that while he was doing this, the Lord blessed him most in his labours, and shone clearest upon the work He had wrought in his own soul. He signified to me that the Lord had circumcised his heart to love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength; and I believe, at that time, he was full of faith and the Holy Ghost.

He was truly meek, and lowly of heart, and little, and mean, and vile in his own eyes. I found my mind amazingly united to him, for the time we were together, like the soul of David and his beloved Jonathan. I loved him much for the mind of Christ I saw in him, and for his zeal for the Lord of Hosts. We parted at Louth; and I endeavoured, with the fever upon me, to creep along to Tedford to preach: but it was with much trouble I went through my discourse. That night the fever seized upon me more violently, and never left me for near a month. About a week after, Mr. Wilkinson came to Tedford to see me. We spent about three hours together very profitably. We then both of us prayed, and commended each other to God.

A few days after we parted, he was taken ill of the fever, and could not rest until he came to his wife at Grimsby; where he lay ill for four or five weeks. He then appeared to be recovering fast, and walked about a little; but he suddenly relapsed, and was carried off in about a week.

He bore all his afflictions with great patience, fre-

quently lifting up his heart to God, and repeating these words: "But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held His steps, His way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips; I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." (Job xxiii.) When he perceived that he should die, he exhorted his wife to cast all her care upon the Lord, and encouraged her to believe that His grace was sufficient for her.

He then prayed for her and his two children; earnestly entreating the Lord to protect them in this troublesome world, and to supply all their wants.

He next prayed fervently for Mr. Wesley, that the presence of the Lord might continue with him all his days, and crown him at last with eternal glory.

He then remembered his three fellow-labourers in the Circuit, praying that the Redeemer would assist us in the great work; that He would go forthwith, and bless the labours of all the preachers; and that the kingdom of the Redeemer might spread unto the ends of the earth, and preserve them until they join the church triumphant.

In the night season he had a severe conflict with Satan, and his spirit wrestled with God in prayer. Yea, he was in an agony, as he said afterwards. At last the tempter fled; and he seemed as if he was admitted into heaven, to converse with God, with angels and saints.

He suddenly awaked his wife, (who was in the same room,) and said, "Thou hast been sleeping, but I have been in heaven. O, what has the Lord discovered to me this night! O the glory of God! the glory of God and heaven! The celestial city!

the New Jerusalem! O the lovely beauty! the happiness of paradise! God is all love; He is nothing but love. O, help me to praise Him! O, help me to praise Him! I shall praise Him for ever! I shall praise Him for ever!" So Robert Wilkinson departed this life in peace, on Friday, December 8th, about eleven o'clock, 1780.

It seemed a great providence that he died on the market-day, when a number of friends out of the country were present, who quickly published, in their little villages, that a funeral sermon would be preached on Sunday. The house was well filled, and the Lord made it a solemn time. I believe there was scarcely a dry eye in the congregation.

I have often taken notice, how the Lord makes the triumphant death of good men a peculiar blessing to His children who are left behind: so it was at this time. The people of God were remarkably blessed in hearing the dying testimony of our dear friend. The worldly people and the backsliders were cut to the heart.

At the conclusion of the sermon I dropped these words: "Earth has lost, and heaven has gained, a child of God. Let us pray the Lord to add another to the church militant." We did so; and the Lord answered our prayer, by setting a young man's soul at liberty, so that he went from the solemn place, as the shepherds from the heavenly vision, blessing, praising, and glorifying God.

The minister of the parish behaved exceedingly kind: he came to the preaching-house, stayed awhile, and then walked slowly before the corpse, whilst the people sung a hymn of praise. When we arrived at the church, one of our friends asked him if we might sing a hymn of praise. He answered, "I have no

objection: I am against nothing that is good." So we sung those awful words,—

"Thee we adore, eternal Name,
And humbly own to Thee,
How feeble is our mortal frame,
What dying worms we be!"

The people sang lustily and with a solemn spirit; for the Divine presence was with us all the way through, and in such a manner as I never knew before at any funeral.

When the minister read these words, "Not to be sorry as men without hope," Mrs. Wilkinson, who hung upon my arm with her two little babes, was so overwhelmed with the presence of God, that she could not refrain from crying out, "Sorry, no! Glory be to God! glory be to God! Glory, and praise, and blessing, be ascribed unto God, for ever and ever!" Her spirit seemed as if it was ready to launch into the eternal world, to be with Jesus and her happy husband. A remarkable power fell on all that could hear her; so that the people were melted into tears; some of sorrow, others of joy.

From this time the work of God began to revive at Grimsby, and the country people caught the fire, and carried it along with them into their little societies.

Robert Wilkinson was, as you have described him, "an Israelite indeed; a man of faith and prayer; who, having been a pattern of all good works, died in the full triumph of faith." O, what a blessing to live and die a Christian! May I also be a follower of those who "through faith and patience inherit the promises!" In my life, and at my death, may I be like him!

G. S.

September 20th, 1781.

THE LIFE
OF
MR. BENJAMIN RHODES.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

LETTER TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.

April 20th, 1779.

REV. SIR,

I WAS born at Kexborough, a little town in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in the year 1743. My father, who taught a school in the town, had the external parts of religion before he heard the Methodists: he used family and private prayer, read the Scriptures and other books of devotion in his family daily, and frequently instructed, exhorted, and catechised his children. By this discipline we were restrained from many evils, taught the fear of the Lord, and, in some measure, to seek that which is good.

Before I was eleven years of age, I went with my father to Birstal to hear Mr. Whitefield. I found my soul deeply affected under the word. At first I had a kind of terror; but before the sermon was ended, my heart was melted into tenderness, and sweetly drawn after God: yet a few months after

this, a propensity to foolish pleasures sprung up in my breast, and drew me into childish vanities.

At about twelve years of age I took a walk one evening into a large, thick wood, not far from the town. I left the path, and wandered in the thickest part of it, till I was entirely lost. Night began to close in upon me, and I did not know which way to turn my face towards home. It soon became quite dark: I then gave over rambling, and intended to remain there till the next morning, when I hoped to find my way out. In this situation I found my former impressions begin to return with much sweetness. My soul was drawn out in prayer; I was deeply sensible of the presence of God; my heart overflowed with penitential tenderness; and, under a deep sense of my own unworthiness, and of His goodness, mercy, and love, I sang and prayed with much fervour: yea, I was so thankful that the Lord had found me, while lost in a wood, that I would not for all the world have missed such an opportunity.

My parents, being alarmed at my not returning at the usual time, made great search for me. At last, my father came to the wood-side, and called aloud: I soon heard him, and following the sound, got out about midnight, without receiving any hurt.

The impressions I received this night lasted for some time; but youthful pleasures again prevailed, and drew me into such follies as grieved the Spirit of God, and greatly damped the fervour of my own spirit.

I was chiefly at home with my father till I was sixteen years of age, and mostly attended the school. I had great opportunities of improvement, both in learning and religion; but my volatile spirit did not love study and confinement: the love of pleasure

prevailed over my judgment; and, though my vain enjoyments were rendered very painful from my father's displeasure, and the terrors of my conscience, yet my attachments to them made me careless about things profitable, and prevented such an improvement as might have been made.

About this time my father put me out to learn some branches in the wool and the worsted business. His chief motive in placing me where he did was that I might be under the means of grace: and though I attended the preaching constantly, heartily believed the doctrine, and often felt the power of the word; yet I was so much taken up with pleasure, and those companions who led me from seriousness and religion, that at last, as with a flood, I was carried away; not indeed into gross sins, (for I do not remember that I ever swore one oath, or took God's name into my mouth upon a light occasion,) but into foolish company, gaiety, and youthful vanities. But in my foolish career I was like the troubled sea: the more I sought to please myself in vanity, the further I was from it; and sometimes my conscience terrified me almost to distraction; so that I have been afraid to sleep, lest I should awake in endless misery. All this time my understanding was clearly informed respecting the nature and the necessity of religion; and I felt great reverence for it. None can tell the struggles I had in my breast, between my conscience and my inclinations: sometimes one and sometimes the other was obeyed. I knew I could not be truly religious without parting with all that is contrary to seriousness, and without having the bent of my mind turned from vanity to God. Neither did I make any pretensions

to it, as I had not a fixed determination to forsake all, and follow Christ.

When I was about nineteen, I thought myself most miserable. I was quite sick of vanity, and so burdened with a sense of it on my conscience, that I could not find rest day or night. I then began to think on the mercy and goodness of God, which had been so abundantly made manifest to me in times past; but my follies so reproached me, that I was ashamed to look up. I then found a willingness to be saved in God's way; and, groaning in my bondage, prayed, "Turn Thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned." The Lord heard, and turned the whole desire of my heart from everything earthly unto Himself: it was then I found such relentings of soul, as I had not done before. Nothing affected me more than a sense of God's long-suffering, mercy, and goodness; that, after I had so often refused His calls, quenched His Spirit, and abused His blessings, yet I no sooner cried to Him than He heard, and delivered me from the servitude of sin, and encouraged me to hope in His mercy. My whole heart was then given up to Him. Prayer was now my chief business; and I often sang very feelingly:—

"Wealth and honour I disdain,
Earthly comforts all are vain;
These can never satisfy;
Give me Christ, or else I die."

