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THE LIVES OF EARLY METHODIST PREACHERS
Chiefly Written By Themselves

Edited, With An Introductory Essay,
By Thomas Jackson

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In Six Volumes

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Part 1
THE LIFE OF MR. JOSEPH COWNLEY
By John Gaulter

The following narrative of the life of Mr. Cownley is chiefly collected from minutes of several conversations with him, and although I have had the perusal of his manuscripts yet as he wrote no circumstantial account of himself they afford but little information: consequently the narrative will be found in many instances, defective, nor is it possible to give a connected series of his labors. However, I hope it will be considered as a tribute, justly due, to the memory of a man remarkable for his piety and abilities. His labors and success in the ministry entitle him to the notice of a people whose interest was his constant care, and among whom his abilities were unremittingly exerted. History is disgraced by heroes who ought to be remembered more for detestation than for praise or imitation. It is only the useful and pious that we can admire with propriety, or imitate with safety. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the life and death of all His saints; and the memory and piety of the just should be had in everlasting remembrance.

John Gaulter
Alnwick, February 4th, 1794

* * *

Mr. Joseph Cownley was born June 26th, 1728, at Leominster, in Herefordshire. His parents were not remarkable either for indigence or affluence. They gave their son an education which, though not classical, was every way adapted to his expectations in life; the earlier part of which was not checkered by profaneness, or the dissipation of pleasurable amusements. Even in youth he was cautious in the choice of his companions, and his manners were uncorrupted by the example or influence of others. It is indeed very difficult for young persons to escape untainted by the depraved conversation of neighbors and friends; but that it is possible, Mr. Cownley is an

instance. This must not be imputed to any superior excellence in his nature, but to the powerful operations of preventing grace, to which he happily yielded obedience. From his first conscious perceptions, the Divine Spirit attracted his attention, and led his mind to reflect on eternity and the awful concerns thereof. He soon discovered the weakness and depravity of his heart, and the sinfulness of sin; but, although apprised of his malady, he was unacquainted with the method of obtaining a cure. He conversed with all the serious persons he could meet with, particularly a pious speaker among the Quakers, and a Dissenter of the Baptist persuasion. He received their instructions with gratitude, though it does not appear that he was clearly convinced of the way of salvation by faith in Jesus. His mind labored under dreadful apprehensions of the Divine displeasure. The evil and corruptions of his own heart gave him the greatest uneasiness. He thought himself the most wretched of sinners, and frequently threw himself upon the ground, crying out to God, with inconceivable anguish of mind, "No misery is equal to this: a wounded spirit who can bear?"

"What greater curse can earth or heaven devise,
Than his who, self-condemned, in torture lies?
From agony of mind who knows no rest,
But bears his own accuser in his breast?"

He denied himself of necessary food, and by abstinence and mortification thought to appease the Divine displeasure; for, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, he went about to establish his own. So scrupulous was he about his words, that when asked a question, he would answer, "I think so; I believe so;" lest he should be found, through ignorance, not speaking the truth. In this state of mind he entered into the service of a justice of the peace, a man totally unacquainted with either religion or morality. In many respects, the place was eligible: it opened the prospect of a genteel and comfortable maintenance, and the perquisites of his office were considerable. He served the justice as a traveling secretary. All the servants of the family considered Mr. Cownley to be "too religious;" but, to use his own words, when speaking of himself; "I thought myself the vilest upon earth, because I was not what I considered a good man should be." The gardener of the house said to him one day, "Mr. Cownley, if you think that every one must be as good as you before they can go to heaven, you will go there by yourself."

The business of the justice sometimes called him to Bath. In that city Mr. Cownley first heard the Methodists. He attended upon the ministry of Mr. Williams, then a very popular preacher; and was pleased with the preacher, though not profited by the sermon. Soon after Mr. Wesley came to that place: under his discourses Mr. Cownley was fully enlightened: he then saw the impotence of his fastings, and the insufficiency of his morality, to purchase the favor of Heaven; and that there is salvation only in Christ. He could find no rest, he desired none, until the Lord, Whom he sought absolved him from his guilt, and gave him the witness and seal of pardon.

"What charm shall bid these horrors rage no more,
Heal the hurt mind, and gentle peace restore?
That charm is Jesus: Jesus can supply
Comfort in life, and courage when we die."

That night, in which the Lord manifested Himself to the distressed mourner, he went to bed, deeply affected with a sense of his burden and misery. His rest was broken and interrupted. In the intervals of sleep, his cry was, "God be merciful to me! He was heard in that he feared. The Words of our Lord to the paralytic were suddenly and powerfully applied to his mind: "Thy sins are forgiven! Thy sins are forgiven!" The darkness vanished away from his soul, and the Sun of righteousness arose with healing in His wings. He was filled with Divine joy, pleasure smiled in his eyes, and heaven reigned in his heart. While he was reflecting upon what the Lord had done for him, the following lines were applied with powerful energy:--

"To save what was lost, from heaven He came;
Come, sinners, and trust in Jesus' name!
He offers you pardon, He bids you be free;
If sin be your burden, O come unto Me!"

Mr. Cownley was far from being a visionary: it was not from these impressions alone that he drew conclusions of the Divine favor; he had surer grounds. Peace and hope succeeded anguish and fear; and the love of God was shed abroad in his heart; accompanied with the most indubitable evidence that the change he felt, and the work wrought in him, was of God. Nothing less than this Could satisfy a mind so well informed, and so anxious to avoid every deception.

Mr. Cownley's employment exposing him to much company and conversation, which was frequently very disagreeable, he determined to quit his situation; but his diligence and fidelity having gained the affections of the justice, he was much averse to part with one whom he esteemed a faithful and upright servant. He therefore requested of Mr. Cownley to assign the cause that induced him to go away; which when he heard, he replied, "I thought you had religion enough for us both, and should never have supposed that to be the reason."

Mr. Cownley returned home to Leominster in 1743, where he found a little society that had been formed by Mr. Beaumont, a Welsh preacher, of Mr. Whitefield's sentiments. He joined this society; and next year he began to exercise those talents of instruction by which he was so eminently distinguished, and to preach that gospel, the truth of which the Lord had written on his heart. His first attempts were received with approbation, and crowned with success. Several were brought to the knowledge of salvation, and established in the truth: they loved and respected him as a father; and his intention was to live and die in fellowship with them, having no expectation of being ever engaged in a larger sphere of action. At this time many of the Methodist societies were agitated by unprofitable disputes about opinions. The spirit had reached Leominster. Several believed the decrees of Calvin, and others supposed that these sentiments were opposite to Scripture and reason. Among the latter was Mr. Cownley. He wrote to his father in the gospel, Mr. Wesley, requesting his advice in these critical circumstances. The answer is worthy of being preserved, as it shows the amiable spirit of the writer; and, though directed to Mr. Cownley, was addressed to the society.

"Bristol, September 20th, 1746
"My Dear Brethren,

"As many of you as have set your hands to the plow, see that you go on, and look not back. The prize and the crown are before you, and in due time you shall reap, if you faint not. Meantime fight the good fight of faith, enduring the cross, and despising the shame. Beware that none of you return evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. Show forth out of a loving heart your good conversation, with meekness and wisdom. Avoid all disputes as you would fire: So shall ye continue kindly affectioned one toward another. The God of peace be with you. "I am your affectionate brother,

John Wesley."

His endeavors to establish peace in the society, and to extinguish the violent animosity of party, proving unsuccessful, Mr. Wesley requested his attendance at Bristol, and engaged him in the important office of an itinerant preacher. The forms of admission into the connection at that time differ from the present. Mr. Cownley knelt down; and Mr. Wesley, putting the New Testament into his hand, said, "Take thou authority to preach the gospel." He then gave him his benediction. His first appointment was for Bristol, where his labors were attended with considerable success.

At this period of his life, his voice was very strong, soft, and harmonious; and as he felt the most lively conviction of the truths he taught, his discourses raised in the hearts of the hearers the same heavenly persuasions. He had no design upon their passions: nothing could give him more sensible pain, than to perceive mere mechanical effects from his preaching, a few tears without conviction, which pass away as the morning cloud, or the early dew. God gave him remarkable power to remonstrate with sinners. The stoutest heart quaked when he pronounced, with his awakening energy, "Why will ye die, O house of Israel? Have I any pleasure in the death of a sinner? But if ye turn not, ye shall die; ye shall surely die, saith the Lord God!" There are many now living who remember his fervor and zeal, before those infirmities commenced which constrained him to confine the overflowings of his soul, and to relax from those exertions in the cause of Jesus, which distinguished the first part of his labors in the vineyard.

Near the close of 1746 he left Bristol, to encounter the violence of the mobs in Staffordshire His appointment was in those troublesome regions of Darlaston, Wednesbury, and Walsall. In this neighborhood he continued three months. Persecution had raised a powerful opposition to the truth. The priests, the magistrates, and the mob were united, and determined to crush the infant society, to prevent what they called "the progress of superstition and enthusiasm. By such names is the doctrine of a sinner's pardon through faith in Jesus Christ distinguished. Truth is mighty, and will prevail; for in proportion to the rage of opposition was the success. Sinners were brought out of darkness into light, and exchanged the tyranny of Satan for the glorious kingdom of liberty and love. Many were awakened and converted; the gates of darkness were opened; the pillars of hell trembled; and numbers experienced that the kingdom of heaven is within us. The persecutions in this part of the kingdom form a remarkable trait in the history of Mr. Wesley, who has related some of the circumstances in his Journal for 1746.

It must argue a considerable degree of malevolence in the informed part of the community, to countenance and support persecution; for the rabble would soon have desisted, had they not, directly or indirectly, received support from their superiors, many of whom descended from that

propriety of character which they ought to have sustained, and instigated the lower orders not only to insult, but to injure, an innocent and unoffending people, whose only crime was professing faith in Jesus, and worshipping God according to their consciences. Persecution is an evil which ought to be without a name in a country professedly Christian. It is a violation of the law of God, and every just law of man. It was begun and carried on by the pride and passion of the more powerful, from the time of the merciless Cain, to the solemn burning of heretics. No pretense, however plausible, should induce men to injure each other, for any real or supposed differences in religion: it dissolves that natural and social union of our nature, and makes us worse than savage beasts.

Mr. Cownley's next remove was into Cornwall. The fruits of his labor in that county are now only known to a few, to whom his memory is still dear. He traveled in Cornwall about three months; and then removed to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he arrived in March, 1747. The people received him with every mark of affection. Multitudes attended, and many were converted from the error of their ways. There are still living witnesses that the word he preached was the "power of God unto salvation;" and when the effects of novelty subsided, he was loved for his piety, and esteemed for his abilities.

Mr. Cownley continued at Newcastle until the beginning of July, 1748. In the preceding year, Mr. Williams, an intimate friend of Mr. Cownley, went over to Ireland. His preaching was attended with success. Multitudes flocked to hear; and though in the midst of the greatest opposition he formed a society. Several of them knew that God does now also give "the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins to those who repent and believe the gospel. The next year Mr. Trembath informed Mr. Wesley that they were persecuted on every hand, but that the society stood like marble pillars; and, by the grace of God, were resolved rather to die with Christ than to deny Him."

The situation of affairs in that kingdom requiring an increase of the most able preachers in the connection, Mr. Cownley was appointed for Dublin. He arrived there in July, 1748, where he labored for about three months. Here a very painful disagreement took place between him and Mr. Samuel Larwood, which induced Mr. Wesley to interpose, in order to reconcile the contending parties. It arose from an impropriety in Mr. Larwood, who, without reason, and in opposition to his brethren, admitted and expelled members of the society.

This affair may appear uninteresting; but, as it gave rise to a remarkable feature in Mr. Cownley's character, it was necessary to mention it. Incidents, apparently small in themselves, generally form what may be considered peculiar in our manners, which equally expose us to censure or praise. This was the case with Mr. Cownley: his mind was painfully disturbed, and so deep were the impressions, that time could never remove them. He resolved from that moment never to say an unkind word to those with whom he might differ; and I believe he kept his resolution to the day of his death. If he was called upon to attend meetings where there was the least expectation of any differences or debate, he always excused himself; if possible; and if unavoidably present when any were incidentally introduced, he generally rose up and walked out.

One day I desired him to inform me what were his reasons for being so singular. He related the preceding affair, and added, "I cannot bear it, because it gives me so much pain to see any

offended." I once saw him in the most exquisite distress, from a supposition that he had given unnecessary offense to those who differed in opinion from him.

The work of God, by the successive labors of the preachers, spread through different parts of Ireland. In Cork a society was formed in the face of violence and opposition exceeding all description. In the latter end of November, 1748, Mr. Cownley went to that city, where he preached at the peril of his life. But such was the spirit which influenced the preachers, that they counted not their lives dear, so that they might win souls. The mob, headed by a brutal barbarian of the name of Butler, did not stop at insult. Forgetting every dictate of reason, or feeling of humanity, they attacked the congregations with stones, clubs, and swords; so that the lives both of the preachers and people were in imminent danger. Outraging all law and security, they broke the windows, and burst into the houses, of every one suspected of heresy; where they committed crimes which are as painful to conceive as to describe. The magistrates were applied to, but without success; instead of affording assistance, they added fuel to the flame the preachers were presented by the grand jury as vagrants. It is something singular that in that memorable presentment, preserved in Mr. Wesley's seventh Journal, Mr. Cownley, by a misnomer, is called Joseph McAuliff. At the assizes, these disorders were discountenanced by His Majesty's judge, and in a little time the mob was finally suppressed. This persecution, so far from preventing, rather increased, the zeal of the preachers: the Lord smiled on their labors, and numbers were added to the church of Christ.

After continuing some time in Ireland, Mr. Cownley returned to Newcastle in the spring of 1750. A letter which he received from Mr. Wesley will give some idea of his situation about this time

"Dublin, April 12th, 1750

"My Dear Brother,

"I doubt you are in a great deal more danger from honor than from dishonor. So it is with me. I always find there is most hazard in sailing upon smooth water. when the winds blow and the seas rage, even the sleepers will rise and call upon God.

"From Newcastle to London, and from London to Bristol, God is everywhere reviving His work. I find it is so now in Dublin: although there has been great imprudence in some, whereby grievous wolves have lately crept in amongst us, not sparing the flock; by whom some souls have been utterly destroyed, and others wounded, who are not yet recovered. Those who ought to have stood in the gap did not. But I trust they will be wiser for the time to come. After a season, I think it will be highly expedient for you to labor in Ireland again. Mr. Lunell has been on the brink of the grave by a fever. Yesterday we had hopes of his recovery. I see a danger you are in, which, perhaps, you do not see yourself. Is it not most pleasing to me, as well as you, to be always preaching of the love of God? And is there not a time when we are peculiarly led thereto, and find a peculiar blessing therein? without doubt, so it is. But yet it would be utterly wrong and unscriptural to preach of nothing else. Let the law always prepare for the gospel. I scarce ever spoke more earnestly here of the love of God in Christ, than last night. But it was after I had been tearing the unawakened in pieces. Go thou, and do likewise. It is true the love of God in Christ alone feeds His children. But even they are to be guided, as well as fed. Yes, and often physicked

too. And the bulk of our hearers must be purged before they are fed. Else we only feed the disease. Beware of all honey. It is the best extreme; but it is an extreme.

"I am your affectionate brother,
"John Wesley."

To preach Christ, to display Him as the Saviour of sinners, was Mr. Cownley's favorite topic; yet he did not forget by the terrors of the Lord to persuade men. Mr. Wesley, in this letter, only expresses his fears, lest by indulging too much on an agreeable subject, he should not be sufficiently explicit on another, no less necessary, in preaching the gospel. The extremes are judiciously marked by Mr. Wesley, and may serve as a memento to all who preach the gospel of the grace of God.

In the autumn of 1750 Mr. Cownley left Newcastle, and proceeded to Bristol; from whence he sailed to Ireland. He visited several places in that kingdom, and established societies. In Limerick, when preaching in the street, he was beset by a mob. The principal promoters were soldiers, one of whom assaulted Mr. Cownley. The soldier being noticed by a friend, Mr. Cownley complained to the commanding officer. With a justice which so frequently distinguishes the conduct of the British officers, he desired Mr. Cownley to name the punishment, and it should be inflicted. He answered, he only desired peace; which was soon restored by the timely exertions of the commander. A different spirit influenced one of the ministers. He was determined that none of his parishioners should be Methodists. Many, indeed, were out of his reach; but the poor were threatened that their weekly allowance should be stopped, unless they desisted from hearing these men. This holy inquisitor sent for a poor old woman who attended the preaching, and with an air of vast authority demanded, "And what do you believe? What is your faith?" With great simplicity she began to repeat the Belief. He stopped her, with an oath, and said, "That is my faith:" then, with a torrent of imprecations, and expressions which are too wicked to be repeated, he dismissed her. It will not demand any remarkable degree of discernment to determine which had the most of the spirit of Christianity, the military or the priestly officer.

Mr. Cownley continued in Ireland a short time, and then returned to Newcastle. I have not sufficient documents to fix his different stations, nor the success of his labors, from 1751 to the beginning of 1755. Through powerful exertions in preaching, he had fallen into a languid habit of body, which was succeeded by a malignant fever. Calmly resigned to the disposal of Providence, he waited with Christian fortitude the event, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." In a little time he was restored to his friends, and to the church of God. In the month of October, 1755, he was married at Cork, to the pious and amiable Miss Massiot, of that city.

From his first connection with the Methodists he cultivated the friendship of Mr. Whitefield. Mr. Cownley loved him for his work's sake, and revered his memory to the last. They corresponded with a freedom peculiar to the disciples of Jesus, and which is the natural offspring of love and union. The following letter illustrates the temper of this heavenly man, and his great esteem for Mr. Cownley. As it is an original, and the writer was conspicuously eminent in the present revival of vital religion, it will no doubt be acceptable to many.

"Newcastle, September 16th, 1755

"My Dear Mr. Cownley,

"Dare I wish you joy (after having been in sight of your heavenly port) of putting out to sea again? I hear you are upon the recovery, and therefore humbly hope, as your sickness has not been unto death, that it has been only a kind purgation to cause you to bring forth more fruit. Then, then shall you sing,

'O happy rod,
That brought me nearer to my God!'