In this state I continued several months, desiring and seeking God alone, without much interruption or temptation. About this time I was invited to a private meeting among the Calvinists. The minister spoke much of the power of imagination, and what a deluded people the Methodists were, and warned his flock not to come near them. I was greatly

bewildered and terrified at this. I began to suspect that my call to religion, and the change in my mind, were only delusion. I was also tempted to think, that all who professed religion were like myself. I was carried so far as to doubt of Christianity, and of the being of a God! I thought the greatest part of the world consisted of Heathens, Mahometans, and Jews; the Popish religion is almost as idolatrous as the Pagan; there are but few Protestant Christians, and but very few of these who act consistently with the doctrines of Christianity. These thoughts increased my infidelity till I was almost distracted. Darkness and horror sat brooding upon my mind, together with a gloomy fear of falling into nothing, or worse than nothing, at death. I hated life, and, though tempted, was yet afraid to venture on death. I had no power to pray: I only wished for a dark retreat, where I might converse with darkness and misery alone.

In this "horrible pit" I groaned for deliverance, yet was not sensible of a Deliverer near. At last I found power to look up; my heart began to melt, and the spirit of prayer returned: I cried, and the Lord heard. The darkness began to disperse; hope again visited my soul: yea, it increased, attended with a degree of confidence in God, till the "Sun of righteousness arose with healing in His wings." I beheld the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world;" and had such a sense of the sufficiency of His atonement, as I had not had before, with a conviction that I was interested therein. All my fears and doubts disappeared: I found the peace of God: His love was manifested to me, which caused me to love Him again. Joy and gratitude now so possessed my heart, that my

cup was ready to run over; and my soul, being freed from all its bondage, said, "God is become my salvation." Now my infidel fears were gone, and the truth of Christianity appeared to me in the clearest light. Not only my understanding saw, but all my powers felt, the truth thereof. I had a deep sense of a present God, whom I approached in the name of Jesus, with reverential awe, confidence, gratitude, and love, and could call Him "my God and my all."

In this happy season, my joy frequently prevented my sleep, while my soul was taken up with Him who is altogether lovely, and in ecstasies of joy in the stillness of the night I often sang my great Deliverer's praise. All things earthly appeared so empty, that I thought nothing here below worth a thought, only as it tended to promote my eternal interest: I only desired grace and glory. I then began to conclude, that my adversaries were quite overthrown; and that I had only to march forward, and take possession of the "land of promise:" I therefore pressed forward rejoicing for some months. At length, through unwatchfulness, and giving way to levity, my comforts greatly diminished, till, imperceptibly, I was again drawn into a wilderness state; and though I was diligent in the outward means of grace, yet I had lost the pleasing sensations which I formerly had found therein.

About this time I was strongly beset with some Calvinists, who used all the arguments in their power to draw me into the belief of their doctrines. I was almost persuaded to believe "final perseverance," only I did not see how I could separate it from "reprobation:" I wished to do it, but could not. I thought, if these must necessarily be saved,

on whom God begins a good work, then the rest must as necessarily be damned, on whom He does not begin it. When I considered "final perseverance," as it related to myself only, it appeared so pleasant that I hardly could resist it: but when I considered it as a branch of the doctrines of unconditional "election and reprobation," it gave me pain, and inclined me to renounce it. Reprobation appeared to me quite contrary to the whole purport of Scripture,—the nature of a holy, just, and merciful God,—the state of man as an accountable creature,—and to a future judgment, where rewards and punishments will be dispensed to every man according to his works. However, my lot being cast among those who held the decrees, I frequently heard the chief arguments that are used in support thereof. Sometimes their arguments appeared so plausible, that I began to stagger in my mind, and to be much distressed: I then made it the subject of prayer; and one night, after I had been wrestling with God, that He would lead me into all truth, I dreamed of reading a passage of Scripture which gave me entire satisfaction. I could not remember the passage in the morning; but on opening my Bible, the first words I cast my eyes upon were, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter iii. 9.) Such light and conviction attended the words, as removed every doubt of God's loving all mankind; and from that day to this my mind has been established in the comfortable doctrines of universal redemption.

But though I was fixed as to doctrines, yet I did not find, as formerly, such a sweet intercourse with

heaven ; and foolish desires began to arise again, which formerly seemed to be dead. I had also very powerful temptations ; and earthly attachments prevailed too far upon my affections. Yet the hand of the Lord was over me for good, and preserved me from the dangers to which I was exposed.

When I was about the age of twenty-one, I heard Mr. Jaco preach on Hebrews xii. 1. He insisted on the necessity of laying aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, in order to our running the Christian race. I saw the necessity of it, and was again stirred up ; and the Lord once more set me at liberty from every entanglement. In a short time my former comforts returned with more solidity, and my understanding was abundantly matured in the knowledge of the Christian warfare.

About this time I was desired to lead several classes. I found those meetings were both solemn and profitable to myself and others. The first quarter several found a sense of forgiveness, and others were greatly stirred up. I was also desired to speak a word of exhortation : this also I complied with. I now soon found work enough, as many came to hear what I had got to say. Indeed, I have often stood up to speak to a large congregation, when I would rather have undergone almost any punishment. However, the Lord gave me strength according to my day ; for when I have begun to speak, my fear and trembling were quite taken away, and I frequently found much freedom in speaking : and I have reason to believe that the Lord rendered my weak labours useful ; for some were turned from their wickedness to God, some converted, and many stirred up to press forward. On a Sunday I usually preached at several neigh-

bouring towns, and sometimes visited them on the week-days.

As the Conference drew near, Mr. Jaco asked me if I was willing to travel, suppose there should be a want of preachers. I found much reluctance to this, arising from a sense of my insufficiency; and I had such a love to the people where I was, that the thought of leaving them gave me great pain; yet I desired not to be governed by my own inclination, but by the providence of God.

At the Conference held at Leeds, 1766, I was desired to take a Circuit; to which I consented. I set out in the twenty-third year of my age, and went into the Norwich Circuit, where I stayed two years. The Lord was pleased to own my poor labours here in the conviction and conversion of several souls.

At the Conference in London, 1767, I was taken into full Connexion. My second Circuit was in Oxfordshire, where I stayed two years. In that time the work of the Lord was enlarged abundantly.

My next remove was to Canterbury, where I stayed one year. While I was here, my father died. Since then I have been much in the north, to be near my mother and sisters.

My next remove was into Lincolnshire, where I stayed two years among a poor people, who received the word gladly. We got into some new places, and in other respects God gave me some fruit of my labours. From hence I went to Hull and Scarborough, where I stayed three years. Here we raised several new societies, and in several parts of the Circuit the work prospered.

I next went to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where I stayed only one year. Here I had many profitable

opportunities, and had also the pleasure of seeing some fruit of my labours. From hence I went to Alnwick and Dunbar, where I laboured one year. I had much riding here; but being amongst a people whom I loved, and with whom I laboured comfortably, I thought little of fatigues.

I am now in Sussex and Kent. Since I came into these parts, I have lost a sister and mother, who, I believe, are both gone after my father into Abraham's bosom: but I am left behind, almost the only person out of a large family. But how long or how short my day may be I leave to unerring wisdom: one only concern ought to possess me,—to employ it as I ought; then, at the close of it, I also shall sleep in peace, and, after a short absence, be with my dear departed friends.

“Thrice happy meeting!

Nor time, nor death, shall ever part us more.”

I am thankful to God that He ever called me to this blessed work; as by this means I have gained more strength to my own soul; have been of some use to my fellow-creatures; have had an opportunity of knowing a little of the world, and of the state of religion amongst the Methodists and others: all which I judge to be more than a reward for what I have done and suffered.

At present, there is nothing so precious to me as religion and the cause of God; and my principal desire is to fill up my little sphere, that when I am called to give an account, I may do it with joy, and not with sorrow.

I am, Rev. Sir,
Your affectionate son in the Gospel,
BENJAMIN RHODES.

IN the Minutes of Conference for the year 1816 the following character is given of Mr. Rhodes:—

THIS venerable and excellent man was brought to the knowledge of God, and His truth, at an early period of life. When he was yet a child, the Father of lights revealed His Son in the heart of His servant, and made him happy in His love.

Having received a Divine call to the work of the ministry, he willingly devoted all his talents to the duties of his holy calling; and it pleased the great Head of the church, not only to qualify him for these duties, but to bless him with many seals to his ministry.

For about half a century he was engaged in calling sinners to repentance; during which time he always possessed the confidence of his brethren, and was highly respected as a faithful and laborious servant of the Lord. During the last years of his life he resided with his family at Margate; where he was always found ready for any part of his Master's work of which he was capable.

Mr. Rhodes was a man of great simplicity and integrity of mind; he was warmly and invariably attached to the whole economy of Methodism. His life was a practical explication of his faith; and his character, both in the church and the world, was creditable to himself, and honourable to religion.

THE LIFE
OF
MR. THOMAS TENNANT.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

LETTER TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.

July 1st, 1779.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I WAS born in London, in the year 1741. My father came from Norfolk, and my mother from Cambridgeshire. They were very honest and well-meaning persons, and constantly attended the service of the church; but I fear knew not the power of religion. Shortly after they came to London they saw Mr. Whitefield preaching to a great multitude in Moorfields. As they had never seen or heard of him before, they stared with great astonishment. What he said made some impression on them, and they frequently heard him, till he left England; but when he went to Georgia, they were at a loss what to do, till one told them they might hear the same kind of preaching at the Foundery. My father went, and heard you, sir: but the first time he did not understand it; but after awhile he understood you

very well; and both he and my mother were truly awakened. Presently after they were admitted into the society, which they counted a very great privilege, and continued therein, serving God and His people, as long as they lived.