Perhaps ere this reaches your hands, you may be entered into the marriage state. May the everlasting and ever-loving Bridegroom of the church bless both you and yours, and give you to live as becometh the heirs of the grace of life! I hope you will never say, 'I have married a wife, and therefore can no longer come forth into the highways and hedges.' I dare not entertain such a thought of my dear Mr. Cownley. No: whatever others may have done, I trust he will never say, 'I pray you now have me excused.' God forbid. A good wife and a good fortune call for double diligence in the work of God. You see I love you, by writing thus. A few days ago I was in hopes of seeing you; but now I fear it is too late. O this pilgrim's life! With a pilgrim's heart, how sweet! You must pray for me. I want to begin to do something for Jesus. I am a dwarf; a dwarf; and yet, O amazing love! Jesus still vouchsafes to bless and own my feeble labors. Everywhere the fields are white, ready unto harvest. O for more disinterested laborers! Then shall we go on, and be terrible, like unto an army with banners. This be your happy lot in Ireland! Pray remember me to all as they come in your way; and accept of this as a token of unfeigned love from, my dear Mr. Cownley,

Yours, &c., in our common Lord,
"George Whitefield"

The danger of an increasing property is here judiciously adverted to by Mr. Whitefield. Few there are who, in the midst of affluence, support that spirit of religion, which distinguished their characters in humble situations of life. The history of Methodism abounds with awful examples of the reverse. Tempers and dispositions which honored the cause of the Redeemer have been changed, in consequence of an increase of fortune and importance. This friendly caution was not lost on Mr. Cownley. He treasured it up in his heart; and no alteration in his temper or manners could be discovered. His soul had higher cares. He had fixed his heart on God, and laid up all his riches in heaven! He had a charge, -- the charge of souls. He could not desert the flock, nor "for a grasp of ore, or paltry office, sell them to the foe!" He did not; he lived for their service, and died watered with their tears.

The zeal which influenced the minds of the preachers, and their continued exertions in promoting the everlasting interest of men, was much encouraged by a reciprocal intercourse by letter. It was then, and continues to be, admirably adapted to increase and maintain a holy spirit of emulation among the brethren. May these instances remind us of that spirit which we ought to impart, in all our communications with each other! The following letters I consider of this nature, which, without any other apology, I shall insert:--

"Bristol, December 10th, 1755

"My Dear Mr. Cownley,

"Not want of love, but of leisure and opportunity, has prevented my answering your kind letter. Immediately on the receipt of it I was called to the west of England; and since that, from a cold contracted in the north, I have been threatened with an inflammatory quinsy. But, alas! like you, when putting into harbor, I am likely to put out to sea again. O that it may be to take some prizes for my God! Blessed be His name, though I am reduced to the ungrateful necessity of preaching only once a day, yet I find the word of the Lord doth not return empty. Congregations are very numerous, and fresh stirring there seems to be among the dry bones. Letters from Virginia inform me that above a hundred have lately been awakened in one county; so that I trust the walls of the new Jerusalem will be built in troublesome times. May the glorious Redeemer make use of you, more and more, in this Divine employ; and may you daily be built up in your most holy faith! From my very inmost heart I wish you all the blessings of the upper and nether springs; and, if the Lord spares life, hope to see you in Ireland. Continue to pray for me as one that loves you tenderly; and, though less than the least of all, yet, your affectionate friend and ready servant for Christ's sake,

"George Whitefield.

"Sunderland, August 14th, 1756

"My Dear Mr. Cownley,

"I am glad to hear that you are restored to your throne again, and that Jesus is still honoring you in preaching the everlasting gospel. As I am now on my tour to Scotland, I have thoughts of coming to the north of Ireland, and pay you a visit in Dublin. How it will turn out, the Lord of the harvest alone knows. I hope the work is upon the advance with you. In London there hath been a most glorious awakening all the winter. Almost all last week we had most blessed seasons thrice a day in and about Leeds. At York, Yarm, and here, Jesus hath done wonders; and surely it is the wonder of wonders that such a worthless wretch as I am should be employed by Him. Help, O help me to praise redeeming love! O for a hundred thousand lives to spend in the service of Christ Adieu, my dear man, adieu! My love to all. I earnestly entreat their and your prayers, that if I come, it may be in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ; for whose great name's sake, I subscribe myself,

"Yours, &c.,

"George Whitefield."

The fever which Mr. Cownley had in 1755 so relaxed his nerves that his labors were considerably interrupted. A pain settled in his head, which no medicine could ever remove. After consulting the most able physicians in Ireland, he stated his case to Mr. Wesley, and received the following answer:--

"London, January 10th, 1756

"My Dear Brother,

"I have no objection to anything but the blister, If it does good, well; but if I had been at Cork, all the physicians in Ireland should not have put it upon your head. Remember poor Bishop Pearson. An apothecary, to cure a pain in his head, covered it with a large blister: in an hour he cried out, 'O my head, my head!' and was a fool ever after to the day of his death. I believe cooling things, if anything under heaven, would remove that violent irritation of your nerves which probably occasions the pain. Moderate riding may be of use; I believe of more than the blister. Only do not take more labor upon you than you can bear. Do as much as you can, and no more. Let us make use of the present time. Every day is of importance. We know not how few days of peace remain. We join in love to you and yours. I am, dear Joseph, your affectionate friend and brother,

"John Wesley"

Though no radical cure was effected, yet the severity of the disorder abated by some attention to his manner of living and preaching. He removed to Dublin in the beginning of the year 1756, where Mrs. Cownley was delivered of her first child; and in the month of October he arrived at the Orphan House in Newcastle. The work in the north of England extended much by the united labors of Mr. Cownley and Mr. Hopper, and their brethren. Several societies were founded, which continue to this day. On the banks of the Tyne, in Prudhoe, and Nafferton, beside a variety of other places in that neighborhood, numbers were truly awakened and converted to God. In one of Mr. Cownley's excursions into the Dales, he was insulted by a mob headed by a clergyman. Warm from the village tavern, this zealous son of the Church, with the collected rabble, advanced to the field of action. Mr. Cownley was preaching near the door of an honest Quaker, when the minister insisted that he was breaking the order of the Church, and began to recite the canon against conventicles. Mr. Cownley replied, "If I am disorderly, you are not immaculate;" and reminded him of the Canon "for sober conversation, and against frequenting alehouses." Confounded with the application, the parson retired for a while; but, mustering up his courage, he again returned, and, with threats of prosecution, began to take down the names of the hearers. A Quaker, who was one of the congregation, hearing the alarming denunciations, stepped up, and, with unruffled gravity, clapped the parson on the back, and said, "Friend John, put my name down first." This ended the contest: quite disconcerted, the clergyman withdrew, and left Mr. Cownley to finish his discourse in peace. It is difficult to introduce anecdotes of this kind without being suspected of a design to reflect on a particular community; but this suspicion is highly unreasonable. The sacred writers had certainly no intention to injure Christianity when they recorded the avarice of Demas, or the errors of Nicolas. The want of character in individuals has been the lot of every Christian society. Methodism has produced such, which have been faithfully noticed by Mr. Wesley, in justice to the public, exposing them as examples of impiety, to deter others, and enforce a contrary practice.

The active life of Mr. Cownley has already been considered. We are now to view him in his more confined and local situation. On account of his health, his station has been principally in the north of England; his disorder rendering him incapable of fulfilling the duties of an itinerant life. The inveterate headache so oppressed his spirits, that, to use his own expression, "the keenest attacks of the gout were nothing in comparison." His chief residence was in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. At first he had apartments in the Orphan House, but afterwards he furnished a house for himself. Though enfeebled by infirmities, he exerted his remaining strength in calling sinners to repentance. He visited those parts of the north which now include the Newcastle, Sunderland, Hexham, and Alnwick circuits. Wherever he came he was received as a servant of God. The Lord owned and

blessed his labors among the people; and the living seals still praise him in the gates. He was like a center of union to the preachers; and they treated him with the reverence of a father, more than with the familiarity of a brother.

After his return to England, and fixing his residence in Newcastle, he continued to consult medical men. Dr. Turner, a gentleman high in professional eminence, gave him the most flattering hopes of a radical cure; but theory is disputable, and promises of this kind are rarely confirmed by success. Mr. Wesley recommended the doctor to Mr. Cownley as a person on whose medical skill he might depend. He stated his case, received the prescriptions, but his expectations were disappointed. Satisfied that his disorder baffled the address of human art without a murmur he resigned his body and soul into the hands of his almighty Benefactor and sought in the consolations of religion, and in the resignation of patience, a relief which the hopes of his friends and the assurances of physicians had promised in vain.

Though Mr. Cownley was admired, he never affected popularity. His disposition, had he lived in the austere ages of monkish superstition, would have led him to the cloister. All noise he dreaded, as much as it is courted by others. His chief delight was in the pulpit, his book, and his God; his visits to others were rather the effect of duty than inclination; and his conversation was chiefly confined to the great truths of religion, the work of God, and the experience of Christians. Few men, with his connections, have been more abstracted from the world: perhaps he indulged the desire to excess,

"Along the cool, sequestered vale of life,
To keep the noiseless tenor of his way."

In this year (1757) I have many reasons to believe that his soul was truly alive to God, and that the life he lived was by the faith of the Son of God. Several of his letters which were written about this time are preserved. They reflect a just resemblance of his mind, a mind ardently desirous of the happiness of others. One to his amiable and intimate friend Miss Allen (now Mrs. Carr) is an example of genuine simplicity:--

"October 9th, 1757
"Dear Betty,

"Never forget that one thing is needful. Wherever you are, whatever you do, have that one thing always in your eye. Remember the world is a cheat; and that he who has most of it will be constrained one day to say, 'All is vanity and vexation of spirit.' Keep up communion with your God. Contrive every day to meet Him in some private place or other. He expects it. It is a sign of no great intimacy when we have nothing to communicate to a friend but what we can always do in company. Search His word, and meditate on it; be familiar with His friends, esteem them as the excellent ones of the earth, and converse as much with them as may be; keep your lamp trimmed and burning, and have oil in your vessel; endeavor as often as possible to be in the way when the mails arrive from Mount Zion. You know that they always bring good news for pilgrims and strangers. I am just going with a mail to the Fell. The Lord grant I may have good tidings for many. Think of us when your Lord bids you ask what you will. Mrs. Cownley joins me in love. I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"Joseph Cownley."

Mr. Cownley's life appears to contain nothing remarkably interesting from 1757 to 1760; but as he was charged with disaffection to the established clergy, it may not be improper to examine the justice of the charge. No man was more attached to serious persons of every persuasion than Mr. Cownley. If he had predilections, they were favorable to the pious of the Establishment; but as his heart and life were influenced by the gospel, so were his opinions. He did not admire in the gross, nor censure without discrimination. He had learned to distinguish; and in his views the precious and the vile were equally objects of praise or detestation. In the course of his travels he had frequently opportunities of forming just estimates of men and manners; and it was impossible, to a man of his observation, that the characters and doctrines of many of the clergy should pass unnoticed. Uninfluenced by subordinate or any motives but those of truth, he sometimes offended by exposing the wickedness of clerical impiety, and the consequences of their defection from the doctrines of their fathers; but if this was a crime, Mr. Wesley, Dr. Burnet, Bishop of Sarum, and the present Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Horsley, are equally criminal: with such company, bigotry itself will forgive. From the natural mildness of his character, he never indulged improper severity.

One of the sages of antiquity has said, "Account that day happy which brings no new misfortune." Indeed, the history of human life is one continued scene of perplexity and distress; and happy are they whose minds are so influenced by the spirit of Jesus as to say, with St. Paul, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Men, however eminent for learning, fortune, or piety, have been subject to partial or overwhelming calamities, which neither their wisdom could foresee, nor their prudence prevent. It is some relief to know that we do not suffer alone, though the causes and nature of our sufferings may be very different. Profane and sacred history afford examples of what the experience of every day confirms, that man is born to sorrow, and that it is part of our duty, as men and Christians, like the good Samaritan, to pour in the oil and the wine. From trials, Mr. Cownley was not exempt; he had to grapple with those which unassisted nature is too feeble to endure. Previous to his union with Miss Massiot, a deed of settlement in trust was executed. This vested the management of the principal part of her property in two trustees. Several years after the execution of the deed, one of the trustees died; and the other, a gentleman of the name of Matthias, removed to Jamaica. It is not my intention to trace the various mazes of his difficulties: it is sufficient to observe that through the trust, and a variety of other causes his affairs were involved in the utmost confusion, so that, though Mrs. Cownley brought a fortune of near three thousand pounds his family were on the verge of beggary. Suspense is always disagreeable but when it involves our support, and that of our family, it is more, it then becomes one of the most painful situations in which we can be placed. For many years this was his case, between hope and despair; but it had a happy effect: his soul was led to center in God, where he waited in hope. In his distress, he found in the pious Mr. Charles Greenwood a friend indeed; the recollection of whose disinterested kindness only expired with his breath. In 1766 it was thought necessary that he should come up to London; where, if I mistake not, he resided with Mr. Greenwood. Though his business was secular, he had work to do for his great Master. His labors were received, not merely with acceptance, but with admiration, and several remember that visit with gratitude. It was not until the following year that his affairs were fully adjusted by a new assignment upon the original trusts. On Mr. Greenwood's receiving the writings from Jamaica with

the signature of Mr. Matthias, he expresses the warmth of his affection: "You cannot conceive what pleasure this news gave us. I thought of those words of the old clerk in the country after a wedding, 'This is a joyful day indeed.' We heartily 'wish you and dear Mrs. Cownley health to enjoy it, and that you may live to bring up your little ones in the fear of the Lord.'" Thus ended a business, the remembrance of which gave him pain and pleasure; and of which he said to me, "I did not know that I was worth a farthing in the world."

There are few religious societies, not those immediately under the notice of the apostles, but what have been exposed to the illusion of enthusiasm. We read the scriptural accounts with regret; but it is some mitigation to remember that these effects generally arise from the weakness, though sometimes from the wickedness, of men. There is not an established or independent church in Europe, but what has been disgraced; but if religion, or any particular society, must be reproached, because of the frantic reveries of some of their professors, then every branch of science, as well as religious community, will have full measure, pressed down, and running over. In 1760 and 1761 an extraordinary work commenced in London: the kingdom of the Redeemer was enlarged, many were convinced and converted, numbers were added to the society, and renewed in love. By the folly of a few men, the blessing was perverted. The principal visionary, and who exceeded the rest in delusion, was George Bell, whose piety and zeal degenerated into madness and fury: from a dreamer he became a prophet, declared himself immortal, and finally predicted the end of the world. It is impossible to describe the confusion into which the excesses of these men threw the society. An extract of a letter from Mr. John Downes, a friend of Mr. Cownley, may throw some light on an affair which should remain as a monument of possible extravagance.

"My Dear Friend,

"As to the follies and extravagances of the Witnesses, I consider them as the devices of Satan, to cast a blemish upon a real work of God. The letter from brother Lawrence, in Mr. Hampson's 'Book of Letters,' is a short description of it. The more I converse with the solid ones, the more I long to experience what they do. It is a state worthy of a Christian. As to the follies of the enthusiasts, Mr. Charles hears every week less or more. Why his brother suffers them, we cannot tell. He threatens, but cannot find in his heart to put in execution. The consequence is, the talk of all the town, and entertainment for the newspapers. What will be the end, who can tell? My friend is strongly invited up to town to help in this time of need: I mean, to quell these pretenders to prophecy, &c. O my friend, I only want to love the Lord Jesus. I am sick of all besides. Will you not help me on by your prayers?

"Yours, &c.

"John Downes."

There was something in Mr. Cownley's disposition averse from the slightest approach of fancy and imagination in religion. From his experience he had been taught that nothing prevents a real, more than the appearance of a fictitious work; that dreamers and prophets are generally persons of suspicious characters, or whose understandings are only remarkable for their weakness. It cannot, therefore, be a matter of astonishment that we find him using all his influence to prevent and resist a torrent of imaginary piety, which exposed Methodism the reproach, and sensibly injured the interest of vital religion. Mr. Cownley was earnestly solicited by many of the friends to

come up to London to assist in crushing an evil which menaced the society with destruction. The reasons why he did not do not appear, though it is most probable the principal cause was the situation of his temporal affairs. The spirit which prevailed in the center affected Methodism in its remotest branches. But there the disorder, in its commencement, met a powerful resistance. Mr. Cownley, Mr. Hopper, and several others opposed with success, and had the happiness of seeing it expire. Mr. Charles Wesley, from the beginning, had been in opposition to George Bell and his associates. This appears from several letters which he wrote to Mr. Cownley, one of which I shall insert.

"Bristol, February 1st, 1763

"My Dear Brother,

"I received a letter from you just before God laid His hand upon me and took away my strength. Full often have I intended to answer it; for my love to you is the same as ever; and my hope of you is steadfast, that you will be of those who endure to the end. Sad havoc Satan has made of the flock since you and I were first acquainted. What they will do after my brother's departure I leave to the Lord, for I dare not think of it. I gave warning, four years ago, of the flood of enthusiasm which has now overflowed us; and of the sect of Ranters that should arise out of the Witnesses. My last hymns are a farther standing testimony. Tell Christopher Hopper I reverence him for his stand against the torrent. The Lord is your strength and wisdom. You had need keep close to Him and His word. Remember me and mine.

"Yours most affectionately,

"Charles Wesley."

Mr. John Wesley has been much censured for want of firmness in resisting these enormities in their rise; but what the severity of criticism may object, a candid examination will reject. Though prompt on the call of manifest danger, and instantly executive; yet, as there was, in his views, a probability of the remedy being worse than the disease, a man of his feelings and piety would naturally suspend. His situation was peculiarly delicate; he embraced all the consequences, and concluded that the violence of the flame might be soon expended; that patience and forbearance would more effectually extinguish what a sudden and violent resistance might increase. If his hopes were not realized, it is no proof that his intentions were not just; and he had the satisfaction at least of attempting to save the society from a division which at last became necessary. It would be improper to enter more minutely on a subject the particulars of which are to be found in the Journals and Life of Mr. Wesley.