As to myself, I had convictions of sin from my childhood. But as I grew up, I endeavoured to get rid of them; which was partly effected; but I could not shake off the fear of death. I sometimes tried to comfort myself with the thought, that death was only my common lot among the rest of mankind; but if I apprehended it near, I was terrified beyond expression. One Sunday afternoon, when I had sauntered up and down St. James's Park, I went into Westminster Abbey, not for devotion, but to pass away time. I had not been there long before I was struck with an horrible dread! My sins were set in array against me! I hastened out of the church, but did not expect to get home alive. I seemed ready to expire, and was to my own apprehension

“Condemn'd the second death to feel,
Arrested by the pains of hell!”

I cried to the Lord in an agony of fear, who heard me from His holy place, and came to my deliverance. My dread and horror were in a measure removed; and I resolved never more to spend any part of the Sabbath in merely seeking my own pleasure.

When I was about fourteen years of age, my father put me out to a person who feared God. While I was with him, I had frequent visitations from God, and felt the drawings of His blessed Spirit, though I too often resisted them. However, I became more serious; which was increased by two severe fits of illness. Before this I had been exceedingly fond of

going to plays, yet never went without a dread upon my spirit. When I was there, I always seemed as one treading on forbidden ground; and particularly one night, when two persons were trampled to death, in crowding up the same passage which I had but just before got up.

I also took great delight in reading plays; for which purpose I collected a number of the best I could meet with, and often pleased myself and my companions with the repetition of some of the most striking passages in them. But I found nothing of this kind could give me any real happiness, and was constrained to say, "This also is vanity! It will not satisfy an immortal spirit; it will not ease a wounded mind." At last, from a full conviction of this, I committed all my plays to the flames, and determined to spend my leisure hours in reading more profitable books. I therefore read your "Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion" with much satisfaction. Yet on reading the former part of your sermon entitled "The Almost Christian," I was quite distressed, and ready to give up all hope. I thought, "His Almost Christian leaves me so far behind, that to be quite a Christian seems impossible to me." But when I had turned over the next leaf, and saw what was necessary to make a true Christian, namely, "the love of God," my heart was softened, and my hopes revived. I said, "This is religion, this is Christianity indeed; and this, Lord, is the very thing I want! O, give me this love, and I shall be satisfied, and all within me shall bless Thy name!"

Frequently, when I have heard you preach, I thought you appeared as with a sword drawn in your hand, with which you cleft me asunder. At such

times the word was indeed quick and powerful, piercing and wounding my inmost soul; it was indeed a discerner of the thoughts and intents of my heart; but it still left me without comfort to bewail my wretched condition. Thus I went on, till my burden grew too heavy to be borne. I mourned all the day long. My distress was very great, and I wanted to speak to some experienced person; but, being naturally very close and reserved, I could not break through. I was glad indeed when one asked me to go to a meeting of Christian friends; but when I came to the door, and heard them singing, I had such an idea both of their goodness, and of my own unworthiness, that I durst not presume to go in; therefore I walked back again with a heavy heart.

Some time after this I joined the society; but for a long while durst not venture to go to the Lord's table. One Sunday I was determined to go; but when I approached, my heart failed me, and I went back without receiving; but, through the distress of my mind, my legs were scarcely able to support me, and, being filled with fear, guilt, and shame, I trembled exceedingly. However, at last, as a poor, weary, heavy-laden sinner, who had nothing to plead, but, "God be merciful to me for Christ's sake," I ventured to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. Just before I came up to the table, these words were deeply impressed upon my mind,—

"Cover'd with Thy blood we are:
Find a part that does not arm,
And strike the sinner there."

This inspired me with such courage, that I kneeled down with a strong hope I should not be a victim to God's justice, but a monument of His mercy; and when Dr. J. gave me the bread and wine, I was

enabled to believe that Christ died for me, and was filled with peace in the Holy Ghost. I rose from the table with a glad heart, greatly rejoicing in God my Saviour.

After this I walked in the loving fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. I found great sweetness in the word; yea, and in all the other means of grace. Indeed some of the most delightful moments of my whole life were spent in waiting upon God in His ordinances. I enjoyed great tranquillity of spirit, being delivered from my guilty, tormenting fears of death and hell. When I laid my body down to rest, I could repose my soul as on the bosom of Jesus, and say,—

“ What, if death my sleep invade,
Shall I be of death afraid?
Whilst encircled by Thine arm,
Death may strike, but cannot harm.

“ What, if beams of opening day
Shine around my breathless clay?
Brighter visions from on high
Shall regale my mental eye.”

Meantime I found an earnest desire to live to the glory of God, together with much love to precious souls. And hence I found a desire of preaching; on mentioning which, I was desired to go with a friend who occasionally exhorted a few people at a house in St. George's Fields. At his request I ventured to speak a few words to them, and found freedom of spirit.

About this time I had a great desire to travel with you, sir. When you was informed of it, you was so kind as to consent to it. So I had the pleasure of accompanying you from March, 1770, to the August following, when I was admitted on trial as

a travelling preacher, and appointed for the Newcastle Circuit.

I believe very few, if any, of our preachers set out with so little courage: the depression of spirit I laboured under was nearly insupportable; and if it had not been for the affection and tenderness of my good friend Mr. Jaco, who was at that time the assistant, I must have sunk under the burden. The loving, sensible people I laboured among were also very kind to me, and bore with me; though I was with them in weakness, fear, and much trembling.

The next Conference I was sent into Lincolnshire; where I met with many trials, having both the inward and outward cross to bear. Afterwards I was near a year among the poor, loving people at Colchester; and I hope my labour was not in vain.

From thence I went to Bradford in Yorkshire, and the year following to Newcastle again. I had now a little more courage than when I was there before; and, I trust, was more useful to the people: and from that time I have travelled with more satisfaction than ever I did before.

At present I find a thankful heart for the mercies of a gracious God, and desire to devote myself unreservedly to His service. Indeed it is comfortable to me to reflect, that "God is love;" that "He was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself;" that Christ Jesus "gave Himself a ransom for all;" that "He tasted death for every man;" that "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world;" and I have often wondered how any man of sense, who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, can use arguments in opposition to this. But as to the dispute concerning these points, I very seldom mention it in public; never, unless my subject naturally leads to

it; and even then, I do it in as few and as calm words as possible: for I am quite convinced, that a thousand exclamations and assertions, be they ever so vehemently delivered, will not amount to one argument on either side the question. But what I wish above all things is, that I may increase in the knowledge and love of God, and be more holy, happy, and useful every day of my life: nevertheless, I am truly thankful for, and profited by, the superior talents and labours of any of my brethren who are more particularly called to explain and defend these glorious truths which I have always believed.

Upon the whole, as far as I know of myself, I love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and if He is pleased to continue to use, in any degree, me, His weak, unworthy creature, I shall be unfeignedly thankful, and hope to give Him all the praise in time and in eternity.

I am, Rev. and dear Sir, as ever,

Your dutiful son and servant,

THOMAS TENNANT.

In the Minutes of Conference for the year 1793 the following character is given of Mr. Tennant:—

THOMAS TENNANT; a man of a meek and quiet spirit. He travelled for twenty-two years, and was everywhere received as an acceptable preacher. His sufferings for many years were great, arising from a deep nervous disorder. As he lived to God, so he died in peace.

THE LIFE
OF
MR. JOHN ALLEN.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

LETTER TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.

September, 1779.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I WAS born at Chapel-in-the-Frith, Derbyshire, in June, 1737. My parents were honest labouring people, and brought up eight children, all yet living; most of them convinced of sin, and some converted to God. As my father was a Churchman, and my mother a Presbyterian, I went sometimes to church, sometimes to the meeting: and frequently I went with my mother to hear the Methodists, among whom I had several relations. I stood in awe of these; and when I was in their company behaved more seriously than at other times.

From eight or ten years of age I had many serious thoughts; especially when it thundered and lightened, or when I heard a passing-bell; and I was always preserved from swearing, drunkenness, and other scandalous sins. But I delighted much in

dancing, singing, and cards, and in making everyone merry wherever I was.

When I was about sixteen, I was deeply convinced of sin, by reading the eighth chapter of Jeremiah ; particularly these words, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." I concluded that my day of grace was past, and that there remained for me nothing but judgment and fiery indignation. The thought of this almost broke my heart, and caused me to weep bitterly before the Lord. But after a time I grew as careless as before, and continued so for above five years, only with intervals of seriousness, and many good desires, but none brought to good effect. My great hindrance was, the being joined with a society of singers. I found I could not stay with them, and be religious ; so I thought I would give religion up for the present : but at times I was of all men most miserable.

Another affliction soon came upon me. I was from a child very fond of my mother, and often thought I could not bear to live after her. In March, 1759, she died. This awakened me once more. I resolved to break off at once, and to seek God with all my heart. My companions, thinking I had only left them through grief, and would soon return, said nothing to me at first ; but by and by, when they heard I was turned Methodist, they set upon me in earnest. But by the grace of God I withstood all, and came out from among them.

At that time we had no preaching near us. I often went twelve miles on a Sunday to hear a sermon. But in September following, Mr. Crab came to preach at Chinley, and joined a few together in a society : I willingly cast in my lot among them, and, blessed be God, have never repented of it.

About Christmas I got Mr. John Oliver to preach at my father's house. We had no more preaching there for some time. However, three of us continued to meet together, to sing and pray, and converse. One evening, when we were met, I was in such distress, that I concluded I could live no longer, if God did not pardon my sins. Presently I heard a voice, saying, "It is I: be not afraid." I looked about to see who it was that spoke; but could see no one. However, my mind was much refreshed for a season, and I remained between hope and fear till we met again. As I was then crying to the Lord, those words came strongly to me, "The Lord is at hand! The Lord is at hand!" But neither did the impression made by this continue long. Soon after I gave way to trifling, and so grieved the Holy Spirit, that I hardly dared to look up, or hope for mercy. But while I was overwhelmed, and feebly crying out, "I am oppressed; Lord, undertake for me;" these words were applied, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Put thy trust in God." This comforted me much. But still I could not rest without a clear sense of my being reconciled to God. I was one day crying to God for this, and wrestling with Him in prayer, when I felt the love of God shed abroad in my heart, and was constrained to cry out,

"For sinners like me
He bled on the tree.

Ah, who would not love such a Saviour as Thee?"

Now I could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." My soul was filled with peace, and I rejoiced in the hope of the glory of God. Soon after we began to have constant preaching; and a

little class was formed, of which I was appointed the leader. I loved meeting in class; but I trembled at being the leader: nevertheless, I took up my cross. And many times it proved a blessing, both to the people and to my own soul.

Before this I had many thoughts about preaching; but I saw not how it could be, as I was deeply sensible of my own ignorance. This I often laid before the Lord, praying Him to give me full proof if it was His will. Meanwhile I sometimes gave a word of exhortation; which it pleased God to make useful. This encouraged me to speak again; but it was with fear and trembling; and I often thought, "If I get this time over, I will speak no more." Thus I went on for more than twelve months, before I attempted to take a text. After I had exhorted and preached about four years, I was, in the year 1766, received on trial as a travelling preacher. And, although my heart was in the work, yet was I frequently tempted to give it up; but God suffered me not. He again and again refreshed my soul therein, and encouraged me to go on by letting me see the fruit of my labours.

Some years after, being stationed in London, I was seized with an illness, which held me eight months. In this affliction I was often low-spirited, which laid me open to many temptations. When I got a little better, I resolved to preach again. The first time I was to preach, I went a little before the time to meditate in the fields. As I was walking on the grass, I was, I know not how, thrown down with such force, that I was much bruised, and my clothes ill torn. Hitherto could Satan go, and no farther.

Three or four years after, I had thoughts of altering my condition. Upon this I consulted my best

friends. I gave myself to prayer; and, after much deliberation, married Miss Jane Westal, of which I never had cause to repent. We lived together in perfect harmony, till, on the 30th of June last, she was seized with the epidemic distemper. At first we were not apprehensive it was the fever; though she herself judged it was, and believed it was the messenger of death. As her fever increased, and her end drew nearer, she was happier and happier. She said very little to me about dying, because she was sensible it would give me more affliction than I should be well able to bear. But to others she spoke freely concerning it; and with the greatest composure she said, "I shall soon be

'Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.'"

The Tuesday before her death she seemed to be quite transported with joy. When I went up stairs, I found her with heaven in her look, repeating the following lines:—

"The world recedes; it disappears!
Heaven opens on my eyes! My ears
With sounds seraphic ring!
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!
O grave, where is thy victory?
And where, O death, thy sting?"

On Friday she seemed like one from above. There was in her such a spirit of love and gratitude as I never saw before in any creature. She thanked and blessed every one that did the least thing for her. She often prayed that God would reward me for all my kindness to her; and broke out, "My Lord! my God! my Father! my Husband! my Friend! I long to see Thee!" When she could

speak no longer, I desired her, if her soul was happy, to lift up her hand. This she immediately did; and soon after fell asleep.

By her death I lost one of the best of wives, and my two small children one of the best of mothers. In many things she was a pattern to the flock of Christ; particularly in plainness of dress and of speech, in neatness, in every relative duty, as well as in private prayer. This I never remember her to have omitted three times a day. Had any told me beforehand, how I should be able to bear her death, I could not have believed it. None but God can tell what I felt. But I did not feel a murmuring thought, nor ever for one moment imagine that God had dealt hardly with me. I could still say,

“Thy medicine puts me to great smart;
Thou wound’st me in the tenderest part!
But ’t is with a design to cure:
I must, I will the touch endure:
All that I prize below is gone;
Yet, Father, still Thy will be done!”

I am now more convinced than ever, that religion does not turn us into stocks or stones; that it is intended, not to root out, but to regulate, our passions; and that there may be the most sensible feelings, with full resignation to the will of God. This, I bless God, is my own experience. I have long been telling the people that God would give suffering grace for suffering times; and I am now a living proof of it. As I have endeavoured to water others, God hath watered me again; and not as waters that fail, but as a fountain of water springing up within my soul.

Let the Lord now “do with me as seemeth Him good.”

“I'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come.”

Hitherto the Lord has been my helper; and He is the same for ever. So far as I know my own heart, I have no desire but to live to His glory, and to promote, so far as I am able, the interest of my Redeemer. My greatest grief is, that I do not love God more, and that I have not more of heaven in my heart.

I bless God, I have for twenty years been steady in my principles, having never, that I know of, however I was tempted, wavered for one hour. I have read many things on the other side of the question, but was not in the least shaken. I still believe that Christ gave Himself a ransom for all; and that, by the grace of God, He tasted death for every man, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

If this imperfect account may be of use to any, it will answer the end that is wished for by,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Your son in the Gospel,

JOHN ALLEN.

THE following account of Mr. Allen was given by the Conference in the year 1810 :—

JOHN ALLEN; a man of good report among all who knew him, and a judicious, faithful, and affectionate preacher. He began his itinerant labours in the year 1766; and continued to travel with very great approbation and considerable success, till the year

1799; when, by various infirmities, he was obliged to retire from public life, and was appointed a supernumerary in Liverpool. Here he preached occasionally that Gospel which had long been the joy and delight of his heart; and, though he had often to struggle with much weakness, used cheerfully to say, "I love my Master and His work." Of late he was unable either to preach, write, or walk; but would not relinquish his attendance on the ordinances of God, while any means could be contrived to carry him to the Lord's house. The means of grace were to the last the proper element of his soul. Meekness, gentleness, simplicity, resignation, and humility were Christian tempers which he possessed in a high degree; and one who was long and intimately acquainted with him testifies, that for many years he never was observed to be ruffled with pride or anger. Ten days previous to his departure from this world, in preparing to come to the chapel, he had a fall, which occasioned much pain in his side. After this his strength rapidly declined; and on Tuesday, February 20th, 1810, in the seventy-third year of his age, the weary wheels of life stood still. In the morning of that day, though unable to converse much, he was remarkably recollected; and when asked by a friend, "Have you strong confidence in God?" he replied, "Yes."

THE LIFE
OF
MR. JOHN PRITCHARD.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

I was born in December, 1746, at Arthbay, in the county of Meath, in Ireland. My father was a Protestant; my mother was of the Romish persuasion; and both were zealous for their religion

My father brought up his children according to the best light he had. One evening, while I was playing with the other boys, he heard me swear. On this he took me by the hand, led me into the house, laid me on his knee, and whipped me till the blood came. From that hour to this I believe I never swore one profane oath.

While very young, I was put to school. While learning to read, I met with these words, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." The impression they made on me never wore off, till I knew experimentally what they meant.

Whilst I was a lad I prayed earnestly night and morning. I also prayed at other times, when my mind was drawn out after God, as it very sensibly was from the age of five or six, to that of fourteen.

During these years I could weep and pray for hours together.

About this time I was much awakened by a horrid murder committed near Castle-Pollard, in the county of Westmeath. The manner was nearly as follows:—Three men, Gerroughty, Hughes, and Murray, with two women, went one dark and tempestuous night about eleven o'clock to the house of one Mr. Nangle. Upon their entering, they found the cook-maid, kitchen-maid, and scullion-boy, whom they killed on the spot. From thence they went up stairs, entered the chamber where the master and mistress lay, and, finding them asleep, Gerroughty with an iron bar of an inch square made a blow at Mr. Nangle's right arm, which broke it in two. On this Mrs. Nangle rushed out of the room; and, in the hurry, the candle which Murray held went out, and he fainted away; for Murray was compelled by the other two to go with them. Hughes ran down stairs to light the candle, whilst Gerroughty and Mr. Nangle were engaged with each other; and although his arm was broken, he got his antagonist under him; and had but Mrs. Nangle stayed to assist him, he would probably have conquered them. All this time, Gerroughty was calling upon Hughes to come and help him; who, coming at last, stabbed Mr. Nangle nine times before he left his hold. Gerroughty then dispatched him with a blow. Their next work was to go in pursuit of Mrs. Nangle; whom they found with the child and nurse in the nursery. They cut hers and the nurse's throat. Then they came to the child, about five years old, who cried out in the Irish tongue, "James! James!" (Hughes had lately been a servant in the family; and his mother nursed Mr. Nangle and him

at the same time, so that the child knew him well;) "surely you will not kill me as you have killed my mamma!" The words so penetrated the savage's heart, that he would have spared him; but Gerrougty would not, saying, "What he says to-day, he can say to-morrow." So he caught him by the legs, and dashed his head against the wall. Returning to the maid, and striking her with the iron bar, he left her, as he thought, for dead. After this they went in search of the men-servants, but found none.

They had now only to plunder the house, handing out what they found to the women that waited to receive the plunder; after which they set the house on fire. At that time there was a gentleman, a relation to the family, lying in one of the upper apartments; but they did not think it worth their while to lose any time upon him, concluding he would be consumed in the flames: and so he must have been but for a greyhound that was in the same room with him; which, when the fire came toward it, got upon his master, who was fast asleep, and tore off the bed-clothes from him. When he awoke, he climbed up to the window, and sat there till help should come.

Soon after, a servant that was abroad, returning home, found the house in flames. He concluded the family were asleep; and, getting in through one of the windows, ran up stairs to his master's chamber; but, on opening the door and going in, fell over him, while he lay gasping out his last. Hence he was convinced the house was not accidentally set on fire.