From Mr. Cownley's first conviction and conversion his union with the Methodists was unshaken. Though the affliction under which he labored exposed him to the temptation of settling in a society where his labors might have been acceptable; yet no consciousness of abilities, or prospect of emolument, could alienate his affections or labors from that community in which he was brought to the knowledge of salvation. That he had opportunities, both before and after his incapacity to travel, of enjoying a lucrative situation, I have many reasons to believe but his heart was fixed and such was the force of his love of those under connections which are formed in the unity of undisguised religion that nothing but violence or expulsion could have separated him from

his brethren. As I could not pass unnoticed a conduct so meritorious in Mr. Cownley, I hope it will not appear an improper introduction to an animating letter from his friend Mr. Whitefield:--

"London, September 1st, 1766

"My Dear Mr. Cownley,

"Indeed, and indeed, I received no letter from you whilst abroad. Sickness prevents my corresponding more frequently now I am come home. Home, did I say? Where is my home? Where yours lies, in heaven. There is our citizenship! There may our conversation always be! Blessed be God that our salvation is nearer than when we first believed! Yet a little while, and He that cometh will come, and will not tarry.

"We soon shall hear the archangel's voice
The trump of God shall sound, Rejoice!

Methinks I hear you and yours, dear Mr. Hopper's whole self; and all the Orphan House true pilgrims, adding, 'Amen! Hallelujah!' O for one more meeting on earth, before we take our flight to heaven! Abba, Father, all things are possible with Thee! Is it practicable for you to come to town, to assist at the Tabernacle for a month or six weeks, if you have proper notice? My helpers, as well as myself; are invalids. Dear Mr. Wesley, I am persuaded, will readily consent. We are upon very good terms.

'O may we find the ancient way,
Our wondering foes to move,
And force the Heathen world to say,
See how these Christians love!'

God bless you all! Does Mr. Hopper think to go to heaven before me? Well, my turn must come by and by. Help, dear friends, help to pray thither,

"Yours, &c., in a never-failing Jesus,
"George Whitefield."

No materials of which I am possessed enable me to continue this biographical sketch of Mr. Cownley from 1766 to the death of Mrs. Cownley. Years had not impaired, but increased, their reciprocal affection. Parents of a numerous family, they enjoyed in domestic society all that happiness of which humanity is capable. But, alas! all human comforts hang by a dubious thread. We possess with uncertainty, and inherit but for a moment. To lament the departure of a friend is not only a principle of nature, but religion; and that man must be lost to all those divine affections which the friends of Jesus experience who can with a barbarous apathy commit to the grave the partner of his joys and sorrow. This was not his case on the death of Mrs. Cownley. As his affections were not the result of passion, the affliction of his loss remained when its violence had subsided; and, to his last moments, every recall of the past revived the anguish of his grief. It cannot be said, that "to feel is criminal:" we are only guilty when, by impatient insult, we arraign and impeach the providence of God. The infinite Redeemer draws nearer to us when we see Him Weeping over the tomb of Lazarus; and He cannot but approve of those sensibilities which we find

in Himself. To suffer is ours, independent of choice; and it is our folly and weakness to expect impossibilities. The enjoyments of life, like many of the operations of nature, deceive our expectations, and disappoint our hopes; and at last we are unwilling to be convinced,

"By sudden blasts, or slow decline,
Our social comforts drop away."

O happy Christian, your hopes can never die: death may divide, but
cannot separate. You shall meet

"Where angels gather immortality from life's fair tree."

In the month of March, 1774, Mrs. Cownley being pregnant, it was expected that she would soon take her bed. Her mind had been impressed with a persuasion that she should never survive. Under this presentiment, with the greatest calmness, she formally parted with her friends. To one she said, after embracing her, "I shall never see you here again." So perfectly satisfied was she of the truth, that all the demands on the family were paid, her affairs settled, and she literally prepared to die. Mr. Cownley had engaged for a few days to visit the friends in Alnwick, and, without the least apprehension of danger, proceeded on his journey. Her eyes followed him until he passed out of sight: she then shed tears, and said, "I shall never see thee any more." As her danger approached, her confidence increased. She had long taken Him for her portion who has said, "I will never forsake thee," and in the last struggle of nature was not disappointed. Her labor came on, she was brought to bed, and soon after expired. But hers was not a setting, but a rising sun. The victory was complete. The fears of death had fled like the shades of the evening. She triumphed in the name of Jesus: that precious name hung upon her lips. When burst the bonds of life, immortal happiness dawned upon her soul, and

"Her last faltering accents whispered praise."

Unconscious of the collecting storm, Mr. Cownley was quietly pursuing his labors when he received the message of her danger. He set out from Alnwick, but before his arrival in Newcastle Mrs. Cownley was no more. It is easier to conceive than describe his feelings from an event so little expected; though it was some mitigation to his affliction that her confidence was not shaded by a doubt. His soul seemed to follow her into eternity; and that state of invisible intelligence became as familiar in contemplation as sensible existence. It is not difficult to conceive him saying,

"When midnight spreads her sable curtains round,
I lift my eyes to heaven's empyreal [highest] seat,
Pursue thy image through the vast profound,
Beyond the stars that roll beneath thy feet.
Thy virtues there with beams celestial shine,
Assume superior charms, and luster all divine."

To soften the severity of the loss, Mr. Cownley did not want the consolations of friendship. A letter on this subject, in which most are interested, will at least be excused, if not acceptable.

"London, June 9th, 1774

"My Dear Brother,

"It is the Lord! Let Him do as seemeth Him good. He has taken away the desire of your eyes with a stroke; but He does not forbid you to feel your loss, like Ezekiel. It is a great thing that you can submit, and patiently bear your incomparable loss. By and by you will feel the comfort of calm and perfect resignation. Perhaps you may not be joyful in tribulation till, through much tribulation, you enter the kingdom. You shall go to her, and then you will know perfectly the love of your Father in this severe affliction, and comprehend how all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth. If you were with her now, your children would be safe under the care of their heavenly Father. You cannot hope to see them all brought up; but the Lord will look to that. Trust this with Him, and be anxious for nothing. I shall very shortly leave my widow and children to our common Friend. It is well His promise is on our side; for there is no help in man, no dependence on him, either before our death or after it. My partner's heart towards you and your children, you know is that of, my dear brother,

"Your ever affectionate
"Charles Wesley."

Mr. Cownley's principal engagements after the death of his wife were preaching, study, and visiting the sick. In his favorite retirement, he spent the greatest part of his time in collecting that agreeable variety which rendered his preaching so instructive, useful, and entertaining. He was seldom without his book. Blessed with a tenacious memory, he treasured up in his mind a fund of various knowledge; and in its application he consulted not the applause, but the essential benefit, of others. His conversation was without ornament; and it would have been difficult, unassisted by an intimate acquaintance, to discover any remarkable degree of information. He spoke but little in company, unless his opinion was called for; and then his observations were generally just, and frequently pertinent. His serious deportment, his conversation, his fervor in preaching and prayer, discovered him to be a pilgrim upon earth, seeking a city whose founder and builder is the Lord.

In 1780 he suffered another loss in his family, by the death of his favorite son, Massiot Cownley. Convinced of the defects of his own, he spared no pains nor expense in the education of his son. At a proper age, the young man was committed to the care of a surgeon in London, where his abilities promised a distinguished eminence in the profession. After the expiration of his apprenticeship, his disposition led him to the army, much against the inclination of his father, who suffered what he found it difficult to prevent. The piety and instructions of parents cannot always influence the conduct of children; and they have often to lament, before God, a temper and inclination destructive of present and everlasting happiness, which without effect they have opposed. In 1779 Massiot was appointed surgeon of the Queen's Rangers, a regiment then raising by Colonel Stanton; and as he was put upon the staff of the regiment, he was secured in a provision for life. But, alas! he had scarcely begun to act upon this theater of dissipation, when his career was ended. His manners, though agreeable, were influenced by the maxims of this world; for by mixing with men of fashion and pleasure, he unfortunately imbibed their principles. It is said he fell in what is falsely called an affair of honor, [1] but it was happy for his father, that this

circumstance, by the prudence of his children, was kept from his knowledge. Such an event as the death of Massiot was no small addition to his grief, and although he suffered like a Christian, he mourned over the loss of his son with all the tenderness of a parent.

At the Conference in 1788 Mr. Cownley was stationed in Edinburgh. In September he proceeded to that city, and began his labors, not, indeed, with the fire of youth, but the wisdom of age and experience; and although his popularity was not in proportion to his abilities, yet many of the children of God were confirmed and comforted by his ministry. In a letter to his friend Mrs. Carr he thus describes his journey and labors:--

"Edinburgh, September 17th, 1788

"My Very Dear Friend,

"God graciously brought me here, in about eighteen hours, without any accident happening all the way; though we were overtaken near the end of our journey by a thunder storm, which set a farm house on fire, and killed several cattle. The lightning was most awful indeed. Happy they who have an interest in Him who gives winds and storms their commissions, and directs their courses as it pleaseth Him. I find my employment here is rather above my strength. A long lecture in the morning, and two sermons in the afternoon, is their ordinary on the Lord's day. I could do well with the lecture, and the last sermon, but the sermon after dinner distresses me much. Edinburgh is now one of the finest cities in Europe. For spacious streets, pompous buildings, and elegant squares, no place in Britain, except Bath, is to compare with it. Yet, after a while, all this pomp will perish. The earth and all that is in it will be consumed. But there is a city whose foundation is immovably fixed, whose builder and maker is God Himself. John's description of it exceeds all our thoughts; and in this city may you and I have our portion and our home. So prays

"Your ever affectionate friend,
"Joseph Cownley."

His health at his first arrival in Edinburgh nearly continued the same. But, by an unaccustomed succession of labor, the pain in his head increased to such a degree of violence, as to render him incapable of the duties of a regular preacher. His own account was: "My work overpowers me on the Lord's day, and no one knows what I suffer with my wretched head. I preached on Sunday about an hour, at the full extent of my voice, without bawling: I slept but little that night, and had some degree of fever, and the next day was very low." He informed Mr. Wesley of his incapacity to endure the fatigues of his labor, who sympathized with his infirmities, and appointed him an assistant.

Mr. Cownley's ministry was not confined to Edinburgh. He visited Glasgow, Dunbar, and several other places in Scotland. In 1789 Mr. Jonathan Crowther came down to assist him. His respect for Mr. Cownley must not pass unnoticed. With a tenderness almost filial, he not only attended but anticipated his desires; preached for him when oppressed with pain, and helped to soothe a mind but too frequently overwhelmed with the gloom of disease. "May God reward him!" was the prayer of his friend; and I am happy to record this example of disinterested affection. Mr. Cownley's continuance in Scotland had been very doubtful for some time, from the appearance of a

fatal disorder, and increasing debility, and at last became impossible. His labors were attended with so many unavoidable interruptions, that he was preventing a more regular supply of preaching. After an ineffectual struggle, which he unwillingly communicated, it was the opinion of his friends, and a persuasion of the impolicy of his remaining, that determined his resolution to return to England. Such was his holy and fervent piety, his love to the blessed Redeemer, and the lively conviction of his call to preach "the salvation of Jesus," that nothing but absolute necessity could have influenced his return. And I am persuaded, from his enlightened apprehensions of the nature of inward religion, that for its success in the world, his soul ever glowed with an equal ardor, which years had not impaired, nor weakness relaxed.

In the autumn of 1789 Mr. Cownley returned to Newcastle. Mr. Wesley at first expressed his disapprobation; but understanding that he had been attacked by the gout in his stomach, writes, "I am fully satisfied by your last letter, you returned in good time." He was received at Newcastle, and its neighborhood, as one risen from the dead. He preached in the Orphan House every Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and frequently on the Lord's day morning: this was from choice, as he cautiously avoided the large congregations; and this was his constant practice, until his spirit returned to God.

In the former part of 1792 it was evident to many of his friends, that he was ripening for eternity. The concerns of his everlasting state absorbed all his soul. In prayer with his family and friends, the tears flowed from his eyes, and his approaches to the throne of grace indicated the closest union with God. Indeed, life had no ties to retain him. He had outlived his first, and many of his warmest, friends; for most of those who had shared his friendship, and divided his love, he had seen carried to the grave. In the decline of life there is something melancholy in the loss of our earliest intimates, with whom our weaknesses were familiar, and our thoughts ripened through experience into knowledge; whose hopes and fears, and general character, resembled our own. But to him, futurity had prospects in reserve: though a Wesley, a Whitefield, a Perronet, had left him, yet it was not a separation for ever. "This mortal being only can decay;" and the hopes of a blessed reunion cheered the approach of dissolution.

After the London Conference, he continued as usual his visits to the neighboring societies. In September, on his return from Hallington to Prudhoe, he caught cold, which brought on the complaint in his stomach. He preached in the greatest agonies of pain, both there and at Ovington. His last sermon was from Psalm cv. 3, "Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord;" and with this, on the Lord's day, September 23d, concluded the labors of near half a century. The following day he returned to Newcastle, and the surgeon of the family was sent for, but prescribed without effect. On my return from the country that evening, I found Mr. Cownley to all appearance approaching his dissolution. We proposed sending for a physician, which, at first, Mr. Cownley opposed, saying, "No: my heavenly Father, He is the best Physician; He is my only Physician." He then said, "Lord, after all that I have done, I am the chief of sinners." Soon after, I observed to him, that the blood of the Redeemer was precious in our dying moments: he replied, "O, precious! O, precious! What should I do but for that?" Dr. Clarke then arrived, and, seeing him in the extreme of pain, said, "Do not be afraid." Mr. Cownley answered, "The fear of death, sir, has long since been removed! I am not afraid to die, but I am afraid lest I should become impatient under this affliction." When the physician withdrew, while the sweat fell in large drops from his face, he cried, with remarkable fervor, "Jesus, I am Thine! Thou art my only Physician; but if it is Thy will,

and I have finished the work Thou hast committed to me, then take me to Thyself." He afterwards repeated, "Lord, how little have I done for Thee! Lord, how little have I done for Thee!"

The doctor's prescriptions had an immediate effect, and the rigor of the disorder almost instantly abated. I sat up with him that night: he rested a little, and in the morning was free from the severity of the pain. Conversing with me the following day, with a countenance expressive of regret, he said, "The doctor, by his timely applications, has brought me back into a world from which I should have been happy to escape." As it was my fortnight to be in Newcastle, I visited him every day, and had not the least hope of a complete recovery. He had received a letter, previous to his illness, from Josiah Dornford, Esq.: a few days before his death, he began an answer, which he never lived to finish. It is descriptive of his state and disorder; and will, I hope, be acceptable to the reader. As it was only a copy, there is no date nor address.

"I have been for some time past confined to my room with the gout in my stomach. I made an excursion into the country for a few weeks, and thought I had not been so well for a long time past; which, under God, I attributed to the little exercise I underwent in going from place to place, with the change of air; till on Friday evening before I came home I was seized with a pain in my breast which deprived me of three nights' rest; nor could I be excused preaching, ill as I was. On Monday I came home, and that evening the pain increased so much that I thought I should have sunk under it. What my apothecary ordered me did not in the least answer his design. My children insisted on calling in a physician, and we have in this town a very eminent one from Scotland. He was presently with me; and, after asking a few questions, ordered me a draught, and a blister on my breast. The Good Physician, I believe, directed him what to prescribe; for in less than half an hour after taking the medicine I found relief. I mend very slowly; for on any little exertion of my strength the pain returns: but on sitting down a while it ceases again. My appetite, which was quite gone, is much better, and I rest tolerably well; but how and when it will end, I leave to Him in whose hands I am, and in whom is all my trust, and from whom is all my expectation. There is something very charming to me in those sweet lines of Dr. Watts:--

"Jesus the vision of Thy face
Hath overpowering charms.
Scarce shall I feel Death's cold embrace,
If Thou art in my arms!"

As there appeared the most flattering symptoms of a perfect recovery, he spoke with the greatest pleasure of once more seeing us at the Orphan House; but his hopes, and our expectations, were equally disappointed. The Lord's day before his decease the consolations of God were so sweet that his cup of joy ran over. "I feel," he said, "such light and love in my heart, that, if I were carried to the chapel, I could sit and preach to the people." But his labors were ended; angels were ready to tune their harps, and the everlasting gates to lift up their heads, and admit a redeemed spirit into the regions of delight and happiness. October 8th, the day of his death, I sat with him for several hours. He conversed on a variety of subjects, with a vivacity that I have but seldom witnessed in his liveliest moments. A little after four o'clock I left him to fulfill an engagement with a friend: with difficulty I gained his consent, but promised to return immediately after preaching. It was the last farewell; and little did I think it was our final separation. Just as the service in the chapel was finished I received the message of his danger, and arrived in time to see

his left eye close, and to feel the flutter of an expiring pulse. A few minutes after eight Mr. Cownley sat down to supper. His daughter Mary had withdrawn into an adjoining apartment: she heard a noise, returned, but he was speechless. The family were alarmed, his friends and the physician sent for, but all in vain.

"Death broke at once the vital chain,
And forced the soul the nearest way."

He reclined his head on the chair, and, without a struggle or a groan, expired. It is impossible for me to describe the affliction of his children: their loss, indeed, was irreparable. O, may they meet him at the resurrection of the just!

"He's gone, --
Lost for a while, and numbered with the dead;
But there's a day when I shall meet my friend:
Meet him, O transport! and together spend
Eternity itself, where pleasures cannot end."

On Friday the corpse was brought into the chapel, and a discourse was delivered on the occasion to a numerous and afflicted audience, from John v. 35: "He was a burning and a shining light." Then, attended by the singers, and a number of friends, his remains were carried to the Ballast Hills; where, amidst tears and sighs, I committed him to the dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.

I communicated the painful notice of his decease to several of his oldest friends. Mr. Hopper's answer is a tribute to his memory:--

"Bolton, October 13th, 1792

"Is my dear, dear, and well-beloved Cownley dead? No; he sleepeth. Who can tell what my poor heart feels? I see the whole scene, from his first meeting Miss Massiot, in the city of Cork, to this precious moment. A serious drama indeed. The dream is ended; this momentary life is over; he is no more, no more here, no more in Newcastle. His body rests on the Ballast Hills, and his soul in the bosom of the Lord. Farewell, dear brother Cownley! I shall hear and see thee no more on the stage of this mortal life; but I hope I shall soon behold thee among the glorified saints in the celestial Jerusalem, the city of our great God. There, there we shall meet to part no more. Glory be to God, I am the next man on the list. Time passeth, death approacheth, the Judge standeth at the door, and eternity is come. May I, may you, may all be ready! Amen, and amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!

"Your affectionate brother,
"Christopher Hopper."