On this he carried his master out, and laid him against the wall, and went in search of his mistress. Not finding her in her own bed, he went to the

nursery, where he found three of them in a deplorable condition ; but the child and the maid were not quite dead : these he carried out also. He then went to seek the maids, but in vain, being murdered in the kitchen, which was by this time almost in ashes. He then ran better than a mile to awaken the adjacent village. When he returned he found the good old man sitting in the window, whom he just saved by reaching him a ladder. All this time the murderers were in the garden.

The next day, the country being alarmed, the inhabitants came together ; found the house in ruins ; the master and mistress dead ; the child half dead, but who yet lived thirty hours after. The two maids and the kitchen-boy were dug out of the ruins : the nurse only was in possibility of recovery. But God would not suffer the wicked to go unpunished. For Hughes got drunk on the very day of the funeral, and wanting to be rude with the servant of the public-house, on his offering her a purse of money, she told her mistress, who sent a young man to the room who knew him. On this he strove to escape, but was quickly taken, and carried before Lord Longford ; to whom, after a while, he related the whole affair, and impeached his accomplices, who were soon apprehended, and sent to Mullingar, and at the next assizes were condemned, and hung in chains near the place where the murder was committed. This awful event made a deep impression on my mind, and was a means of stirring me up to seek the Lord with greater earnestness.

I was about fifteen when Providence led me to Longford. My father, being a builder, was employed by the lord of the place to carry on some build-ings for him. It was here I first knew the Method-

ists, of whom I took particular notice : their going to church constantly pleased me much, being myself regular in attending all the ordinances. Yet I was often uneasy ; which I strove to cure by doing something more. But afterwards, by going into loose company, I was soon led away from my former exercise of prayer and receiving the sacrament. In a while I could walk the streets at night, and run from one excess of folly to another. Yet I could find no rest. There was a bitter herb mingled with all my sweets. Nay, the concern of my mind still increased, and every method I took to satisfy it proved abortive.

About this time I was sent to the Academy for Drawing, in Dublin ; and through it I got a new set of acquaintances, which gave me a disrelish to everything in the country : so that nothing would now do but a city-life ; and yet I was not happy.

From my earliest years I had a strong inclination to travel. I took the first opportunity, and, with some more wild than myself, I left my native soil, without acquainting father or mother, sister or brother, with my intentions, and set off for London. I was not long here before the Almighty found me out again. Being visited with a violent fever, I came to myself, and said, " Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son." I now found myself in a strange land, and among a strange people. I knew none save one man, a distant relation, who proved a friend indeed. The Lord's hand was heavy on me : my body, soul, and substance felt the weight thereof. He cut off every comfort at a stroke. He smote me with a fever, a consumption, and a guilty conscience. My sickness continued so long as not to leave me a

groat in the world, and hardly a morsel to eat. For three weeks I had to live upon twopence a day, and this at a time when just risen out of a fever. I could say, in the words of Job, "Terrors are turned upon me; they pursue my soul as the wind, and my welfare passes away as a cloud. My bones are pierced within me, and my spirit is poured out. I go mourning without the sun; a brother to the beasts of the field." In this condition I sought unto the Lord, but had no answer. He smote me with astonishment; He scared me and terrified me with dreams, and made the night to come upon me at noon, and my sun to go down in the morning of my life; He covered me with shame, and caused me to cry out, "A man may bear his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear? I am vile; I am oppressed: Lord, undertake for me!"

I now saw my whole heart polluted, my understanding darkened, my will corrupted, and destitute of its native freedom. I therefore made my bed in sorrow, and watered it with my tears. The multitude of sins, whereof my whole life was full, the heinousness of them, I feared would one day be laid open before Him that is to judge the quick and dead. My confusion increased as I dwelt upon what God had done to bring me to heaven, and what I had done to oppose His gracious design. I wept to see His goodness which I had abused. The great day of trial appeared full in view; and that the rich man could not then save himself by his riches, nor the mighty man by his might, nor the crafty man by his wiles; only the just shall stand before Him with joy. The just appeared to me as sitting upon their thrones, condemning me by their holy lives; together with many of those who had committed equal sins with

myself ; because they knew their time of repentance, which I had despised and rejected : the just Judge pronouncing the sentence, " Go, ye cursed ; " which sentence must remain, when once passed, unalterable.

This appeared most terrible of all ; and, I trust, profitable, in that it led me to the fear of the Lord.

I now appeared as one waking out of a dream in which I continued all my days. My sins stared me in the face ; the consideration of my estrangement from and opposition to God, was set home on my mind ; so that I was tried, cast, and condemned in my own breast. Under this sore burden and distress of mind I called upon the Lord. I also inquired after the Christians. I went to church, and to the Dissenters of almost all kinds, but still found no peace. I then went to the people called Quakers, and under their testimony I found a little consolation. At last I dropped into the old Foundery, in Moorfields, and heard a man who told me all that was in my heart. And now it might be said of me, as Milton said of our first parents,—

" Thus they in lowliest plight repentant stood,
Praying ; for from the mercy-seat above
Prevenient grace descending had removed
The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
Regenerate grow instead ; that sighs now breathed
Unutterable ; which the Spirit of prayer
Inspired, and wing'd for heaven with speedier flight
Than loudest oratory."

I now, both night and morning, sat under a powerful and faithful ministry, which led me gradually through the hidden mazes of corrupt nature into grace. I found it instrumental in turning me to Christ, the true Shepherd, the Lawgiver coming out of Sion, that turns away ungodliness from Jacob. I

soon found my understanding enlightened; my judgment informed how to find favour with God. But my sense of sin was so great, I could not think of finding mercy so soon: years, yea, my whole life, I thought was too little to repent and weep before I could with any face expect pardon. Thus I often rejected the counsel of God. I would not be yet healed, until I heard Mr. Jaco preach from these words, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." O, how did my heart bound! It was like the hart upon the mountain. "My chains fell off at a stroke! my soul was free; and found redemption, Lord, in Thee!" My wilderness soul became a pleasant field, and my desert heart like the garden of the Lord; the promises flowed in upon me. I found in consequence of this great tenderness of mind, and much peace and joy through believing. I now began to taste the sweets of religion; and was enabled to pity those who were curious in their inquiries after many things but that the most needful to know. What I counted gain before, I now counted loss; for, doubtless, I esteemed all things but as dung, in comparison of Christ and Him crucified. My daily study and contrivance was, how I might manifest my love and thankfulness to Him who had called me out of darkness into His marvellous light. My every meal was a kind of sacrament: the food I ate was life to my soul, as well as marrow to my bones. I found a double sweetness in all I possessed. In private the Lord poured His blessing upon me. He washed away my tears when weeping at the throne of grace, and called me His child; enabling me comfortably to look up, and call Him Father. I read His word daily, and wept over it. I looked into my heart, (for fear a plant of

unbelief should spring up,) and beheld the lineaments of God's image, the transcript of His laws, the harmony of His gifts and graces, the witness, earnest, and foretaste of eternal joys.

Soon after this I met with many things to try my patience; but none of them moved me. I had my room robbed one evening while I was at the Foundery; but I could say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord." I rejoiced exceedingly in that they could not rob me of Christ, and the privileges of the Gospel. Immediately I joined the society; and the first night of meeting the class, I thought it the greatest emblem of heaven of any meeting I was ever in. My soul was much humbled under a deep sense of my great unworthiness, and of being permitted to sit and hear such as feared God relate His lovingkindness to them. I was now united to a happy people, who walked (the general part of them) in the light of God's countenance, and counted it all joy at any time to suffer for His name's sake; where discipline was for walls and bulwarks, and where His doctrine dropped as the rain, and His words distilled as the dew. Yet I saw the need of watching and praying, that I might maintain the life and power of God in my soul. I saw that the best way to be free was to lay the axe at the root of the tree, and to spare neither root nor branch, but cut asunder all the cords which would tie the soul to earth; to deny every temper, passion, and gratification that had the least tendency to indulge the evil nature; seeking, intending, and desiring nothing during my long or short stay in this world, but to find in Christ what I lost in Adam,—holiness of heart and heavenly tempers,

which become those who are called by grace to be children of God and heirs of glory.

When you* appointed me for a class-leader, and would not excuse me from undertaking that office, I gave myself up to do all the good in my power to those you appointed to meet with me. Soon after this I got a band of single men. It increased every month, until I was forced to divide it into four bands. But being unwilling to be parted, we appointed to meet together once a month, and to make it a prayer-meeting. In these meetings God was with us of a truth. We had a heaven among us, and a paradise within us! We lived as the Christians of old, having all things common; so that few, if any, counted anything that he possessed his own.

It is true we had some wildfire among us, which made Mr. John Pawson fearful of us. Mr. Allen also seemed fearful of us likewise, though he loved us much, and strengthened us both in public and private.

For between three and four years this blessed work went on among near a hundred young men, besides what were at the west end of the town; until one and another of them went into the highways and hedges to be more useful to the world.

It is with pleasure I call those days to remembrance; when we ran our circle of duty both to God and our neighbour, visiting sick-beds, hospitals, gaols, workhouses, and garrets. O, how did we then harmoniously stem the tide; swim against the stream of evil examples; and with labour and strife, self-

* The following part of this account is addressed to the Rev. John Wesley.

denial and patience, fortitude and resolution, watchfulness and diligence, resist every temptation to forsake God and His ways !

Young men have the greatest opportunities for usefulness, before they get entangled in the cares of the world : if they do not, they are never likely to make any progress in the best way. This is the seed-time for usefulness. O that all young persons, male and female, who read these lines may bestir themselves, under a sense of the importance of this great work, to all assiduity while they are in the vigour of life !

Having spent five years thus with this happy people in London, you sent Mr. R. to inquire if I would accompany you to Ireland. After a few moments' consideration, I gladly accepted of your offer. Accordingly we left London the first Sunday in March, 1770. When we got over to Ireland, I went to see my relations and friends. After staying some days with my parents, I overtook you at Coolly-Lough. From this place we travelled round the kingdom, and in July arrived safe in Dublin. During this journey, I found my mind enlarged towards God and man. Many desires were kindled for the furtherance of the Gospel. At times I purposed to give a word of exhortation ; but my heart failed me, which brought on me much distress, and sore conflicts with the enemy. I then fasted, and also prayed that God would remove the burden ; but to no purpose ; for it grew more and more heavy upon me. The amazing value of souls weighed much with me towards putting in my mite for their salvation ; especially when I considered that the everlasting God Himself came down, not to reign over princes, but to wear out His life in the form of a

servant. These thoughts made me cry out, "Lord, what is a kingdom, what is the earth, with all the planetary worlds, compared to one soul?" During this time, in which my soul hung in suspense between heaven and earth, the following lines were often brought to my mind :—

" Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small ;
Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all !"

After travelling from March to September, I found I could not continue to travel with you in your long and painful journeys. I therefore purposed to return to business again. On consulting you, your answer was, that I was not called to be a hewer of wood, or a drawer of water ; that the Lord had something else for me to do ; but for the present you would have me go to Kingswood. I accordingly went ; and while I was there, my heart was drawn out in prayer for the whole world. My soul grasped the habitable globe. I felt as if I could spend my life in cries and tears for Zion's welfare. During my stay here, I came to a resolution to try the Lord ; to put Him to it, and to see what He had for me to do in this world. I was conscious that though all Christians were not called to be public speakers, yet all are called to be a common blessing, a public good, and thereby prove themselves the children of their heavenly Father, who is good unto all, and whose tender mercies are over all His works. But as I was uncertain how to act, I thought that by exercising the little ability I had, I should in time know the will of God concerning me. I therefore gave myself up to do all possible good, and to extend my usefulness to all around. Accordingly, I resorted to prayer.

meetings among the colliers in different parts of the wood, and exhorted the schoolboys daily; which often proved a means of quickening me in the ways of righteousness.

After some time I began to preach at Keynsham, and found much encouragement to proceed, until I fell into reasoning upon the necessity of human qualifications; such as a knowledge of the languages, and episcopal ordination. But I made this matter of prayer, and in a short time met with Mr. Baxter's "Answer to Mr. Johnston's Four Arguments" for an uninterrupted succession in the ministry, and the absolute necessity of episcopal ordination; in which answer Baxter refers his readers to the Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus, for a description of the persons qualified to speak in public: which was a grateful relief to my mind.

After being at Kingswood some time, I received a letter from you, desiring me to go immediately into the Wiltshire Circuit. This threw me into a fever, and brought on me much trouble of mind; seeing I was weak in grace and in gifts, and young in years, as well as of a shy disposition. However, I ventured. But though God gave me the hearts of the people in general, and I had for my Assistant one of the best of men, Mr. Richard Bourke, (now in Abraham's bosom,) yet my fears and sorrows so increased, that my appetite failed, my sleep departed, and my body so wasted, that I became a very skeleton. Nevertheless I went on, hoping it might be better with me hereafter.

August, 1772, I was received into full connexion at Leeds, and appointed for Norwich. Here I stayed but one week, and could not think of staying any longer, from a sense of my unfitness to preach

to so large a congregation. During my stay I was led to expose Antinomianism, which prevailed much here, to the great scandal of the Gospel. Many of my hearers were much enraged against personal holiness, and him that preached it; and at one time in particular they ran down the gallery-stairs like madmen, crying out, "False doctrine! false doctrine!" I cannot say I was ever before so much inclined to speak against the popular doctrines of the day as at that time. And it since appeared there was need of it then; for some of those very persons became the most abandoned wretches in their lives afterwards.

When I came to London I knew not what to do. My mind was like a troubled sea, tossed upon every wave of temptation; not through guilt or condemnation, but on account of my not preaching against sin. At last I ventured again, in consequence of Mr. Mather's advice, and went into Sussex. Here I saw my need of wisdom; that as a servant of God I might heal divisions, and unite in one those that fear God. I was now afraid to turn my thoughts towards home, and therefore gave myself to reading, meditation, and prayer, that my profiting might appear to all.

Towards the close of this year I was much tried for myself and others, and went to the London Conference in 1773 with a heavy heart. My former resolutions were now broken, and I concluded I was not fit to stand up and speak for God. But dear Mr. Charles Perronet, knowing my trials, spoke to me in an affectionate manner, and encouraged me all he could to persevere.

After some days spent in Conference, I saw the zeal of many of the preachers who had borne the burden and heat of the day, and the desire which

appeared in all to promote the Redeemer's glory. On this I saw my trials altogether unworthy of notice. Never did the things of sense appear so inconsiderable as at present. On this the zeal of the Lord of hosts kindled afresh; and in this day of almighty power my mind was lightened of its load, and made willing to go through honour and dishonour for the sake of Christ. Fain would I have been excused aforesaid from this work; but now I believed the Lord laid this burden on me, and therefore I durst not throw it off. I beheld the dear servants of my Master, who, through many dangers and labours, were still willing to spread the saving truth far and near; and strongly desired to bear a part with them; and saw myself happy that my gracious Lord assigned me a place among them.

Finding a desire to visit my native country, I no sooner asked but you granted me my request by appointing me for the Newry Circuit. Here we gathered in some hundreds from the barren mountains. In Lisburn we built a house, and added seventy souls to the society.

In 1774 I was stationed for Charlemount; where I found the Lord had blessed the labours of His servants the year before. Here also He blessed His people, and increased their number this year also.

The first half year I met with great discouragements: the person appointed to labour with me had married a gay young lady, and consequently could not come. My horse also died, and I was left alone without a man to help me, or a horse to carry me. As a great fear rested on me lest the work should be hindered through these things, I cried to God in the anguish of my spirit, and poured forth my complaints and tears to Him that called me to the

work. However, I laboured to fasten every stake, and strengthen every cord ; and as much, as in me lay, to build up the tabernacle of David wherever it was fallen ; and in doing this I continued travelling on foot the greatest part of the year.

Such was the love I bore for truth, that I forgot everything else in comparison of it. I longed for the Spirit to shine out upon all my ways, and sought it with great diligence : I also sought an increase of grace, well knowing this to be the most likely means of making me useful in my day and generation ; and was fully determined that whatever gifts or graces God gave me, they should all be used in His service, and spent for His glory.

July, 1775, we met you in Conference at Dublin, when I was appointed for the Athlone Circuit. I was thankful to a kind Providence for giving me an opportunity of seeing and being with my first acquaintances in religion at Longford ; who first showed me the way of worshipping God in the spirit. But we had no remarkable work among us this year, only that we lived in peace, and that the God of peace was with us ; which we esteemed a very great blessing.

August, 1776, I was sent to Londonderry. In this Circuit we had an increase. When I went to visit Coleraine, we had not one in society ; but after preaching in the streets a few evenings we joined together about sixty souls, got a room in the barracks, and continued to go there regularly from that time.

This year we lost a most valuable friend in Londonderry, namely, Mr. John Smith, who was a pattern to all that believed ; who for years stemmed the tide, and swam against the stream of corrupt

customs and sinful examples; and who now enjoys the crown prepared for him, and sees Him whom his soul loved.

Our Circuit was large, and painful to travel; having to go to Coleraine on the one hand, and to the dreary county of Donegal on the other; and round by Lough-Derg to Lisleen: to which the Papists resort from all parts of Ireland, England, and sometimes from foreign countries, to expiate their sins, as they imagine.

In the depth of winter I was taken very ill at Mrs. Johnson's. Great was the love, and multiplied were the favours, I received from her. For all the time I was ill at her house she was to me as an affectionate mother and a tender nurse. Her example increased my desires for holiness, and wrought in me a greater degree of zeal to promote the interest of our Saviour wherever I came.

In this visitation I found the truth of those words, "Blessed is the man whom God scourgeth, and teacheth out of His law." Scourging and teaching I observed generally go together. I found it was a means of improving my grace, and an evidence that I was not a bastard, but a son. I also found that it tended to wean me from the world, and to prepare me for a greater reward in my Father's kingdom.

July, 1777, I returned to England, after spending four years in Ireland; and three out of the four in the north; during which time my mother died, which left me more free to preach Christ wherever the Lord pointed out my way. I came to Dublin, and embarked for Liverpool, in company with Mr. John Hampson, Mr. Floyd, and others. But the high winds which are frequent in St. George's Channel, and which are fatal to many vessels in the passage

from Ireland to this kingdom, were near proving so to us. For we were driven on the coast of North Wales in the night; but, by the blessing of God, with some difficulty, we landed at Beaumaris early in the morning; and about the third day we arrived safe at Bristol, which was the day before the Conference began.

During this meeting I experienced much self-abasement; being conscious of my unworthiness of the Connexion I was in. Every one there appeared as a bright light compared to me. However, I was appointed for Bristol that year. When I came to preach to such a great body of people, my soul fainted within me. But the Lord strengthened me, and gave me to see that nothing of consequence could be achieved with a faint heart, nor great matters undertaken without resolution. Accordingly, I applied myself to reading, meditation, and prayer; and found a blessing in so doing.