Thus lived and died Joseph Cownley; a man, though with defects common to all men, one of the fairest characters I ever knew. His mind was capable of the most abstruse investigations; and had he improved in proportion to his mental resources, he must have secured the reputation of

genius and learning, as well as that of a minister and a Christian. His abilities as a public speaker have been appreciated by an unsuspected and competent judge. Mr. Wesley did not hesitate to say, "He is one of the best preachers in England." His discourses, though generally plain, were distinct and argumentative; not daubed by the mere finery of phrase, nor ornamented by affected sublimity: he pleased more by the gravity and force of his sentiments, than by the elegance or graces of his style. But, what is far better, by an enlivening pathos he reached the heart, and inspired love to God and benevolence to man. He was averse to a noisy and uncertain popularity. His ambition was, not to be distinguished, but to be useful; and, although he gained the applause of the serious, he never sought the admiration of the multitude. He dreaded extremes. His piety was rational, equally removed from formality and enthusiasm; and, as his affections were in heaven, his opinions were regulated, not by the impulse of a moment, but the revelation of God. His learning was confined, though his knowledge was extensive. He had traveled "history's enormous round;" and there are but few books on divinity in the English language but what he had read. From a disposition naturally reserved, he conversed but little in company. His manners were uniform, without the austerities of an ascetic, or the affected singularities of the mystic. He united the solemn with the familiar, and was at once cheerful and serious. As his feelings were nicely sensible, his humanity was almost an extreme; and if in anything he bordered on extravagance, it was in his treatment of the brute creation. But this was a failing which seeks no extenuation, and solicits no forgiveness; for we cannot but admire the man who can say,

"No dying brute I view in anguish here,
But from my melting eye descends a tear."

Though constantly afflicted, his tempers were not embittered by disease, nor soured by impatience; and he endured with submission what had baffled the skill of man and the powers of medicine. Improper complaint seldom escaped his lips; and when on the rack of pain, his language was, "The will of the Lord be done." In his walk as a Christian, his meekness was remarkable. For upwards of forty years he had scarcely an enemy; and when, towards the close of life, he was disturbed by one who had been his friend, his severest remark was, "I did not think he would have used me so." An unwillingness to offend has sometimes exposed him to the suspicion of irresolution. But it must be remembered that he dreaded the consequences of argument and debate; for experience had convinced him that his feelings were too susceptible for a pointed opposition. Hurt at the least appearance of discord, whenever it occurred he instantly departed, and no persuasion could influence his return. If, on some occasions, this was not agreeable, we cannot but approve the motive; and happy would it be for society were all men influenced by his principles. Part of his time was held sacred to the poor. He sought out the asylums of wretchedness; in comforting the mourners, establishing the pious, and rousing the careless,

"He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

His union with the Redeemer was almost uninterrupted. His was not a transient, but a constant flame. As God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, so he walked in the light as He is in the light; and the life which he lived was by faith in the Son of God. His love to his brethren, and the church of God, is as worthy of imitation as it is above all praise. Nothing could alienate his affections; neither the certainty of labor, nor the promises of reward his heart was fixed, and he

said, "This people shall be my people, and their God shall be mine." He had the clearest ideas of the religion of Jesus, and an engaging method of communicating those conceptions. Hundreds of careless sinners were awakened under his ministry, and he is the father of many spiritual children; children who are still living to God, though many sleep in Jesus. Persuasion hung upon his lips, and at times he appeared to speak with an authority more than human. Alternately he was a son of thunder and of consolation. By the terrors of the Lord he persuaded men, and by the application of the promises he confirmed the wavering and comforted the doubting believer. His end was the consequent issue of his life. Death had lost its terrors. He loved that which is the dread of the impious. He said, "It is better for me to be dissolved, that I may be with Jesus;" and, without a struggle or a groan, he committed his soul into the hands of his faithful Creator. In him the church lost a faithful pastor, his children a parent of indescribable tenderness, and the world a burning and a shining light.

I shall make no apology for what I have written, as I have not willfully misrepresented anything in this narrative of Mr. Cownley. I have certainly kept in mind, as a motto,

"When actions wear a dubious face,
Put the best meaning on the case;"

and the impartial will admit that it is invidious to criticize defects when they are nothing in comparison of superior virtues. The principal facts were communicated by Mr. Cownley, and confirmed by his papers, though he kept no journal of his travels or experience. I am perfectly satisfied that I have at least endeavored to rescue from oblivion a man whose memory will be no disgrace to Methodism; and, our enemies being judges, whose life and conversation would have done credit to any society. O, may my life and death be like his!

John Gaulter
Alnwick, May 24th, 1794

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Part 2
THE LIFE OF MR. THOMAS OLIVERS
Written by Himself

I was born at a village called Tregonan, in Montgomeryshire, in 1725. My father died in December, 1729. My mother was so afflicted on account of his death, that she died of a broken heart in March following; leaving me and another son, not two years old, behind her. My mother's father, Mr. Richard Humphries, took care of my brother, and when he died, left him to the care of his eldest son.

My father's uncle, a man of property, took care of me while he lived; and when he died, left me a small fortune; ordering in his will, that the interest of it should be employed in bringing me up, and that I should receive the principal when I came of age.

The person to whose care he left me was Mrs. Elizabeth Tudor, eldest daughter to his son-in-law, Mr. Thomas Tudor, an eminent farmer, in the parish of Fordon, in the same county. And as she was unmarried, she committed me to her father's care, in whose house I was boarded till I was eighteen years of age.

As soon as I was capable, I was sent to school where I received such learning as was thought necessary. And as to religion, I was taught to say my prayers morning and evening; to repeat my Catechism; to sing psalms; and to go to church, in general, twice every Sabbath-day.

But my carnal mind soon discovered itself; by prompting me, not only to a great variety of childish follies, but also to a multitude of heinous sins particularly lying, and taking the name of God in vain. In these I was confirmed by the examples of all about me; for, with grief I mention it, I knew not so much as a single person (except an old man or two, whom we all supposed to be crazy) who made any scruple of these or of various other acts of wickedness. There was one man in the parish, who exceeded all the rest in cursing, swearing, and horrid blasphemies. This hellish art he studied with all his might. His custom was to compound twenty or thirty different expressions, to make one long and horrid oath! I never heard of any telling him he did wrong; but many laughed at him, and admired his cleverness; and some even strove to imitate him. Among the rest, I was one; and so apt a scholar was I, in these diabolical practices, that, before I was fifteen years of age, I vied with my infernal instructor. It is horrid to think how often I have cursed the wind and the weather, the souls of cows and horses, yea, the very heart's blood of stones, trees, gates, and doors! So that on this, and on various other accounts, I was generally reckoned the worst boy who had been in those parts for the last twenty or thirty years.

At eighteen years of age I was bound apprentice; but by this time I was become so idle, that I did not half learn my business. Dancing and keeping company engrossed my whole soul; and was it not for some small restraints, they would have employed my whole time. Accordingly, the very first day I was at full liberty, I gave scope to my inclination to such a degree, that out of sixteen nights and days, I was fifteen of them without ever being in bed.

For four or five years I was greatly entangled with a farmer's daughter, whose sister was married to Sir I. P., of N__wt__n, in that county. What

"Strange reverse of human fates,"

For one sister was wooed by, and married to, a baronet, who was esteemed one of the finest men in the country. When she died, Sir I. was almost distracted. Presently after her funeral, he published an elegy on her of a thousand verses! For her sake he said, --

"O that the fleecy care had been my lot,
Some lonely cottage on some verdant spot!,

For some time he daily visited her in her vault, and at last took her up, and kept her in his bed-chamber for several years.

On the other hand, her sister, who was but little inferior in person, fell into the hands of a most insignificant young man who was a means of driving her almost to an untimely end. I cannot omit giving some intimation of this particular, seeing all who are acquainted with my former life know this to be one great aggregate of my folly and wickedness; and seeing it is that which lay heaviest on my mind, both before and after my conversion; and which to this day I remember with peculiar shame and sorrow. However, God, who often brings good out of evil, made it a means (though a remote one) of my conversion.

For such was the clamor of the people and the uneasiness of my own mind that I determined to leave the country. Accordingly I set off for Shrewsbury. Here I continued for some time; and among various things which I have much reason to be ashamed of; I went one night to the Methodist meeting; and out of mere wantonness made use of some very indecent language as I came out. I also went one Sabbath day to St. Chad's church in company with a very wicked young man. We got into the organ-loft and while the late Dr Adams was preaching, I was wantonly cursing him, and almost every sentence which proceeded out of his mouth. This was matter of huge diversion to my companion, who expressed his hearty approbation of my profane and impious behavior, by ridiculous laughter, and the like. O, how much is it to be lamented that all this while we were called Christians, Protestants, and Churchmen!

From Shrewsbury, I went into a country village about three miles from the town. Here I was greatly reduced in my circumstances: my conscience also stared me dreadfully in the face as it had frequently done on many former occasions. I thought "I live a most wretched life! If I do not repent and forsake my sins, I shall certainly be damned: I wish I could repent of and forsake them: if I could but hate them as well as I love them, I should then be able to lay them aside; but till then I despair of doing it. For I have always gone to church: I have frequently prayed and resolved against my evil practices; and yet I cannot leave them." I then thought, "I will receive the sacrament, and try what that will do." Accordingly, I borrowed a "Week's Preparation," and went through it regularly, reading on my knees the meditations and prayers for each day. On Sunday I went to the Lord's table, and spent the following week in going over the second part of the book, in the same manner I had done the first. For this fortnight I kept tolerably clear of sin: but when it was over, I returned the book with many thanks, and then returned to my former practices.

From hence I went to Wrexham. I had not been here long, before I was taken ill of a violent fever, of which most people expected me to die. As it was known that I had little or no money, a Methodist (Mr. John Memis, afterwards Dr. Memis, of Aberdeen, who was then a journeyman to an apothecary in the town) visited me without fee or reward; and I believe, under God, saved my life.

When I was got out of danger, I found great thankfulness to God for sparing me; and as soon as I was able, I went to church twice every day, and read books of devotion at home; and frequently wept bitterly over what I read or heard; for I saw very clearly, that if I had died at that time, I should certainly have gone to hell. I therefore again resolved to forsake my sins, and to become a new man.

But before I was fully recovered, my resolutions vanished away, and I returned to my former practices. Accordingly, being one day at the house of one Mr. Jones, who was then a

Methodist, I swore by my Maker. Mr. Jones said, "Young man, what a pity is it that you, who are so lately brought back from the borders of the grave, should already curse and swear!" I bowed, and thanked him for his seasonable reproof; and esteemed him ever after. Several times I followed him to and from church; listening, with great attention, to what passed about religion between him and others. At last I got him by himself; and asked him many questions concerning the way to heaven. When we came near his house, I asked, "How do you intend to spend the remainder of this Sabbath?". He answered, "In reading, meditation, prayer, and singing of hymns and psalms." When he was gone a little way from me, I turned about to look at him, and thought, "This is an odd man indeed! However, I wish I was like him; but, at present, I cannot spend my Sabbaths without mirth and pleasure." I therefore gave up my acquaintance with him, and soon became as wicked as ever.

Not long after, a young man and I, after committing a most notorious and shameful act of arch-villany of which I was the contriver, agreed to leave the country together. Accordingly, we set off about one in the morning; he leaving his apprenticeship, and I several debts, behind us, which was generally my case wherever I went. About one o'clock the next day we got to Shrewsbury. While we were in a public house, my companion began to curse and swear at a Welsh Methodist, who sat quietly in the chimney corner. On this I cursed my companion, and said, "What is that to you, suppose he be a Methodist? The poor man is quiet, and does not affront us; therefore, you are a scoundrel for affronting him:" and so enraged was I at the ill-usage this poor man received from my companion, that I was very near striking him on that account.

The next day we got to Bridgenorth, and put up at a public house, the landlady of which was a Methodist; which we soon discovered by her conversation. We winked at each other, put on very grave looks, and asked, if there were any more Methodists in that town. She answered, "I thank God there are a few." We continued our affected gravity all that evening, and the next morning, while we were in her house. But when we were got a little way out of town, we laughed, and held our sides, and cursed and swore till we were quite weary because she thanked God, that there were such wretches in the town.

After some days we got to Bristol. A few hours after our arrival, a sharper, pretending to pick up a sixpence, enticed us into a public-house; where, in about half-an-hour, he stripped us of all our money, to the last penny. However, we got into lodging that night, and the next day we got business. I had not been long in that city, before I went to lodge with one who had been a Methodist; but was now, at times, a slave to drunkenness. His wife too had once been a religious woman; but was now eaten up with the cares of the world. There was also a lukewarm Moravian in the house. With these I had various disputes; particularly about election, which I could never believe. One day the Moravian and I quarrelled so highly, that he struck me; and as he was a tall, lusty man, I knew I should have no chance in fighting him. However, for a whole hour I cursed and swore in such a manner as I never heard before or since; and perhaps in such a manner as is seldom equalled on earth, or exceeded even in hell itself. And what was the greatest aggravation; it was all in confirmation of a lie! For though I swore with all the rage of a fiend, and with almost all the diversified language of hell, that I would prosecute the man; and though I wished, perhaps not less than an hundred times over, that vengeance, ruin, destruction, and damnation might lie on body and soul for ever, if I did not do it immediately; yet I never so much as attempted to do it, from that hour to this. Indeed, such a habit of horrid swearing had I acquired, that though I saw I was dreadfully wrong, and, at times, wished and labored to break it off; yet, on the smallest

occasion, I was carried away, as by a mighty torrent: yea, I daily and hourly did it without any provocation at all; and frequently not knowing what I did. The poor, drunken apostate was often so shocked, that one time he said, "I wish you were out of my house; for you are such a horrid swearer, I cannot bear you." How astonishing is it that a person who had ever known the fear of God did not instantly turn such a wretch out of doors; that the earth did not then open, and swallow him up alive, and that an infinitely holy God did not take him at his word and send him quick into hell to reap that punishment he had so long deserved yea, and so often wished for, dared, and defied!

As I was going along one night, I met a multitude of people; and asked one of them, where they had been. She answered, "To hear Mr. Whitefield." She also told me, he was to preach the next night. I thought, "I have often heard of Mr. Whitefield, and have sung songs about him: I will go and hear what he has to say." Accordingly, I went the next evening, but was too late. The following evening I was determined to be in time: accordingly, I went near three hours before the time. When the service began, I did little but look about me; but on seeing the tears trickle down the cheeks of some who stood near me, I became more attentive.

The text was, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" When this sermon began, I was certainly a dreadful enemy to God, and to all that is good; and one of the most profligate and abandoned young men living; but by the time it was ended, I was become a new creature. For, in the first place, I was deeply convinced of the great goodness of God towards me all my life; particularly, in that he had given His Son to die for me. I had also a far clearer view of all my sins; particularly, my base ingratitude towards Him. These discoveries quite broke my heart, and caused showers of tears to trickle down my cheeks. I was likewise filled with an utter abhorrence of my evil ways, and was much ashamed that ever I had walked in them. And as my heart was thus turned from all evil, so it was powerfully inclined to all that is good. It is not easy to express what strong desires I had for God and His service; and what resolutions I had to seek and serve Him in future: in consequence of which, I broke off all my evil practices, and forsook all my wicked and foolish companions, without delay; and gave myself up to God and His service with my whole heart. O, what reason have I to say, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

When I returned to my lodgings, the people saw that something remarkable had befallen me; and, as they knew not where I had been, could not imagine what it was. They were greatly astonished the following days, on seeing me weep almost incessantly. They first judged that I had lost some near relation; but when I told them I had not, they judged it to be some disappointment in love. At last they found, by my great reformation, that it was a concern for religion which so deeply affected me. When they put it to me, I frankly told them the whole matter: and, though the best of them was but half-hearted in religion, yet they all rejoiced at the mighty change they saw in me.

The first Sunday after I was awakened, I went to the cathedral at six in the morning. When the Te Deum was read, I felt as if I had done with earth, and was praising God before His throne! No words can set forth the joy, the rapture, the awe, and reverence I felt. At eight I went to hear Mr. Whitefield: at ten I went to Christchurch. When the invitation to the Lord's supper, which was to be administered the next Sunday, was read, it pierced my very heart, and caused me to weep bitterly. At the same time I determined, at all events, to partake of it. I went to church again at two

in the afternoon; at five I again heard Mr. Whitefield; and concluded the public worship of that day at an Anabaptist meeting. Thus, though I had spent the whole Friday before in the works of the devil; now, partly by hearing the word, and partly by reading, meditation, and abundance of private prayer, I spent the whole of this day in acts of most fervent devotion.

The next day I bought a "Week's Preparation," which, for a long time, I read on my knees, both by day and by night. This, and the Bible, were far more precious to me than rubies; and God only knows how often I bedewed them with my tears; especially those parts of them which speak of the love or sufferings of Christ.

As to secret prayer, I was, for some time, almost continually on my knees. By this means I soon grew lame on one knee, and went about limping: in a short time my other knee failed, so that it was with difficulty I walked at all. And so earnest was I, that I used by the hour together, to wrestle with all the might of my body and soul, till I almost expected to die on the spot. What with bitter cries, (unheard by any but God and myself;) together with torrents of tears, which were almost continually trickling down my cheeks, my throat was often dried up, as David says, and my eyes literally failed, while I waited for God.

As I had just before been so notoriously abandoned, none of my carnal acquaintance had much objection to my reformation; only some of them thought I carried matters too far. One said, "You may repent of your sins without so much weeping, and without walking the streets with your hat slouched about your ears." The young man who came with me from Wrexham lay near my heart. Whenever he came in my way, I used to reason with him about the necessity of repentance. I would entreat him with all the love and tenderness my soul was capable of; and while I was doing it, I sometimes seemed as if I could weep my life away over him: but, though he took it in good part, I could not prevail on him to leave his sins, and to walk with me in the way to heaven.

The love I had for Mr. Whitefield was inexpressible. I used to follow him as he walked the streets, and could scarce refrain from kissing the very prints of his feet. And as to the people of God, I dearly loved to be with them, and wished to be a member of their society; but knew not how to accomplish it. At last I ventured to mention it to one of Mr. Whitefield's preachers, but he discouraged me; and therefore I was obliged to give it up.

After three or four months I left Bristol, and went to Bradford, in Wiltshire. As I went, I fell in company with some who were going thither, and asked if there were any Methodists in Bradford; and on their telling me there were, I rejoiced exceedingly. When I had got to Bradford, I soon found out the place of preaching, and embraced the first opportunity of hearing the word; and so constant was I therein, that for two years, I believe, I did not omit a single sermon, either late or early. I also heard with deep attention, and in general with many tears. And this I did wherever I heard the word preached, whether at church, or elsewhere.