In August, 1778, being appointed for Northampton Circuit, I left the dear people of Bristol with reluctance, and came to London, the place from which I first set out to travel. With tears I surveyed the interval of time since I betook myself to the highways and hedges, and changed my quiet habitation for a public one, and the silent shades for troubled seas. Since then I have not been without such difficulties as unavoidably attend us. And though I had not been wanting to count the cost, yet I have often been like the widowed dove when I thought upon the time, the place, and people among whom I drew the warmest breath after heaven. But surely the time will come when we shall for ever enjoy the company of those most dear to us.

After a few days I set off for Northampton, where I soon found the preaching of the Cross but coolly received by the inhabitants in general; where Christ is much talked of, but I fear is kept at too great a distance. There is much said of outward things, but little of the inward washing of regeneration and universal obedience. Many speak great swelling words about imputed righteousness, promising to others liberty, while they themselves are the servants of sin. I was much distressed to see the Antinomian ministers and doctrines carry the multitude after them; which made me cry, "How long, O Lord God, holy and true, will it be ere Thou wilt come, and maintain Thy own cause?"

In the winter my horse fell ill; and I being poor, (for a Methodist preacher is likely so to be as long as he lives,) and the people poor also, I travelled the winter and spring quarters on foot, about twelve hundred miles. Meantime, whatsoever I parted with on earth was amply made up to me in Christ and His people. My love to them was so great, that I could willingly have died to promote their welfare. Through this love I could keep nothing as my own, but freely communicated what I had to others. And thus, through perseverance under the cross, I found the truth of those words, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day."

August, 1779, I went to Lynn Circuit, in Norfolk. This took in Colchester, the Fens of Cambridge, and all along the coast to Wells, Walsingham, and Fakenham: in which towns, and many of the villages, we gathered many into societies, who were careless and wicked before. But in the towns along the sea-coast we met with much trouble, espe-

cially from the smugglers. We applied to the justices, who were more afraid of them than we were; and who told us, if we would preach on Sundays, they would protect us, but not on other days.

I was much blessed with two faithful colleagues, who counted not their lives dear, so they might win souls to Christ. Yet in Lynn we did but little good; which was principally owing to some imprudent professors, by whom such as were feebly inquiring after truth were hindered from going forward in the good way, and from pressing into the kingdom of Christ.

August, 1780, I was stationed at Taunton, in Somersetshire, and went thither in much heaviness of spirit. I had for my fellow-labourer James Skinner, who travelled with me in Norfolk the year before, to the great edification of many; but his poor state of health would not admit of his continuing long in the work. Through much affliction he weathered out this year, and part of the next in Nottingham; and then returned home.

I found here but little of that warm and lively affection for the Gospel which I had known in other parts. Here also I was seized with an ague of a long continuance, which exercised my spirits much. I sought for submission to the rod, but found not so much of it as I could wish. However, I found a measure of the love of God, which at last enabled me to break through all difficulties.

My dear Mrs. P——, and a few others, proved kind to me. May the God whom I serve in the Gospel of His Son reward them! May the angel of His presence give them victory in this life, and a crown of glory in the next!

We visited some new places, and endeavoured to break up fresh ground ; but to little purpose. This is one of the most fruitful counties in England for good eating and drinking ; but most unfruitful as to religion. However, there are a few resolutely bold to stop the tide, and swim against the stream of evil examples. But among the few in society, I knew but one that had attained the whole mind that was in Christ ; namely, J—— S——, of N——, who walks worthy of his profession, and is a light in a dark place. This year, with assistance from the Conference, we paid off a debt of near two hundred pounds which was on the Taunton house.

August, 1781, from Leeds Conference, I came back again to Taunton, and had for my fellow-traveller Mr. Boone. But we both were very ill of the ague, which hindered our usefulness. I used the cold bath, and took bark in abundance ; I walked and rode ; I tried electricity : but the most effectual remedy I could find was the cobweb-pills.

August, 1782, I went to the London Conference ; but was so ill I could not attend. From London, after taking a tour round Norfolk, and from thence to Bristol, I went to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in hopes the north-country air would prove effectual for the recovery of my health. It did so till spring, and then I had the ague about ten weeks more. Here I found an old experienced people who have stood many storms. During my illness, which was at Alnwick, I found many friends, who spared neither cost nor pains to make me comfortable. Here I could spend my days cheerfully among a loving, tender, and affectionate people, who received my testimony with thankfulness and love.

On the 21st of July, 1783, I was married to

Hannah Day, of East-Brent, in the county of Somerset; for which I hope to bless God to all eternity.

August, 1783, I was appointed for North Wilts: the first Circuit I ever laboured in. We soon had a fair prospect; particularly at Allington, Castle-Carey, Bradford, and Brumham, near the Devizes.

In Allington we joined about forty members this year; and our good friend Mr. John Horner built us a comfortable preaching-house in Castle-Carey, where but a few years ago they threw Mr. Samuel Wells into a pond for preaching. At Bradford, the work of God broke out by degrees, and the society increased, to which but few had been added for many years. At Trowbridge, God was at work on many hearts; but in a more silent and deep manner than is common at the first. O, what a glorious Gospel is this! And how much do I owe to a kind Providence, who has called me, a sinner, to publish it! O, what reason have I for thankfulness on this occasion! And how ought I to be humbled under a sense of His goodness to such a weak and ignorant creature! I find God increasing my desires after Himself, and exciting in my heart a warm zeal for His cause. But truly a sense of the importance of my work is sometimes more than I am able to bear.

July, 1784, I went to the Leeds Conference; but it proved to me a very sorrowful one, such as I trust I shall never see again. From this I came back to Wilts Circuit, where I am at present. The work which last year began has broken out into a glorious flame; so that, before the year is out, I expect to see some hundreds in connexion, and happy in the love of Jesus.

Having thus, sir, given you a brief account of

myself, and of the great goodness of God in bringing me to Himself, and sending me out into the highways and hedges to call sinners to repentance, and who hath thus far stood by me, I now praise His holy name, and pray that, as He has hitherto blessed us as a people, He may continue His lovingkindness towards us, and bless us more and more. I also pray that, as we believed in Him, we may ever walk in Him, and be able and willing to testify of Him to the world, and never return more unto folly.

O, sir, let us remember with gratitude and deep humility what God has wrought among us from the beginning! When were we hungry, and He fed us not; sick, and He came not to us? When we went out without purse or scrip, lacked we anything really necessary? When were our calamities so great, that we found no consolation in Him? Can we not to this day say, Hitherto He hath helped us? Can we not read the witness, the seal, the earnest of His Spirit, and foretastes of joys to come, written on our hearts? O that He may remain amongst us; and that it may be our constant desire to glorify Him! which some have neglected to do. May the words of our Lord to His disciples be ever sounding in our ears: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I overcame, and am set down on My Father's throne!" O, may we all be like the messenger returning to the Athenians in the day of battle, who just cried, "We are conquerors!" and then died.

JOHN PRITCHARD.

COLEFORD, *January 17th, 1785.*

THE following character of Mr. Pritchard was given by the Methodist Conference, in the year 1814:—

JOHN PRITCHARD, aged seventy-one; a native of the county of Meath, in Ireland. Early in life he united himself with the Methodists, and became experimentally acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus. His conversion was sound. His knowledge of the pardoning love of God was clear and distinct. Soon after he began his Christian course, the Spirit itself bore witness with his spirit that he was a child of God; and he earnestly panted after a full conformity to the Divine image. In the year 1771 he began to preach; and in the same year Mr. Wesley sent him into the Wiltshire Circuit. He continued to travel till the Conference in 1802, when, at the request of his brethren, he became governor of Kingswood School. In that situation he remained till the year 1807; when, under growing infirmities, he retired from it, and lived in Bristol until he was called to his eternal rest.

Mr. Pritchard was a warm advocate for the doctrines of the Gospel as held by the Methodists. He preached with zeal and energy a free, full, and present salvation, to be obtained by faith in Christ; and towards the close of his life often expressed to his intimate friends a concern for the perpetuation of sound doctrine, genuine Christian experience, holy living, and godly discipline, among the Methodists.

THE LIFE
OF
MR. WILLIAM ADAMS.

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.

WILLIAM ADAMS was born in Fairfax county, in the State of Virginia, on the 23d of July, 1759. From his infancy he was naturally inclined to passion and other evil tempers. But the Spirit of God very early impressed his mind with serious reflections concerning the salvation of his soul. When he was about fourteen years of age, he had frequent opportunities of hearing the Methodists preach. I am not certain in what manner the Lord first awakened him; whether it was suddenly, or in a more gradual manner. However, when he was thoroughly awakened, he was greatly broken down, and most deeply convinced. For about two years he was in distress, under a sense of the wrath of God; and by his countenance, tears, frequent groans, gestures, and, indeed, by his whole behaviour, discovered that he felt a hell in his soul.

During this time, he missed no opportunity of hearing the word; and early and late he poured out his soul to God in private prayer. He fre-

quently retired into the fields and woods, and arose in the middle of the night, to seek rest for his troubled soul. He had at this time a power over outward sin, and walked circumspectly in attending all the ordinances of God; yet he still knew this would not suffice, except his past sins were blotted out, and his soul quickened and made alive by faith in Jesus Christ.

He was tempted to think that all his prayers and tears were in vain; that he was a hypocrite; that God would never have mercy on him; and that it was now too late for him to expect it. He opened his mind to the preachers with whom he conversed, and begged their advice and prayers. They sympathized with him in his distress, and exhorted him to persevere in seeking the Lord. Some of his friends, indeed, dreaded that his unbelieving fears would drive him to despair. Yet he determined, by the grace of God, to lie at the feet of Jesus, and, if he perished, to perish crying out for mercy. He had, at the same time, the conversion of others, especially his relations and neighbours, much at heart; and he earnestly prayed for the success of the Gospel among all people.