My custom was, when I went to the house of God, to fall on my knees, and with great humility and earnestness of soul to implore a blessing upon what I was going to hear; I then rose up, and fixed my eyes on the preacher, and scarcely ever moved them till all was over. This occasioned a gentleman of the town, whom I reprov'd for swearing, to say, "When you come to church, you fix your eyes on the parson, and never move them till he has done."

As to the people of God in this place, I loved them as dearly as I did those I had left in Bristol and longed to be united with them in Christian fellowship but knew not how. When the public preaching was over on a Sunday evening, and I, along with the multitude, was shut out from the society, I used to go into the field at the back of the preaching house and listen while they sang the praises of God. I would then weep bitterly at the thought that God's people were there, praising His name together, while I, a poor and wretched fugitive, was not permitted to be among them. I would then look upon the house, and think "Under that blessed roof the servants of God are now assembled but I alas a foolish virgin am shut out!" and then I would weep again, as if my very heart would burst within me. When they came out, I have often followed at a small distance those of them I thought most in earnest, particularly the preacher and his company, that I might hear something further concerning the ways of God. I often followed them near two miles, and then returned praising God for this further instruction I had picked up, as it were by stealth, and meditating thereon all the way home.

After some time, I was taken notice of by some of the principal members of the society, who desired some young men to inquire who I was. They did so; and also asked me if I desired to join the society. My heart leaped for joy on hearing that; and I told them I should be exceedingly glad to do it. They then took me to the preacher, who gave me a note of admittance, which I received with great thankfulness. As I returned home, just as I came to the bottom of the hill, at the entrance of the town, a ray of light, resembling the shining of a star, descended through a small opening in the heavens, and instantaneously shone upon me. In that instant my burden fell off, and I was so elevated, that I felt as if I could literally fly away to heaven. This was the more surprising to me, as I had always been (what I still am) so prejudiced in favour of rational religion, as not to regard visions or revelations, perhaps, so much as I ought to do. But this light was so clear, and the sweetness and other effects attending it were so great, that though it happened about twenty seven years ago, the several circumstances thereof are as fresh on my remembrance, as if they had happened but yesterday.

I now thought myself happy, as I had got among the people of God, and had received such a token of His favour. But these things were so far from making me secure or careless, that they stirred me up to greater diligence in all the Works of God. For now, partly by the public preaching, partly by the various exhortations I received in the society, and partly by conversing with the people in private, I received more light, and my conscience grew more abundantly tender. Therefore, in my actions, I could not do an act of injustice, -- no, not to the value of a pin; or in any instance do to another what I would not he should do unto me. In my words, I could not mention the name of God but when it was necessary; nor even then, but with deep awe and reverence: and as to jesting and foolish talking, mentioning the faults of an absent person, talking of worldly things on the Lord's day, these I abstained from with all my might. As to my thoughts, intentions and desires, my constant inquiry was, "Is this thought, intention, or desire, to the glory of God?" If I found it was not, I durst not indulge it. In eating and drinking, I took care to do it to the glory of God: to this end I received my daily food, nearly in the same manner as I did the body and blood of Christ. As to mental prayer, I used it daily and hourly; and for one while my rule was, to employ five minutes out of every quarter of an hour therein. I also made it matter of conscience to examine myself daily; and to humble myself before God for everything I saw or feared had been amiss. Upon the whole, I truly lived by faith. I saw God in everything; the heavens, the earth, and all therein, showed me

something of Him; yea, even from a drop of water, a blade of grass, or a grain of sand, I often received instruction.

As a member of the society, I was careful not only to receive strength from them, but also to stir them up to greater diligence. Among other things, I used to run over a great part of the town to call them up to the morning preaching. If I found any of them guilty of evil-speaking, or of mentioning news or worldly business on the Sabbath, or of useless conversation, I always gave them a very serious and loving reproof; at the same time advising them to be more watchful for the time to come. If I heard the people of the world swear, or take the name of God in vain, I always made it matter of conscience to reprove them lovingly and earnestly, and in the most unexceptionable language I could use.

But, notwithstanding all that God had done for me on the one hand, and all that I had done on the other, I was still liable to doubt of the favour of God. Early one morning, as I read in the "Pilgrim's Progress" concerning the happy death of Christian, I wept bitterly, for fear my latter end would not be like his. I continued weeping for six or seven hours. At last my doubt turned into despair: I imagined that there was no mercy for me, that Christ died for all but me! I then wept bitterly, and wished, "O that I had been anybody else! then there would have been mercy for me." At last I began to murmur against God; and I was tempted to speak and think blasphemously of Him, and to resolve to pray no more. But going into my chamber, and seeing a New Testament lie in the window, I thought, "I will open it, and perhaps I shall see something that will do me good." I took it up; but instantly threw it down again, for fear of meeting with something that would aggravate, rather than remove, my despair. However, I at last ventured to take it up; and on opening it, cast my eyes en those words of St. Paul: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." This struck me exceedingly; on which I reasoned thus: "Will God have all men to be saved? Then I am not excluded. Did Christ give Himself for all? Then He gave Himself for me. And is He to be testified in due time? Then I believe, that in due time He will again reveal Himself to me." But what struck me most of all were those words in the following verse: "I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath or doubting." These words tore up by the roots my temptation to pray no more, to be wrathful against God, and to doubt of His mercy. I therefore fell on my knees before Him, and prayed and wept in earnest; and rose up much ashamed of my unbelief; and greatly encouraged to hope in His mercy.

Some time after, when I was got again into doubts and fears, I opened my Testament on these words: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace which is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." I laid fast hold on those words, -- "the grace which is to be brought unto you." From this time I fully believed that all the grace I wanted would be brought unto me. It was not long after this, that I heard Mr. William Roberts preach, when he strongly exhorted us to believe, and to venture on the mercy of God. In that instant I did lay hold; I did venture to believe more fully than ever I had done before; and fear and sorrow fled away.

From my first awakening, I had a great desire to tell the world what God had done for my soul. And as I grew more experienced, this desire grew stronger and stronger. At last I thought I

was called to preach: this I communicated to the young men that met in band with me. They proposed a day of solemn fasting on the occasion; which we accordingly kept. They then advised me to make a trial: I did so; and many approved of my gifts, but others thought I ought to be more established. Indeed, it was often said that I was too earnest to hold it long;. and instances were produced of some who had been exceedingly earnest for a season, but afterwards fell away. At the time I began to preach, my custom was to get all my worldly business done, myself cleaned, and all my Sunday's apparel put out on Saturday night; which sometimes I could not accomplish before twelve o'clock. After this, I frequently sat up till one or two in the morning, reading, praying, and examining myself; and have often rose at four, but never later than five o'clock, and gone two miles into the country, through all weathers, to meet a few poor people, from six to seven. By eight I returned to hear the preaching. I have then gone seven miles on foot to preach at one; then three or four miles further to preach at five; and after all, have had five or six miles more to walk, before I got home. And as in everything I did, I put forth all my strength, I have been often so wearied, that I could scarce get over a stile; or when I got home, go up into my chamber, to ask a blessing on the labors of the day: indeed, before I began to preach I was so earnest in all acts of public and private worship, that on a Sunday night I was commonly more wearied than on any other night in the week.

For some time after I began to preach, I had frequent doubts concerning my call. One time, as I was going to preach at Coleford, I was tempted to believe that I was running before I was sent. As I went on, the temptation grew stronger and stronger. At last I resolved to turn back. I had not gone back above thirty or forty yards, before I began to think, "This may be a temptation of the devil." On that I took out my Testament, and, on opening it, the words I cast my eyes on were, "He that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven." I could not help looking on this as the voice of God to me: therefore I took courage to turn about, and pursue my journey to Coleford.

When I had been a local preacher about twelve months, the small-pox made dreadful havoc in and about Bradford. So universal was the infection, that in all that populous town, and the neighboring villages, scarce a single person escaped who had not had it before. It was also so mortal, that six or seven were buried in a night in Bradford only. As I had never had it, it was often suggested to me to leave those parts: but I thought, "I am in the hands of a wise and gracious God; and also in the place where His providence has fixed me; and therefore, whether I live or die, I will continue where I am, and commit myself to His wise disposal."

About a week after Michaelmas I was taken ill, and in the beginning was very comfortable in my soul. It was soon discovered that I should have a vast quantity, occasioned, as was supposed, by the ill management of an ignorant old woman, who gave me heating things. I had not been ill above a day or two, before that pattern of practical Christianity, Mr. Richard Pearce, came to see me. Among other things, he asked what money I had. I said, "But little." He then encouraged me not to fear, telling me that as I was far from my own country, he would take care I had all things necessary. Accordingly, he turned away the old woman, and sent me one of the best nurses in the town. He next sent the chief apothecary the place afforded; and lastly, Dr. Clark, the most experienced physician in all that country. But, notwithstanding all these helps, I was soon one of the most deplorable objects ever seen. I was stone-blind for five weeks; my head was swelled to such an enormous size, that many thought it would drop from my shoulders; my whole body was

covered with one scab, a great part of an inch thick; and though the room I lay in was large and airy, the stench was so great, that, though the town was full of the small-pox, neither the doctor nor apothecary could come near me without stopping their mouths and noses as close as they were able. Many others who came to see me ran down stairs vomiting; and some declared, they never smelt a carrion in a ditch which was so offensive. Mrs. Antill, at whose house I lodged, told me and my family, a day or two ago, that though she came only occasionally into my room, yet, when she went out into the town on an errand, the smell of her clothes was so offensive, that the people could scarce bear to meet her; and that when she returned, such a stream of noxious effluvia met her in the front-door, that she was scarce able to enter her house. It is therefore no wonder, that all who saw or heard of me, judged that I was, by many degrees, the most afflicted of any who lived or died, either in town or country. Dr. Clark declared, Though I have been fifty years in practice, I never saw any one so ill of this disorder before."

The first time I was got up, to have my bed made, was on New Year's day; but I was not near recovered at Lady-day. Yet all this time, though I was so extremely afflicted, I was never known to give one groan, and but once (Mrs. Antill says, not once) to say I was ill: my constant answer to all who asked me how I did, was, "I am indifferent." This made a great noise both in town and country; for the doctor, apothecary, and others, often mentioned this circumstance when others complained. Yea, Mrs. Antill told us, that long after I was recovered, and had left the country, Dr. Clark often mentioned, with astonishment, how quiet I lay, and what answers I constantly gave, though I was so dreadfully afflicted.

From this account we learn, first, that none ought to give or take anything heating, in the beginning of this disorder. Secondly, that while there is life, none ought to despair of recovering, however ill they are. And, thirdly, that no degree of affliction is too great for the grace of God to enable us to bear with resignation, meekness, and quietness.

Before my conversion, I had contracted a great number of debts; and, by means of this illness, they were greatly multiplied. This was a cause of great uneasiness to me; and, in particular, whenever I read or heard that Scripture, "Owe no man anything," I felt as great confusion, shame, and sorrow, as if I had actually stolen every sum I owed. As soon, therefore, as I was able, I set out for my own country to receive my fortune, which had lain so long in Mr Tudor's hands. As I passed through the country, I preached in most of the societies which lay in my way; and believe it was not altogether in vain.

When I got home, my old acquaintance got about me; but when they saw such an alteration in me, they were astonished; and the more so, as they had never seen the like before. As soon as I had received my money, I bought a horse, and rode far and near, paying all I owed in my own country. This made a great noise, and confirmed the people in their opinion, that the change they saw in me was of God. My uncle Tudor, indeed, attributed it to another cause. He said, "Thou hast been so wicked that thou hast seen the devil; and that has occasioned so great a change in thee." At last, my aunt Tudor and others desired me to preach the next Sabbath day; to which I consented. On Saturday I fell in company with Lord H__re__rd, who had heard, that I was turned Methodist, and was going to preach in the parish. He damned me; and swore, if there was a pool of water near, he would throw me in. I was going to reply, but he would not suffer me. As we were going the same way, I followed at a distance; and every now and then he turned about, swearing that he would put

me in the stocks, and send me to prison. When we came near a pinfold, where there was a pair of stocks, I turned over a stile to a neighbor's house: on this, my lord swore, that if they took me in, he would drive the country of them. I therefore judged it prudent to turn another way.

The next day I went with my uncle Tudor to church and sacrament: I went with him also to evening prayers. Just as the minister was concluding, his lordship came to church. As soon as the people were got out, my lord said, "Mr. Tudor, why do you harbor that fellow about your house?" My uncle answered, "Where should he be, my lord, but at home?" He then desired my uncle to send me out of the parish; but my uncle said, "He is in his own parish, my lord, and about his own business." On this I stepped forward. When my lord saw me, he said, "Wh-wh-wh-wh-why dost thou dress like a parson?" (For I was dressed in blue.) I said, "What I wear, my lord, is my own, and not your lordship's." He said, "If thou dost not leave the country, I will send thee to the stocks." I answered, "I regard not the stocks, my lord: your lordship may send me to Montgomery, if you please. But before I go, I must tell your lordship, that I was shocked exceedingly yesterday, on hearing a person of your rank, who is also a magistrate, curse and swear as your lordship did, when you saw me on the common." As this conversation passed in the presence of almost the whole parish, many were well pleased to hear my lord so plainly dealt with: but my lord himself was enraged exceedingly, and called for one and another to come and take me to the stocks; but several of those he called, ran away. At last he said to his footman, "Go you, and take him away;" and then called one of his tenants, "John Parry! John Parry! I say, John Parry! come you, and take him to the stocks." I smiled, and said, "My lord, you need not call these lusty men; for if you send a child, it will do as well; seeing I shall make no resistance." When we were gone a little way, the footman swore, he had much rather carry his master to the devil, than me to the stocks; and Mr. Parry swore the same. I said, "Pray do not curse and swear, or you will be as bad as my lord." But what was most remarkable, though such a multitude of young and old were present, so universally was my lord's conduct disapproved of; that not one of them went with us, but my aunt Tudor; nor did any one come after us, but another uncle.

When we came to the stocks, my aunt said, "What do you now intend to do?" Mr. Parry said, "We must put him in, or run the country." She said, "You and I have lived in friendship for many years, and I shall be sorry now to hurt you. Go, therefore, and ask my lord, if he will indemnify you: for if he is put in, somebody shall pay for it." Mr. Parry went, and found my lord had taken the parson and my uncle Tudor into the public-house; where the parson, who had administered the sacrament that day, tarried drinking with my lord, from four in the afternoon till eleven at night; and my uncle, who had received it, till seven the next morning. This I mention, as a sad specimen of the religion of my native country. When Mr. Parry came to my lord, he asked, "Have you put him in?" Mr. Parry answered, "No, my lord; for I am threatened." On this my lord jumped up, and drew his sword; and away ran the farmer, and my lord after him, both cursing and swearing like devils. When Mr. Parry returned, my aunt asked, "Well! what are you to do?" he cursed my lord, and said, "Do! we must put him in!" The footman swore, "I will never put him in;" and the farmer did the same. And as I was quite passive and cheerful, my aunt said, "Thou shalt not put thyself in." I answered, "This is very hard! I am to go into the stocks; and you both swear you will not put me in; and my aunt says, I shall not put myself in. Well, then, I will tell you how it shall be: one of you shall hold up the stocks, and the other shall take hold of my leg; and by so doing, you shall both put me in." After scratching their heads, they consented: accordingly, one of them lifted up the stocks, and the other put his hand under the calf of my leg, and just put it in, and

then bade me take it out again: however, we stood near the stocks the whole time, which was two hours, talking about religion. Among other things, Mr. Parry said, "It is pity you did not tell the people you would preach in the stocks." I said, "It is very true; and I am sorry I did not think of it."

The next morning, through my aunt's persuasion, I rode to Montgomery, to an attorney: but he not being at home, my uncle advised me to let the matter drop; and, indeed, I was easily persuaded to do this, as I found so little of the spirit of resentment.

A few years ago, Mrs. G___n, of Shrewsbury, told me, that Lord H___ told her the affair; and added, that if any more of them came into his parish, he would serve them in the same manner. She said, "My lord, you judge of this people according to the idle reports you hear of them; but I know them to be the servants of the living God. Therefore, my lord, beware what you do, or God will punish you one day or other." He paused awhile, and then said, "Cousin G___, if I had known this before, I would not have done what I did; but for the time to come, I will have nothing to do with them."

After I had paid every farthing I owed in my own country, I went to Shrewsbury to do the same. But many in that place had quite forgotten me, as well as what I owed them. Those I had defrauded by any unlucky trick, I told them of it, paid the full value, and offered them interest, if it was only for a few shillings. One instance of this was, a companion of mine had defrauded a Quaker of a shilling; and because I was concerned in laying the scheme, I thought I ought to pay him. When I went to inquire for him, I found him in jail, and told him the whole affair. I then paid the shilling, and offered him interest, which he refused. He then asked me, "Who art thou! Art thou the young man who preached in the Methodist meeting, concerning whom there is so much noise in the town?" I said, "I am." He said, "Wilt thou come next firstday, and preach to the prisoners?" I said, "I will." Accordingly, I went and preached in the prison chapel; and many were glad to hear what God had done for my soul. Indeed, I found that going to a place, and paying every one what I owed him, was frequently a means of great good; especially, as I was always careful when people thanked me, to commend the grace of God; telling them, "You ought to thank God; for if He had not converted me, I never should have thought of paying you."

From Shrewsbury I went to Whitchurch, on purpose to pay sixpence. I then went to Wrexham, and satisfied every one there. Next I rode to Chester and Liverpool, and preached often in both places. In the first of them, several persons were turned from the evil of their way. I then went to Manchester, and from thence to Birmingham, and so on to Bristol. When I had paid all I owed in this city, I returned to Bradford. I went to Mr. Pearce immediately, and told him all I had done. I then asked him for his account; but he bade me go and satisfy every other creditor. I did so: but when I came again, he told me he had no account against me. I saw the hand of God in this; for I had already paid about seventy debts, which I could not accomplish till I had sold my horse, bridle, and saddle. However, I was at last clear of the world; and, by that means, was delivered from a burden which had lain heavy upon me ever since my conversion, and which had cost me many prayers and tears.

With the small remains of my money, and with a little credit, I set up in my business. But before I was half settled in it, Mr. Wesley desired I would give it up, and go immediately into Cornwall. I was glad of the opportunity, as believing it to be the will of God concerning me. I

therefore disposed of my effects, and paid the few debts I had again contracted. But I was not able to buy another horse; and therefore, with my boots on my legs, my great coat on my back, and my saddle-bags, with my books and linen, across my shoulder, I set out on foot, October 24th, 1753.

From Bradford I went to Coleford, and from thence to Tiverton. I had not been many weeks there before Mr, Bidgood asked me, why I had not a horse. I told him frankly the truth of the matter. He then desired me to buy one, and he would pay for him. I begged to be excused from accepting such an offer, but he still urged me. I then told him I would consult a friend: I did so, and was advised to accept the offer. A few days after, I went with a farmer into his field. In a few minutes a colt, about two years and a half old, came to me, and put his nose upon my shoulder: I stroked him, and asked the farmer what he would take for him. he said, " Five pounds." We struck a bargain at once, and in a few days I mounted my horse, and have kept him to this day; which is about twenty-five years. On him I have traveled, comfortably, not less than a hundred thousand miles in preaching the gospel. In this also I see the hand of God: for I parted with one horse, rather than bring a reproach on the gospel; and, as a reward, He provided me such another as, in many respects, none of my brethren could ever boast of.

While I labored in Devonshire, I met with some trials. As I was preaching out of doors on Christmas day, at South Molton, a gentleman's servant rushed through the crowd, and put a letter into my hand. On opening it at my lodgings, I found a string in it; and, after the writer had fully exerted himself in pouring out a flood of low abuse, he begged that I would do him the favour to hang myself in the string he had sent me. Some years after, the gentleman at whose house I lodged told me, that this same man was killed in a fray with his master. From hence I went to North Molton; and while I was preaching in a large Baptist meeting, a fellow of an infamous character came in, and made use of a great deal of abusive language: when I had done preaching, he and a large mob followed us through the streets, throwing whatever came first to hand. A few days after my return to Tiverton, a messenger came to let me know, that the fellow above-mentioned had got a warrant from the mayor, to make me pay for three oaths I had sworn in the pulpit. The first was, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the people that forget God." The second, "He that believeth not shall be damned." And the third, "They that have done evil shall go to the resurrection of damnation." And for these I was to pay five shillings each; for though, while I was in the pulpit, he said, I was a mere vagabond, now I was to be brought to justice, he would treat me like a gentleman!

While I was at dinner one day at Collumpton, I was dreadfully tempted to believe that I was not called to preach. I then thought, "This food does not belong to me; and therefore I am a thief and a robber in eating it." I then burst into tears, and could eat no more. As I was to preach at one o'clock, I went to the preaching house, weeping all the way. I also went weeping into the pulpit, and wept sore while I gave out the hymn, when I was at prayer, and when I preached. The congregation was soon as deeply affected as I was myself; and many of them roared aloud for the disquietness of their souls; so that I have reason to believe, God brought much good out of that temptation.

From Devonshire I went into Cornwall, where I labored hard: and though I cannot boast of abundant success, yet some were both convinced and converted.

As to trials, I do not remember that I had any in these parts, which deserve that name. Indeed, in one place the high constable came to press me for a soldier, while I was preaching. He said, "As you preach so well, you are very fit to serve His Majesty. I therefore desire you will get ready to go with me to a magistrate tomorrow morning." I answered, "Why not tonight? I am ready to go with you now." He then said, "Well! you may first finish your sermon." Accordingly, I began again where I had left off; and the constable and his companion stayed to hear me, and then went quietly away. The next morning I waited for his return; but he never came; so that in all probability what he heard was a means, at least of cooling his courage.

While I was in this circuit I dreamed one night. that Christ was come in the clouds to judge the world; and also that He looked exceeding black at me. When I awoke I was much alarmed I therefore humbled myself exceedingly, with fastings and prayer; and was determined never to give over, till my evidence of the love of Christ was made quite clear. One day, as I was at prayer in my room, with my eyes shut, the Lord as it were, appeared to the eye of my mind, as standing just before me, while ten thousand small streams of blood seemed to issue from every part of His body. This sight was so unexpected, and at the same time so seasonable, that, for once, I wept aloud; yea, and almost fainted away. I now more fully believed His love to me, and that, if He was then to come to judgment, he would not frown, but rather smile on me: therefore I loved and praised Him with all my heart.

Some years after, I had a dream of a quite different sort. I dreamed that I was talking with two women concerning the day of judgment. Among other things, I thought I told them, I was certain it was very near. On hearing this, I thought they burst into laughter, and rejected all I said. Being much grieved at this, I told them, "I will go and see if it is not as I have said." Accordingly, I went to the door, and, on looking up southward, thought I saw the heavens open, and a stream of fire, as large as a small river, issuing forth. On seeing this, I thought I ran back to the women, and said, "You would not believe me; but come to the door, and you will see with your own eyes, that the day is come." On hearing this, I thought they were much alarmed, and ran with me to the door. By the time we were got thither, I thought the whole concave, southward, was filled with an exceedingly thick, fiery mist, which swiftly moved northward, in a huge body, filling the whole space between the heavens and the earth as it came along. As it drew near, I thought, "The day is come, of which I have so often told the world: and now, in a few moments, I shall see how it will be with me to all eternity!" and for a moment I seemed to feel myself in a state of awful suspense. When the fire was come close to me, I was going to shrink back; but thought, "This is all in vain, as there is now no place of shelter left." I then pushed myself forward into it, and found that the fire had no power to hurt me; for I stood as easy in the midst of it, as ever I did in the open air. The joy I felt, on being able to stand unhurt and undismayed amidst this awful burning, cannot be described. Even so shall it be with all who are careful to enter in at the strait gate, and to walk closely and steadily in the narrow way all the days of their life: all these shall

"Stand secure, and smile,
Amidst the jarring elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds!"

From Cornwall I was sent to Norwich. While I was here, I went one Sabbath day to Yarmouth. As I went along, my companion every now and then cried out, "I shall be murdered and

go to hell this day; for I know not the Lord! " For the people of Yarmouth had often said, that "if any Methodist came there, he should never return alive." When we got to the town, we went to the church. I then went into the market-place, and gave out a hymn. While I sung and prayed, the multitude was tolerably quiet; but as soon as I had taken my text, they began to be very rude. In a short time a friend pulled me down. After staying awhile at another friend's house, I sent for my horse: the mob followed him, and soon filled the alley where he was brought. As soon as I was mounted, he drove the mob before him; but the women stood in their doors, some with both hands full of dirt, and others with bowls of water, which they threw at me as I passed by. When we got into the open street, we had such a shower of stones, sticks, apples, turnips, potatoes, &c., as I never saw before or since. My fellow-traveler galloped out of the town as fast as he was able; but I watched the motions of the sticks and stones which were likely to hit me, so as to preserve a regular retreat. When I overtook my companion, we were thankful that we escaped with our lives; as were our friends in Norwich, on seeing us return.

My next remove was to London, where I continued till August. What service I was of here, I cannot tell; only I remember, that under a sermon I preached in the Foundery, that good man, and useful preacher, Mr. Joseph Guilford, was awakened.

At our Conference in 1756 I was appointed for Ireland. I spent the year in and about Limerick, Waterford, and Cork. In the first of these places, God was pleased to own my labors much. Many of the soldiers, as well as others, were converted to God.

At the next Conference I was again stationed for London. In my way thither, I stopped at Whitehaven. Here I was greatly tried, from a particular quarter; but I was more than conqueror, through Him who had loved me; and was frequently refreshed in my soul, and, in some measure, blessed in my labors.

From Whitehaven I went to Leeds, where the people detained me about six weeks. All that time I was very much followed; yet I cannot say, that the word was more, if so much blessed, as it had been in many other places. At last I reached London; but my Leeds friends wrote to Mr. Wesley, to send me back. When he proposed it to me, I consented. But as I was appointed to do several things which were very disagreeable to some in power, this lost me many of my kindest friends, and was a source of great uneasiness to me for many years.

From my first awakening, I was almost singular in my notions of marriage. I thought that young people did not consult reason, and the will of God, so much as their own foolish inclinations. When I mentioned these things to my young acquaintance, they thought my notions were romantic and chimerical. However, I determined, if ever I married, to act according to the rules I had so often laid down for others. My first inquiry, therefore, was, "Am I called to marry at this time?" Here I weighed the reasons on both sides, and then concluded in the affirmative. I then inquired, "What sort of a person ought I to marry?" To this I answered in general, "To such a one as Christ would choose for me, suppose He was on earth, and was to undertake that business." I then asked, "But what sort of a person have I reason to believe He would choose for me?" Here I fixed on the following properties, and ranged them in the following order; placing that first, which I judged to be of most value in the sight of God; and that last, which I thought of smallest importance. The first was grace. I was quite certain, that no preacher of God's word ought, on any

consideration, to marry one who is not eminently gracious. The second, that she ought to have tolerably good common sense. A Methodist preacher in particular, who travels into all parts, and sees such a variety of company, I believed, ought not to take a fool with him. Thirdly, as I knew the natural warmth of my own temper, I concluded that a wise and gracious God would not choose a companion for me who would throw oil, but rather water, upon the fire. Fourthly, I judged that, as I was connected with a poor people, the will of God was, that whoever married should have a small competency, to prevent my making the gospel chargeable to any.

Having proceeded thus far, my next inquiry was, "But who is the person in whom these properties are thus found in the most eminent degree?" I immediately turned my eyes to Miss Green, a person of a good family, and noted through all the north of England for her extraordinary piety. I therefore opened my mind to her; and, after consulting Mr. Wesley, we were married. As in this affair I consulted reason and the will of God so impartially, I have had abundant reason to be thankful ever since.

As soon as I was married, I went into Lancashire, where I labored about a year. The greatest outward trial I had here was the decay of my health. Sometimes I was so ill, that when I left one place to go to another, the people took a final farewell of me, as not expecting me to live to come round again at the end of three weeks or a month. However, I kept my circuit in general, which included a great part of Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire; and daily did therein the whole work of a healthy man. But though I have not much to say concerning my usefulness, this year, yet some were awakened and brought to God, who stand to this day.

From hence I went into the York circuit, in 1760. At that time I was thought to be near the last stage of a consumption. And, as I had about three hundred miles to ride every six weeks, and about sixty societies to take care of; few thought I should be able to go once round. But I said, "I am determined to go as far as I can; and when I can go no further, I will turn back." Accordingly, I entered upon my work, which was enough to try the strongest constitution. By the time I had got about half way round, I found that violent labor got me a little appetite, yea, and caused me to sleep better; so that I began to gather flesh before I got to the end of my circuit. But my recovery was exceedingly gradual; for as I had been declining from the time I had the smallpox, which was about eight years, so I was about twelve more before I was quite recovered.

My next remove was to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Here I had many mercies and comforts, and a few trials. In one place I was obliged to put thirty-five members out of the society; and if I had not labored hard, and exercised great patience, we should have lost about two hundred in that one place. But though I had the express order of Mr. Wesley for what I did, and acted with great integrity on the one hand, and tenderness on the other, I lost many of my dearest friends, who from that time became my bitterest enemies. But I must say (in honor of the grace of God) that friends and enemies have always been alike to me, when I thought the glory of God was concerned.

From Newcastle I went home to Leeds, where I labored a whole year. But as several persons still retained their old prejudices against me, my labor here was now rather uncomfortable. However, though I cannot say I was of any great service this year, yet I had some fruit in several places.

The year following I was stationed in Bristol. I believe I was never so likely to do good as at this' time; but I was removed, and spent the remainder of the year in Leeds. In 1760 I buried my first child here; and this year I buried the other. The next year I spent in London and Colchester. In the last of these places we enjoyed great poverty and great peace, and had many comfortable opportunities of waiting on God, both in public and private. In London I had friends and enemies, comforts and trials but the greatest trial of all was, the hardness of my deceitful heart, which I sometimes felt in an eminent degree.

At the Manchester Conference I was appointed for Scotland. The two years I tarried here I spent in and about Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee. While I was in Edinburgh, I was remarkably earnest in private prayer one night. The next morning I awoke about four o'clock, and said to myself; "I will lie here no longer, but rise and call upon God." In an instant I was filled with such sweetness, as I had not tasted for a long time. I hastened to put on my clothes, and fell on my knees before God; and, with tears of gratitude, thanked Him with my whole heart. The effect of this visitation lasted a considerable time, and was of great use to me, both in preaching and living. Some time after, as I was preaching on the barren fig tree, a few words proceeded from me in such a manner as I can scarcely describe. The congregation seemed as if they had been electrified. One who had long been bowed down cried out amain and said afterwards, that under those words she felt as if she was just dropping into hell! I have since thought that if the word was always attended with such power, very few would stand before it. While I was in this circuit, I spent two or three nights in Glasgow; and one person, at least, was converted to God in that time. As to Aberdeen, I can only say, my labors were often comfortable to myself. What use they were of to others will be fully known in due time.

While I was here, I found out that Dr. Memis was the person who, under God, saved my life many years ago, when I was ill at Wrexham. When I first went to his house, we remembered nothing of each other. However, in conversing about our travels, and on comparing circumstances together, I found that he was the person to whom I owed so much. On this discovery, I felt great love to my old benefactor; but the doctor himself was not able to recollect anything of the affair. O, how many right actions which God's people have wrought are now forgotten of them, which, nevertheless, are noted in His book, and shall be brought to light in that day when He "shall reward every man according to his works!"

In Dundee I labored comfortably, among a poor, quiet, earnest, and happy people. Here I fell into intimate acquaintance with Mr. T_____, minister of one of the churches in that town. Our friendly interviews, our Christian conversations, our free and candid debates, together with the kind treatment I almost daily received at his house, I shall always remember with pleasure and gratitude. Nor shall I ever forget the last sermon I preached in that town: such liberty I never felt before or since. I had such an absolute command of my ideas, language, voice, and gesture, that I could say what I would, and also in what manner I pleased! What good, if any, was then done, I know not now, but shall know another day.

From Scotland I went over to Dublin. Here the Lord began to bless my labors almost as soon as I arrived. In a very few weeks a considerable number were awakened, and others received a sense of the favour of God. But my fellow-laborer and I were grieved to see so much levity among many of our friends, and determined to oppose it. Accordingly, we preached against it with

all our might. We determined also to show, by our example, how Christians ought to be serious, and to take up their cross daily. But J. M. opposed us, by softening the awful truths we delivered: this was very agreeable to the delicate part of our hearers. At last I spoke my mind very freely: the consequence was, he and his friends rose up against me, and quite bore me down.

The next year I came over to Chester, where I was stationed for a year. From hence I went to pay a visit to my own country; and preached in Montgomery, Newtown, Llanidloes, and many other places. In Tregonan, where I was born, I preached once, and had most of the village to hear me. But, when Mr. B__n__y, who owned most of the parish, heard of it, he told my uncle, who with my grand father had lived in that house nearly a hundred years, that if he encouraged me to preach in the village, he would turn him out immediately: he also sent a servant to a cousin of mine, who lived in another parish, and told her the same.

When I came to Fordon, the place where I was brought up, I fell in company with the minister, who took me to his house. He said, "I hear you intend to preach in this parish." I told him, "I do; yea, and think it my duty so to do." He then intimated, that I should be punished if I did. I said, "I am licensed, and therefore will not be hindered by any man in the parish; no, nor by the primate of all England." He then spoke of the Divine right, which was found only in the established clergy of this land. I answered, "The world, sir, is large, of which England is but a very small part, -- an island only, stuck up, as it were, in one corner of it! And as to its established clergy, you know, sir, that many of them are worldly-minded to a proverb; yea, that multitudes of them are drunkards, swearers, pleasure-takers, &c.: and yet you tell me, that such a clergy, of so inconsiderable a corner of the world, are the only ministers of God; and that all others are intruders and deceivers." To this he made no answer: so we parted as we met. In a few days I preached in the house of one of Mr. Tudor's daughters; and, I believe, to the satisfaction of most who heard me.

Soon after I returned to Chester my wife was taken ill of a fever. For eight weeks the physician told me every day that there was no hope of her recovery; and she thought herself; for many weeks, that every day would be her last. But this was so far from being matter of sorrow to her, that she rejoiced at the prospect of being so soon at her Father's house; and told me frequently, that she had much rather die than live: and though, from beginning to end, she was ill fifteen weeks, in all that time I never heard her once complain about the state of her soul. By this sickness I was more clearly convinced of the necessity, not only of faith, but also of a good conscience. Faith, I saw, as a hand, lays hold on Christ; and a good conscience confirms that hold. Hence my wife, who had for so many years kept a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, now lay as on the brink of eternity, quiet and unmoved, like a ship at anchor in the mouth of a harbor, without one blast of wind to disturb her peace. On the other hand, I saw that an evil conscience causes faith first to weaken its grasp, and then to unloose its hold. Thus it is, that in an hour of trial so many make shipwreck of faith, and are filled with doubt and fear; because, by their loose walking, they have put away a good conscience.

The next year I went to Liverpool. Here I enjoyed many mercies and comforts; but I cannot say much of my usefulness. Indeed, one evening, just as I was going into the pulpit at a village about eight miles; out of Liverpool, I was seized with a great spitting of blood. However, as I did not know where it might end, I was determined, if possible, to say something for God once more.

Accordingly, I began, and delivered a few sentences, and then spit out a large quantity of blood; and so I went on for about half an hour. I then, in the best manner I could, commended myself and the people unto God. And as I did not judge it safe to stay that night in a village where help could not be had in ease of extreme necessity, I took my horse, and returned to Liverpool. Shortly after I heard that one of the most abandoned and noted sinners in those parts was awakened that night. This made a great noise far and near, and was a means of stopping the mouths of many gainsayers, and perhaps of saving some souls from death. On receiving this account, all within me cried out,

"My life, my blood, I here present,
If for Thy cause they may be spent
Fulfil Thy sovereign pleasure, Lord!
Thy will be done, Thy name adored."

From Liverpool I went to the London Conference, and was appointed for the Derby circuit. But before I left London, I fell into great dejection of spirit, and was for many weeks on the brink of despair. But I cried unto God night and day; and, in due time, He showed me the light of His countenance once more: for which I hope to praise Him to all eternity. I have also great occasion to be thankful to His people, who sympathized with me, and encouraged me on every side. When my soul was again revived, I went into my circuit, and was kindly received. Here I continued for two years, among a loving, happy people; and I have some reason to believe that my labors here were not altogether in vain. From hence I came once more to London, where I continued two years. In the first of these, Mr. Toplady paid me a visit at the Foundry, and stayed about three hours. We soon entered on a debate about our different sentiments; which we carried on, from first to last, without one unkind or uncivil expression. I mentioned several reasons why I could not be a predestinarian; and as I am still of the same mind, I shall here repeat the substance of them, as some of my present objections to that hypothesis.