About the 1st of March, 1775, as he was one evening pouring out his soul in private, he felt in a moment such a change that his weeping and mourning were turned into joy in the Lord. His countenance, his behaviour, his prayers, his praises, all testified that the Lord had looked upon him in mercy, and had turned his darkness into light, and his mourning into songs of joy. He could now say, with David, "Come hither, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul." And again, "As far as the east is from the

west, so far hath He separated my sins from me." And as the Lord was at this time pouring out His Spirit on the people in the neighbourhood in a glorious manner, this young man went about day and night to pray among the people, and praised his God who had done so great things for him.

He walked humbly before the Lord; and though he found much of His presence, yet he frequently complained of his barrenness, and expressed a want of more and more of the life of God. There was so much of the mind of Christ in him, that it seemed to the preachers and others that God had some work for him to do: therefore, though he was very young, he was appointed to meet with and assist a few persons near his father's, who were resolved to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. They received him gladly; and it pleased God to bless his labour of love among them. After a little time, it was impressed on his mind that he must, in a more public manner, warn his fellow-sinners to fly from the wrath to come. Accordingly, he first exhorted in the society; and afterwards, with the advice of the preachers, he did it in public; enforcing all he said by his holy life and humble conversation. He was not deterred from attending at the house of prayer by a little sickness, by heat or cold, or by wet and dark nights; for it pained him exceedingly to let one hour of his time pass by unimproved.

Sometime in the summer of 1771 the Lord convinced him more deeply of the inward corruption of his heart. He was now all athirst for a heart perfectly devoted to God; crying out,

"'Tis worse than death my God to love,
And not my God alone."

And on the 17th of August in that year he believed the Lord had saved him from all his inbred sin; and felt what he could not fully express. For some time he had no doubt of this work being wrought in him; and, indeed, none who knew him could disbelieve him, for the tree was known by its fruit. But the enemy of souls soon robbed him in a measure of his confidence respecting this work, so that he came short of his gracious privilege.

In the winter of 1778 he felt a great desire to preach the word, and to give himself wholly to the work of the ministry. It was thought best that he should continue where he was till the ensuing Conference; and then, if God should permit, that he should go out into the work. But it pleased Providence to make a way for him sooner; and after many struggles in his own breast, and some outward opposition, he left his parents and friends, cheerfully commending them to God, and the word of His grace.

After staying some time among the people where he had been sent to labour, he went to the Conference, and was received on trial as a travelling preacher. He was much attached to the old Methodist plan, and grieved when any seemed inclined in any degree to deviate from it. He was appointed, in conjunction with two others, to labour in the Baltimore Circuit. Here he soon found some with whom he could take sweet counsel; men who were on full stretch for all the mind that was in Christ; and not a few who could testify that the blood of Christ had cleansed them from all unrighteousness.

He soon found the work of God reviving in his soul; and got so established in grace, that he had a

constant sense of the indwelling Spirit of God, and was enabled to live nearer to the Lord than ever. He now experienced that he could rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks. All who truly loved God could easily perceive what spirit he was of; and were astonished to see a person so young blest with such gifts, and yet with still greater grace. When they heard this stripling conversing in private and preaching in public, they sat at his feet gladly; and were constrained to say, "Surely out of the mouths of babes God doth ordain praise!"

In this Circuit he spent about six months, with much satisfaction to his own mind, and profit to others. At the last Quarterly Meeting he attended, his words in the lovefeast seemed to flow from a heart glowing with the love of God, and affected all who were present. He declared that the Lord had (since he came to that Circuit) taken away every doubt of his being perfected in love; and had given him a confidence which was stronger than death and all the powers of darkness. He well knew the happiness and advantages of conversing with such Christians as had experienced a deliverance from indwelling sin, and were daily pressing after a growth in grace. Therefore he would fain have continued here longer with those who had been such an unspeakable blessing to his soul. But as it did not seem convenient, he did not object to go to any place where God in His providence should appoint him: nay, he would have willingly gone to the ends of the earth, (if called thereunto,) so he might be a means of bringing sinners to the bleeding side of his crucified Lord.

He evidently desired to spend his little all in

labouring for the conversion of his fellow-men, hoping that the time was drawing nigh when the Lord would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, and spread the knowledge of Himself over the whole earth. His capacious soul never said, "It is enough;" though he was thankful for the least mercy, knowing it was infinitely more than he deserved. The more the Gospel spread, the more he rejoiced, and prayed that the house of the Lord might soon be established on the top of the mountains, and that all people would flow unto it: for he believed that Christ tasted death for every man; and that all, through Him, might come to God and be eternally saved. He was so universal a lover of mankind, that for a time it was difficult to convince him that he had any enemies: yet, before his death, when he became more acquainted with the world, and with the spirit that rules in the children of disobedience, he saw that "whoever will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution."

November 11th, 1779, he was taken with an ague. On the Sunday following he went to hear a funeral sermon preached by one of his brethren. He exhorted at the grave, but complained of being ill. On Wednesday, 17th, there being a prayer-meeting in the neighbourhood, he had a desire to go, but doubted whether it was prudent. However, after pausing awhile, he said, "It may be the last time;" and then went. On Thursday his disorder seemed to increase; but he was truly resigned, desiring that the Lord would do with him as seemed Him good. The language of his heart still was, "Father, glorify Thy Name." On Sunday, the 21st, he came down stairs, and sung and prayed with the family, intending to preach in

the evening; but he was not able. At night some friends came to see him; to whom he testified that for the last six months he had enjoyed more of the life of God in his soul than he could express.

On Monday and Tuesday his disorder still increased. Talking with one of his sisters, he related to her some sore conflicts which he had in his illness; but the Lord bruised Satan under his feet, so that he did not give place to that accuser of the brethren. On Wednesday he talked but little. At the class-meeting in the evening, when some friends asked him how he was, he replied, "Poorly in body; but my soul is full of love."

On Sunday, the 28th, in the morning, he lifted up his hands, and continued for some time in praying to and blessing God. At night many friends, with whom he had had sweet communion, came to see him. He knew them perfectly well; and, holding out his trembling hand to each, he rejoiced to see them once more. When one of them said, "I hope you are not afraid to die," he answered, "No; blessed be God! I trust ere long to be gathered into Abraham's bosom." On Tuesday, 30th, in the morning, he asked his sister to pray with him. When she gave out,

"Corruption, earth, and worms
Shall but refine this flesh;
Till my triumphant spirit comes
To put it on afresh," &c.,—

he sang aloud with great devotion; and while she was praying with him, he frequently repeated "Amen" with such a tone as expressed the happy state of his soul, which appeared ripened for its last remove; gasping, panting, and longing to be lost in that eternity of love which Christ has pur-

chased with His precious blood. When his mother asked him if he was very ill, he replied, "I do not feel much pain ; for it seems as if the Lord bore all for me." Soon after he looked up in his sister's face, and said, "Sister, help me to sing." She replied that she was afraid it would hurt his throat, which was very sore during his whole sickness. But though it was with the greatest difficulty that he could swallow a drop of water, yet he would discourse of the things of God frequently with much ease.

December 1st, after praying in his bed, as if in family prayer, he said, "I thought I was out of doors ; and such a light shone round about me, and I felt so happy, that I thought the Lord was going to remove me that moment." At night he sung,

" Ashamed I sigh, and inly mourn,
That I so late to Thee did turn."

Then he added, "I cannot tell half the happiness I have had since I have been lying here." On Thursday he seemed considerably worse, and sighed, as if he knew what he had to go through ; but said, with great composure, "I do not mind it: I know that I love Jesus."

" Jesus, the Name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease ;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears ;
'Tis life, and health, and peace."

On Friday his feet were cold, and he appeared to have all the symptoms of death. Whilst the family were standing around him, his father asked him if he should go to prayer. This was always pleasing to him ; and whilst four or five prayed, he repeated "Amen" to the last. When one who had

sat up with him was about to take her leave, he asked her if she knew that God for Christ's sake had blotted out her sins. When she replied, she hoped so; he exhorted her not to deceive herself, but to cry to God till she *knew* it. A negro of his father's coming in to take his leave, who was seeking the kingdom of heaven, being asked if he knew him, he replied, "Yes; and I trust I shall know him in Abraham's bosom."

When his sister asked whether he had a greater desire to live than to die, he said he was so happy at times that he had rather die; but desired that the will of God should be done. He then added, "Are you willing to part with me?" His mother replied, "Yes; I trust God will make us willing." Whilst his little brother stood by crying, he said to him, "Perhaps you may be the last that will follow me, and you are not prepared. Therefore pray to God to have mercy upon a poor young stripling; to save you from lightness and laughter, and to bring you to reign with Him in glory through Jesus Christ our Lord." When his sister said, "I hope you see now that you have not followed a cunningly-devised fable," he replied, "I see it: but the devil would once have persuaded me that I had deceived myself; but since that time I have been so happy, that all the devils in hell could not make me doubt." Observing a young woman sitting weeping, he fixed his eyes upon her; and when she was called to the bedside he said, "Do not be frightened; but seek that faith which sweetly works by love, and purifies the heart."

His father asking him if he knew him, he said, "Yes;" and putting his arm round his neck, he kissed him, and said, "Live near to God." He

then kissed his mother, and said, "Farewell, mamma. Ere long we shall meet to part no more." He lay still for some time, though his lips still moved. He often said, "Come, Lord! welcome! hallelujah!" At last, whilst he remained perfectly sensible, and whilst his heart seemed raised to God in praises, he resigned his soul to Him, without a sigh or a groan, on December 3d, 1779, in the twenty-first year of his age.

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