The first principle of predestination, I said, is, that "God's sovereignty is, in every sense, absolute and unlimited." Now, I undertake to demonstrate that, in some sense, it is not so. For instance: it is certain that though it is not limited by anything without Him, His other attributes, such as His wisdom, holiness, justice, truth, and love, limit it on every side. Hence it is, that though He is a Sovereign, yet it is impossible that He should be either an unwise, unholy, unjust, untrue, or an unloving Sovereign; which would absolutely be the case, if, by His mere sovereignty, He had decreed sin, reprobation, &c

The next fundamental of predestination is, that "God, as a mere and an unlimited Sovereign, has decreed whatsoever comes to pass." Now, as idolatry, blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, murder, adultery, &c come to pass, according to this principle of predestination, God has decreed them. And as it is certain that all these are forbidden in His word, it follows, according to this hypothesis, that He has absolutely decreed and expressly forbidden the same things. Now, before I can receive the hypothesis which supposes this, I must clearly see how it is consistent with the wisdom, holiness, justice, truth, and love of God to do this.

Thirdly, because the absolute sovereignty of God has thus decreed everything, predestination represents mankind as not having any of their actions or volitions in their own power, but as being acted upon like mere machines. But God, by giving them instructions,

commands, promises, and threatenings, treats them as if they were free and voluntary agents. Now, before I can be a predestinarian, I must see how it agrees with the aforesaid attributes of God, for His sovereignty to decree, that men should be created involuntary beings, and then to deal with them as if they were free.

As Mr. Toplady did not offer any solid answer to these reasonings, I told him, that, as an honest man, I could not be of his opinion, till these difficulties were fully removed. We then parted, as good friends, at least, as we met; and I was told after that he spoke well of me in several places; but, in his next publication, I was almost all that is bad!

The next year I went with Mr. Wesley to visit my friends in Wiltshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall. This was a very agreeable journey; and I hope it was a profitable one to my old acquaintance, whom I had not seen for many years. After this, I spent a year in visiting my friends in various parts of the kingdom; and, I believe, this labor of love was not in vain. The Conference following, I undertook the care of Mr. Wesley's printing. From that time I have been in London; and between preaching, and writing, and the care of the press, I never labored harder in all my life. But I find labor good both for body and soul; and therefore I hope to be fully employed as long as I live.

Upon the whole, when I consider how the providence of God provided for me in my infancy, brought me up to the state of man, preserved me from those evils which brought others to an untimely end, directed my wandering steps to the means of my conversion, cast my lot among His people, called me to preach His word, owned my preaching to the conversion of others, stood by me in many trials, brought me back so often from the brink of the grave, healed my manifold backslidings, provided me a suitable companion, and put me in possession of all the necessaries of life; when I consider these things, I must say, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life; and I hope to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

* * *

For several years Mr. Olivers sustained what he denominates "the care of Mr. Wesley's printing." Mr. Wesley himself selected the matter for "The Arminian Magazine," and committed it to Mr. Olivers for publication. In this office he did not appear to advantage; and indeed he entered upon it too late in life to afford reasonable hope of success. Having been long accustomed to read merely for the purpose of catching the sense of the authors whom he deemed it requisite to consult, it could hardly be expected that he would readily acquire the habit of that minute attention, not only to words, but also to letters and points, which is necessary to insure typographical accuracy. The mistakes which appeared in the successive numbers of his Magazine were, to the correct mind of Mr. Wesley, a perpetual source of vexation. In many instances, they presented a complete perversion of the sense, even when subjects of importance were under discussion. He himself prepared, for several of the volumes, a frightful list of errata, which he published for the benefit of the subscribers. Mr. Olivers also occasionally inserted articles on his own responsibility, of which Mr. Wesley did not approve. It is not therefore surprising that the following entry appears in Mr. Wesley's Journal, under the date of August 9th, 1789:-- "I settled all my temporal business; and, in particular, chose a new person to prepare the Arminian Magazine; being obliged, however unwillingly, to drop Mr. O___, for only these two reasons: 1. The errata are unsufferable. I have

borne them for these twelve years, but can bear them no longer. 2. Several pieces are inserted without my knowledge, both in prose and verse. I must try whether these things cannot be amended for the short residue of my life."

Mr. Olivers continued his residence in London, where he exercised his ministry, as the infirmities of age permitted, till March, 1799, when he died somewhat suddenly, and his remains were deposited in Mr. Wesley's tomb, behind the City Road chapel.

Mr. Olivers was a man of very strong mind, and of varied talents. As a preacher, he was argumentative, energetic, zealous, and successful, especially during the period of his itinerancy. He had thoroughly studied the Calvinistic controversy, and wrote several tracts upon that subject, which display considerable force of argument, and logical skill. He defended his own creed, and the character of Mr. Wesley, with power and success against the rude and abusive assaults of Mr. Toplady, and of Messrs. Richard and Rowland Hill, by both of whom he was treated with unchristian contumely. His prose compositions possess great merit. They are simple, perspicuous, energetic, and generally correct. Nor did he less excel in sacred verse. His fine hymn to the God of Abraham, adapted to a celebrated air sung by Leoni in the Jews' synagogue, had reached the thirtieth edition in the year 1779. He also wrote a hymn on the last judgment, consisting of several stanzas, which he set to music himself; and the twentieth edition of which was published at the period just mentioned. His "Hymn of Praise to Christ" was set to music by a gentleman in Ireland, and performed before the Bishop of Waterford in his cathedral on Christmas day. To this was annexed a hymn on Matthew v.29, 30. It should also be stated, that the fine tune entitled "Helmsley," adapted to the hymn beginning,

"Lo! He comes with clouds descending,"

and contained in Mr. Wesley's "Sacred Harmony," was composed by Mr. Olivers. As a writer of hymns he was no imitator. His strains of thought, and his versification, are equally original.

Mr. Olivers's talents secured for him a high degree of respect. Mr. Wesley pronounced him to be a "full match" for the Rev. Augustus Toplady; and when Sir Richard Hill spoke of him in language of contempt, as "one Thomas Oliver, alias Olivers," Mr. Fletcher said, "This author was, twenty-five years ago, a mechanic, and, like 'one' Peter, 'alias' Simon, a fisherman, and like 'one' Saul, 'alias' Paul, a tent-maker, has had the honor of being promoted to the dignity of a preacher of the gospel; and his talents as a writer, a logician, a poet, and a composer of sacred music, are known to those who have looked into his publications." The Conference also state, that "in his younger days he was a zealous, able, and useful traveling preacher. His talents were very considerable; and his attachment to Mr. Wesley; and the cause of Methodism, was fully evidenced by several masterly publications."

Mr. Olivers appears to have been distinguished by great firmness and resolution. When Mr. Shirley and some other Calvinist ministers came to the Conference of 1771, which was held in Bristol, for the purpose of obtaining some modification of the Minutes of the preceding year, and Mr. Wesley, with his preachers in general, agreed to sign a paper which was presented to them for that purpose, Mr. Olivers declared his dissent from the whole affair, and warned his friends that an ill use would be made of their unsuspecting candour. His remonstrances were disregarded at the

time; but his friends afterwards found that his apprehensions were unhappily well founded. The following introductory paragraphs to his "Scourge to Calumny, inscribed to Richard Hill, Esq.," will show his manner of writing, and the kind of treatment which he met with:--

"Honored Sir, -- On Monday, February 15th, I attended the evening prayers at St. Paul's. The psalm for the day was the seventy-eighth. The sublime description of God's power and glory there given, as displayed in behalf of His people through all generations, greatly affected me. I was also much affected at the account the royal penman gave of himself. 'He chose David also His servant,' said he, 'and took him away from the sheepfolds. As he was following the ewes great with young ones, He took him, that he might feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.'

"In this account I scarcely knew which to admire most, -- the providence of God in raising a shepherd's boy to the dignity of so great a monarch; or the piety of this renowned people in not rejecting and despising him; or his own amazing humility, at a time when he had reached the very summit of worldly glory, in transmitting to future ages such an explicit account of his mean original. On these reflections, all within me cried out, 'Lord, shall I, shall any servant of Thine, after this, be ashamed of an humble birth, or of a mean employment? Forbid it, gracious God!

"As I returned home, I called at Mr. Dilly's, for your 'Farrago Double-distilled;' and on reading therein the contempt cast on my insignificant name, I adored the kind Providence which brought me so seasonably under the sound of such a Scripture, and which impressed it so deeply on my heart.

"But permit me to ask, sir, by what laws you are authorized to insult a person who never injured you? Not by the laws of God; not by the precepts of Christianity. For these teach you, not to 'render evil for evil, or railing.' But your conduct, sir, has been the reverse of this; for you have rendered evil to one of whom you cannot say that he has injured you so much as in thought. You have railed on him while he was 'dumb, and opened not his mouth.' You know, sir, who hath said, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.' Now, have you done this in the present case? Consider, honored sir, have you, in mentioning my name, been as careful not to load it with public contempt, as you would that I should be in mentioning yours?

"Perhaps you will wonder that I animadvert so freely on the conduct of a person of your consequence, in making any use of my name which you think proper. But permit me to tell you, sir, that my name is as sacred to me, as yours is to you. And permit me to tell you farther, that if the inequality which subsists between us was a thousand times greater than it is, you would have no more right to insult me, than I should have to insult you. And permit me to tell you once more, that if you were the greatest peer of the realm, and I the poorest peasant, the laws of God and of my country would authorize me to call you to an account, for every insult offered to my character, either as a fellow-creature, or as an Englishman.

"As to that reputation which arises from an honorable birth, an early education, a plentiful fortune, and a respectable employment, you are rich; you have flocks and herds in great abundance. But as for me, if I possess one scrap of credit in the world, it is only as a single lamb, bought with my own industry, nursed at my own expense, and with much toil and patience; and which, after all,

is so small and feeble, that it can scarce be seen or heard among all the mighty flocks which adorn your ample plains.

"Now, sir, what was the reason that you, a man of such abundance, should endeavor to rob me of my little all?"

Mr. Olivers's affection for his father and friend Mr. Wesley was strong and uninterrupted. He not only defended the character of that eminent man against the slanderous attacks of the Messrs. Hill and Toplady, but also against those of the Rev. Caleb Evans. When Mr. Wesley died, Mr. Olivers poured out the sorrows of his heart in an elegy of considerable length, and of great pathos. It seems to have emanated from the fulness of his heart before Mr. Wesley's interment, and while thousands of people were crowding to view his remains in the City-Road chapel. We here reprint this scarce tract, in the belief that it will not be unacceptable to the reader.

A Descriptive and Plaintive Elegy
On The Death of the Late Rev. John Wesley
by Thomas Olivers

"Servant of God, will done,
Well hast thou fought
The better fight."
Milton. 1791.

Silence, ye Storms! nor softest Zephyrs blow,
To dissipate the gloom which reigns below:
But deepest Shades of Night, your darkest horror shed,
And aid my pensive Muse to mourn the silent dead.

But chiefly Thou, great Healer of mankind,
Whose only balm can heal the troubled mind,
Support my sinking head, and all my pains control,
While I rehearse aloud the sorrows of my soul.

The man I loved, the man by thousands prized,
By angels honored, but by fools despised,
Hath closed his eyes in death, and left me here in pain,
To sigh, and mourn, and weep, while life and love remain.

O Tale of Woe! expend thy ebon wings,
And fly to palaces, to courts and kings:
Then swiftly mount aloft, and sound from shore to shore,
Thy Friend and Father fled, thy Wesley is no more!

The Tale is gone! it mourns along the plain
The uplands sadden, and the hills complain!
The woods and shady groves assume a darker shade,

While sighs and sadness reign in every pensive glade.

As on the hills the watchful Shepherd stands,
He hears the Tale below, and lifts his hands
Then sighs, and smites his breast, and drowns his path with tears
And to his lonely cot the mournful tidings bears.

The hardy Hind, who turns his furrows over,
Goes on and weeps, till he can weep no more;
Then quits his callous hold, and leaves his team behind,
While he in rustic strains relieves his troubled mind.

The hoary Sire, with cares and years oppressed,
Leans on his staff, and smites his aged breast;
Then homeward bends his way, and strives to mend his pace,
To spread the mournful Tale through all his natal place.

The Virgin-train, who grace the rural throng,
Nor lead the village dance, nor aid the song,
Nor bloom like Sharon's rose, nor hail the welcome spring,
But with loud cries and woes make all their hamlets ring.

The youthful Swains are now no longer seen
To play their gambols over the neighboring green;
Their mirth is sadly changed to solitary woe,
While through the lonely glades and villages they go.

Nor rural Nymphs, nor rustic Swains alone,
But all our towns and streets partake our moan
They swell our deepest groans, and echo back our cries,
And mix their tears with ours, and urge them through the skies.

Even Cite and gay Coquets, unused to weep,
Show signs of sorrow as they crowd the street;
Then turn, and change their course,
and throng the neighboring road, [2]
To view his last remains in his forlorn abode.

They see his last remains, and bless the sight,
And own the things he taught must needs be right:
They bow, and inly pray they may his steps pursue,
And vow while life remains to keep his end in view.

The men of rank and fame their loss deplore,
And wish the season back, which comes no more:
"Could we, alas," they cry, " his shining path pursue,

We should be great indeed, and blest and happy too!"

Fair Science now puts on her sad attire,
And from the studious groves her son retire:
They kiss his learned toil, and bow their pensive head,
And mourn such wisdom lost among the common dead.

Nor Foes (for foes he had!) can now forbear
To loathe their own, while they his deeds declare:
For all the good he did they now at least descry,
And fain like him would live, and wish like him to die.

Nor Envy now no more reluctant seems
To own the worth she in her heart esteems;
But calls him great and good, and truly learned and wise,
And spreads his fame abroad to all in earth and skies.

Pale Indigence draws near, with all her train:
She looks, and looks again, but all in vain
Then weeps and cries aloud, and all her grief relates,
And spreads ten thousand tears around his sacred gates.

As home she goes, but goes without supplies,
"Where is the good man gone?" the Orphan cries:
"I know he's not at home, or we had better sped;
But sure as he returns, we shall again be fed."

The Mother hears, then tears her squalid hair,
Looks wild and raves, and yields to black despair;
Then vents her mightiest woe in many a doleful cry,
And bears her orphan off to pine, and weep, and die!

With pensive ears he heard the Aged moan,
And saw their tears, and mixed them with his own;
Then stretched his liberal hand, and shared his frugal store,
And gave them all he could, and wished to give them more.

The Vagrant Poor, suspected and despised,
Were oft relieved by him, and sometimes prized;
And though the boon was small, he gave with such a grace,
As spread confusion over their feigned and hardened face.

When he had nought, and could no longer give,
He cried aloud, and begged the poor might live;
Nor would he cease to beg, till he his suit obtained,
Though niggards stopped their ears, and all his cries disdained.

But those of worth, who bear the sacred cross,
Revere his labors, and lament the loss
Of one who taught and urged, like those renowned of old,
To share among the poor their hoards of useless gold.

But deeper woes distract my tortured mind;
They come from every coast with every wind:
His children mourn aloud, nor can they ever refrain,
While aught of filial love or gratitude remain.

"Ah me," they cry, "and is our father fled?
And is he numbered with the silent dead?
And is he gone at last to that celestial shore?
And shall our wishful eyes behold him here no more!"

O mighty woe! O loss beyond redress!
Kind Heaven, assist, while we our woes express!
Our drooping head lift up, and loose our stammering tongue,
While we proclaim abroad what he for us hath done.

When wandering wide, and over the mountains spread,
Like sheep without a shepherd at their head,
He kindly sought us out, and in his arms embraced,
And banished all our griefs, and all our fears effaced.

When dangers pressed, or foes appeared in sight,
He stood between, and put them all to flight;
Then led us safely on, and showed our feet the way
To peace, and hope, and love, and everlasting day.

When grief assailed, he heard our every moan,
Wept when we wept, and made our griefs his own;
Nor would he cease to grieve while we of aught complained;
But strove to bear us up till we our joy regained.

In all our joys he gladly bore a part,
And met our transports with a bounding heart
Then looked around on all with smiles of softest grace,
And blessed our happy lot, and kissed our blushing face.

When songs of heavenly praise employed our tongues,
He joined with heart and voice to aid our songs
To guide and guard our strains, he waved his hands on high,
Lest one discordant note passed uncorrected by.

If ever our lukewarm souls grew cold and dead,
And all his mild reproofs flew o'er our head,
He changed his softer notes, and looked with sterner brow,
And fain would use the rod; but, O, he knew not how!

When feuds and contests rose to wound our peace,
His prudence soon prevailed to make them cease.
He heard our sad complaints; then looked, and sweetly smiled:
We blushed, and then shook hands, and so were reconciled.

Beset on every side with worldly cares,
He warned us night and day with many tears,
To shun the dangerous road, where twice ten thousand fell,
Who bartered grace for gold, and now lament in hell.

If young or old appeared in costly dress,
He blamed us o'er and o'er for such excess.
Be plain and neat," he cried,
"and frugal of your store"?
Nor dare to rob your God by robbing of the poor."

Whenever we strayed, by sin and error led,
He sought, and found us out, wherever fled;
Then kindly called us back, and spread his arms abroad,
To help our weakness home to happiness and God.

That we no more might stray, or lag behind,
Our faithful shepherd bore us on his mind;
He watched, and wept, and warned, when sin appeared in view,
Lest greater ills o'ertook than all we ever knew.

"Be wise," he cried, "and shun the paths of sin;
Be bold, be firm, nor let the foe break in;
March on with cheerful feet, and sing your choicest song;
Nor fear your labor lost, nor think your journey long.

"While those who know you not for forms contend,
Be faith and hope your guide, and love your end;
Let these direct your feet, and raise your heads on high,
Where faith and hope shall cease, and love shall never die.

"Yet while you here remain, your load to bear,
Let works of righteousness your faith declare;
Be just and kind to those who all your good despise,
And show to all around your sonship in the skies.

"But chiefly those who love the Saviour's name,
Who prize His scandal, and enjoy His shame;
To each of these extend your arms of love abroad,
And serve and love them well, and only less than God.

"And as you pass through life's uneven way,
Pray for your guides, and without ceasing pray;
Support our feeble hands, when to the mount we go,
And thus reward our toil, and thus your kindness show

"O grant this only boon! 'tis all we crave,
That we in helping you ourselves may save;
That we may faithful prove, and to the end endure,
To wear the crown of righteousness our conquest sure.

"As life so soon is o'er, your time redeem,
And give your hearts to God, and live to Him:
Then wait in patient hope your summons to the skies,
Where pain and grief are o'er, and death for ever dies."

'Twas thus our faithful guide his course pursued,
Nor toil nor danger shunned to do us good;
But gladly bore the cross, that we the prize might gain,
And one with him and God in endless ages reign.

Nor was his toil and cares to us confined;
He daily sought the good of all mankind;
That they might seek and know, in this their gracious day,
The way to endless peace, and cast their sins away.

He wished that all might find their pardon sealed,
Their fear, removed, and feel their conscience healed;
That peace, and joy, and hope, might here their portion be,
And love, and sweet delight, to all eternity.

For this his cheerful feet pursued their way,
Through winter's nights, and summer's sultry day;
Through woods and floods he passed, and o'er the boist'rous main,
Nor ever was known to shrink, or of his toll complain.

While o'er the mountain tops he often went,
He met the rapid storms with sweet content;
Then swiftly moved along the dark and doubtful track,
And chid his coward steed, who fain would turn his back. [3]

He often rode, as through the land he passed,

Full thirty miles before he broke his fast;
Then added thirty more before he stopped to dine;
And ten or twenty more before his preaching time. [4]

When worn with toil, and age, and long disease,
He rode an easier way, his friends to please;
But neither friends nor age his wonted speed could stay,
For now he often went his hundred miles a day. [5]

To live for God, while in this vale of tears,
He rose at four o'clock for threescore years; [6]
Then spent the live-long day in something great and good;
Nor lounged one hour away, nor ever lingering stood.

When he in youthful days his course begun,
And rose resplendent like the rising sun,
Both earth and hell pursued, and waged a dreadful fight,
To blast the opening bloom, and quench the kindling light.

For this the rich and great their influence spread,
And sleeping shepherds raised their drowsy head;
While formal saints exclaimed, where'er he showed his face,
And Scandal croaked around her false and foul disgrace.

By these the human herds were gathered round,
And sought with sticks and stones, or aught they found;
Who tore his raiment off, and bruised his sacred head, [7]
Nor could they scarce refrain before they thought him dead.

Through tumults, toils, and strife, he urged his way,
And dared the ills of life his feet to stay;
The ills he saw and felt but raised his bosom higher,
And kinder pity gave, and more intense desire.

As truth is great, and will in time prevail,
His foes fell off, and would no more assail;
But turned their hate to love, and owned the truth he taught,
And blessed the happy day which such glad tidings brought.

Now thousands turned, and twice ten thousand more,
And mourned the hated deeds they did before;
Then half the wondering world their gratitude expressed,
And threw their arms abroad, and clasped him to their breast

Yet still he onward went, with steady pace,
As much unmoved by smiles as by disgrace;

Nor would he aught abate, though oft besought with tears,
But kept one even pace for more than threescore years." [8]

That this is no romance, one instance hear,
And may it rend in twain each sluggard's ear!
His last day's work but one he planned, and thought to ride
A hundred miles and eight, and preach and write beside. [9]

To feed his flock he put forth all his might,
And preached the word both morning, noon, and night;
Nor did he ever cease, while we had time to hear
But preached, or someways taught, a thousand times a year. [10]

Besides the rest, which we assert as facts,
He wrote in all above two hundred tracts.;
And yet, in every year, a thousand missives sent
Through this and various isles, and every continent. [11]

'Twas thus his years, and days, and hours were spent;
And thus he used the goods his Master lent;
'Twas thus, -- we say no more, but this great truth rehearse,
He did what man could do to bless the universe.

At last the mortal foe his dart prepared;
We saw and wept, and each his grief declared;
Then tried each fruitless means to shield his sacred head;
Nor would we cease to try when all our hopes were fled.

But he, unmoved, beheld his end draw nigh,
And met the coming foe without a sigh;
Then raised his feeble voice, though with a faltering tongue,
And spread his arms abroad, and thus divinely sung

"All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restored;
O Jesus! exalted on high,
Appear our omnipotent Lord

Who, meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race;
Once more to Thy people return,
And reign in Thy kingdom of grace.

"O, wouldst Thou again be made known,
Again in Thy Spirit descend,
And set up in each of Thine own

A kingdom that never shall end!

Thou only art able to bless,
And make the glad nations obey,
And bid the dire enmity cease,
And bow the whole world to Thy away."

When he was quite deranged, or slumbering laid,
No wild or vagrant thought his tongue betrayed;
But what he said before, he said it now again,
And still forgot his own to ease his brother's pain.

As those stood weeping by, who raised his head,
And did what could be done around his bed,
He saw their toil and care, and thanked their great good-will,
And cried, " 'Tis best of all, that God is with us still."

That "God is with us still" he thrice declared,
And thrice looked up, and saw his vast reward;
Then cried, "Through Jesus blood the holiest place I gain;"
And strove to raise his voice, and sung his favorite strain:

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:
My days of praise shall ne'er be past
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.

"Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel's God; He made the sky,
And earth, and seas, with all their train:
His truth for ever stands secure
He saves the oppressed, He feeds the poor,
And none shall find His promise vain."

The night for ever fled, the morn appeared,
Which brought the signs of woe we long had feared
He hailed the happy day, and then triumphant cried,
"I'll praise! -- I'll praise! -- Farewell!"
then closed his eyes, and died.

O ruthless Death! how fixed thy stern decree,
Since he must fall a sacrifice to thee!
Since him we valued most, as best of all our race,
Could not exemption find, or gain a longer space.

O, cheerless light! O, inauspicious day!
Which mocked our fears, and bore our guide away;
And left us wandering here, with thousand cares oppressed,
Without his wonted aid to ease our troubled breast.

The pensive dove, whene'er her mate is fled,
Coos round and round, then droops her languid head;
And shall not we complain, who feel a heavier load?
We must; we can't refrain while in this dark abode.

As Israel mourned of old, his favorite gone;
And Rachel mourned her fertile plains along;
As Mary mourned and wept beneath her Saviour's cross;
So we, with moans and tears, will now lament our loss.

But though we now lament, the day is nigh
When we shall meet again above the sky;
And there our songs unite, and join the radiant throng,
And bow before the throne, and bless the Great Three One!

Then let us still maintain the truth he taught,
And faithful prove in deed, and word, and thought:
The path he trod before, let us through life pursue,
And help each other on, and keep the prize in view.

But chiefly we, who bear the sacred shame,
Who feed the flock, and still revere his name;
Let us unite in one, and strive with mutual care
To help his children on, and all their burdens bear.

For this let us, like him, the world disdain;
For this, like him, rejoice in toil and pain;
Like him, be bold for God; like him, our time redeem;
And strive, and watch, and pray; and live and die like him.

We consider that without these elegiac stanzas the "Lives of Early Methodist Preachers" would be incomplete. It would not, indeed, be difficult for an accurate scholarship to discover in them literary blemishes; but they display throughout that high estimate of Mr. Wesley's character, talents, labors, and usefulness, and that tender affection for his person, which distinguished the men whom he associated with himself in evangelical labor. They admired and loved him, and evidently felt their connection with him to be not only an honor, but also a high privilege; so that when he was taken from them, they wept like a family of orphans at the grave of their only surviving parent.

The following is a list of Mr. Olivers's publications, several of which are well worthy of being reprinted:--

- I. A Hymn on the Last Judgment, set to Music by the Author.
- II. A Hymn of Praise to Christ, set to Music by a Gentleman in Ireland, and performed before the late Bishop of Waterford, in his Cathedral, on Christmas day. To which is added, A Hymn on Matt. v.29, 30.
- III. A Hymn to the God of Abraham, adapted to a celebrated Air, sung by Leoni, in the Jews' Synagogue.
- IV. A Letter to Mr. Thomas Hanby, occasioned by the sudden Death of several near Relations.
- V. Twelve Reasons why the People called Methodists ought not to buy or sell unaccustomed Goods.
- VI. An Answer to a Pamphlet entitled, A few Thoughts and Matters of Fact concerning Methodism, offered to the Consideration of the People who attend, encourage, and support Methodist Teachers. In a Letter to the Author.
- VII. A full Reply to a Pamphlet entitled, An Answer to a late Pamphlet of Mr. Wesley against Mr. Erskine.
- VIII. A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Toplady, occasioned by his late Letter to the Rev. Mr. Wesley.
- IX. A Scourge to Calumny, in Two Parts. Inscribed to Richard Hill, Esq. Part the first, Demonstrating the Absurdity of that Gentleman's Farrago. Part the second, Containing a full Answer to all that is material in his Farrago Double-distilled.
- X. A full Defence of the Rev. John Wesley, in answer to the several personal Reflections cast on that Gentleman by the Rev. Caleb Evans.
- XI. A Rod for a Reviler; or, an Answer to Mr. Rowland Hill's Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.
- XII. An Account of the Life of Mr. Thomas Olivers, written by himself.
- XIII. A full Refutation of the Doctrine of Unconditional Perseverance; in a Discourse on Hebrews ii. 3: in which the Possibility and Danger of the total and final Apostasy of true Believers is demonstrated; and the Epistle to the Hebrews is shown to be no other than a regular Treatise, or one connected Chain of Reasoning, on that subject. 12mo.
- XIV. A Defence of Methodism: delivered Extemporary in a Public Debate, (but now considerably enlarged,) held in London, Dec. 12th, 19th, and 26th, 1785, on the following Question, "Have the Methodists done most Good or Evil?" 12mo.

XV. A Descriptive and Plaintive Elegy on the Death of the late Rev. John Wesley. 8vo.

XVI An Answer to Mr. Mark Davis' Thoughts on Dancing: to which are added, Serious Considerations to dissuade Christian Parents from teaching their Children to dance. 12mo.

* * * * *

Part 3

THE LIFE OF MR. DUNCAN WRIGHT

Written by Himself

I was born in May, 1736, in the Kirktown of Fortingale, near the river Lyon, and not far from the lovely banks of the "soft-winding Tay," Breadalbin, Perthshire.

I claim kindred to the Stuarts, McDonalds, and McGregors' families; perhaps far more famed in story for martial exploits, than for any extraordinary attainments in religion.

It might have been better for me to have had a hardy, Highland education; but of this I was deprived by the removal of my parents to Edinburgh when I was very young. Here I had the best education my father could give me, who was my only schoolmaster. He was esteemed a pretty good scholar; but I doubt knew little of the life and power of religion. Yet he prayed with us at times, made us learn the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, and took care of us to the best of his knowledge. I lost him early, which was a loss indeed! For my mother, being too easy and indulgent, let us have our own way, which led us to all the follies and sins we were capable of. I do not remember that any creature took any pains to instruct me till I was near twenty years of age, but old Lady D____, of Preston-Field, who at times advised me as well as she could. And yet the Lord did not leave me without drawings from above: for having a bookish inclination, I read and wept very often till my head ached, and hardly knew what ailed me. Only I wanted to be a Christian, and to be easy and happy, but knew not how. Had any living Christian taken a little pains to inform me, I doubt not but I should have embraced the proffers of mercy long before I did. Indeed, I never felt any spirit of opposition to religion and religious persons. For as I had neither the form nor the power of religion myself, I knew I had little reason to speak an unkind word of those that had any appearance of either.

I was from my infancy feeble and tender; yet, having many relations in the army, no employment would relish with me but a soldier's life: hence my mother never could prevail with me to follow any regular business, and this exposed me to vain and wicked company. Yet having some tenderness of conscience left, repenting and sinning, resolving and breaking through my resolutions, made my life a weariness indeed. So, in order to be happy, I resolved to see the world in a military life. Hence I enlisted, the latter end of 1754, into the tenth regiment of foot. None of my friends knew what was become of me, till I wrote to my mother from Limerick in Ireland. My mother, being infirm, did not survive this long: she died the spring following; and I fear my disobedience hastened her departure. An awakened conscience will smart, first or last, for this sin, among others, stubbornness and disobedience to parents. So did mine; for the day I enlisted, I

thought, "Now I have done for soul and body:" for I could form no conception how a soldier could be religious.

In the summer of 1755 we encamped near the city of Cashell, eight regiments of foot, and two of horse, where William Coventry, a corporal in the Royal Scotch, frequently preached. I heard him once, but felt nothing but a kind of wonder at his courage in preaching among such a set as we were. I little thought that in less than four years I should be engaged in the same work in another camp.

We returned to Limerick for winter-quarters, where I began to consider (as the soldiers had then a great deal of leisure time in the winter) how I should pass my tedious moments. I could play at cards, and other games, (then common among the soldiery, but now happily suppressed,) but I seldom liked my company. For though I could swear some times, yet I could not relish so much of it as they were addicted to. I therefore bought and borrowed all the plays, novels, and romances I could lay my hands upon; reading late and early. And my reading had this effect, at least, that it kept me out of worse diversions, and gave my mind a turn above such intemperance and lewdness as were too common in men of my rank.

At last an old soldier, in the same barrack-room with me, found fault with me for spending my time, and spoiling my eyes, in reading such trash. I thought, "I will show you how I can read religious books as well as others." But I had none of my own. I borrowed two from one of our soldiers. One of them was "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," which, being written by way of dialogue, attracted my attention; and before I read it half through, I was truly though gently convinced that I was a lost sinner, and that Christ was all I wanted to make me easy, satisfied, and happy.

Now it was that a deep sense of my time, youth, and health, spent in sin and folly; my ingratitude to God, the best of fathers; my slighting of Christ so long, and grieving the blessed Spirit; melted my heart, and made my eyes a fountain of tears. I awoke as from a dream, and saw all about me, like the men of Sodom, blind and groping about for happiness; or asleep, with storms of wrath ready to burst upon their heads. The immediate consequence was, a distaste to all my books and diversions. I exchanged them for religious tracts and, having a praying heart, it soon found a praying place; for as I had no place of retirement in my room, I found a covered battery on the castle-wall. This soon became my closet; and when on guard, I used to cover my head with my watch-cloak, and stopping my ears with my fingers, spent many a happy moment in converse with God, weeping and making supplication.

Although I now forsook, in a sense, all for Christ, yet there was, at times, such a mixture of seriousness and levity, that some might conclude I had no tincture of the fear of God. But my trifling in the day made me often water my couch with tears at night. But I had none to guide me; I did not know a man, among seven hundred, that had any knowledge of such a work as I now felt in my mind.

There was one, indeed, who I thought must have something in him, because he was sober, and read good books. But when I began to tell a little of what I felt, I found him an entire stranger to everything of the kind. However, the Lord made up the want of Christian fellowship, by sending

me such books, from time to time, as surprisingly suited my case; particularly Alleine's "Alarm," which proved of wonderful service to me. Among his directions for conversion, he advises the reader to enter into covenant with God, a form of which he has there given. I took the advice, set apart a day of fasting and prayer, wrote the covenant, and signed it; and it was not long before the Lord showed me He did not despise the day of small things.

There was a society of Methodists in the town, but I knew them not; and when I did, they were such objects of universal contempt, that I hardly knew what to make of them. However, the last night of this year, I ventured to go, and heard Mr. Oddie. I likewise began the year 1756 with them; and from that time never missed an opportunity of hearing, morning and evening.

I think it was in April this year, that the Lord justified me by His grace. I used to spend all my time in bed, while awake, in weeping and prayer; and it was in one of these weeping nights, that in an instant the Lord brought me out of darkness into His marvellous light. I did not know then what to call it; but its effects were many: I found an uncommon concern for the souls of the soldiers; and the sight of a Methodist used to set my heart on fire with love. Yet, for half a year, not a soul of them spoke a word to me, though I sometimes threw myself in their way. For, much did I long to be acquainted with them; but my shyness was such that I could not break through to speak to them.

Mr. John Wesley, and Mr. Thomas Walsh, made us a visit this summer; and O, what a heaven upon earth did I feel in hearing them! and yet I could not speak to them for my life. At length, that serious man, Mr. Thomas Seccombe, took notice of me; and when he was about to leave Limerick, desired Sidney Hoey (a mother in Israel she was to me and many of the soldiers) to get acquainted with me. She brought me to her house, and the same day to a classmeeting, which was a day of gladness to me; for I had often found Solomon's words fulfilled, "Woe to him that is alone when he falleth." For when I fell into perplexities and temptations, I had no one to help me; but now I found the real benefit of having fellowship with a loving people.

Part of 1757 and 1758 I spent at Dublin, and found their fellowship there also of very great service. The preachers were lively, and faithful lovers of discipline. The society retained much of their simplicity and teachableness, and were in a good degree prepared for the blessed revival which followed some time after, under Mr. John Manners.

It was of uncommon advantage to me to be among the Methodists, at a time when both the preachers and people loved all our discipline, and practised it. I saw the blessed consequences; for few cared to stay among us, but such as retained their fervor for the whole of religion. False brethren especially were soon tired, and went to the Independents, Anabaptists, or Moravians. But with great simplicity we used to crowd to the sacrament at St. Patrick's in Dublin, or the cathedral at Limerick, every Sabbath. These were happy times to me; for although I was bred a Presbyterian, (if I was bred anything,) yet the love of God threw down the walls of partition, and made me love to be there, where I found most of the people of God. I soon saw our plan to be more noble than any poor, narrow dissenting scheme whatever, as intending the good of thousands and tens of thousands in the great bodies of the established churches; and I am still convinced, that our present situation is infinitely better calculated for general good than the best-planned separation that can be conceived.

What occasioned my commencing a preacher was as follows -- In September, 1758, we returned to Limerick; and as Government resolved to shoot a deserter in every city, in terrorem, the lot fell on a young man in our regiment to die in Limerick. His name was Joseph Newton; he was a Derbyshire man, twenty-two years of age. I longed to talk with him; but as he was kept in a public guard-house, with no place of retirement, I could not tell how to speak to or pray with him, among so many people. But when I found the adjutant had been to inform him that he must die on Monday, (this was on the Tuesday before,) I saw I had no time to lose. I went in, and found him weeping as if his heart would break, and reading a "Whole Duty of Man" with all his might: like a drowning man catching at any thing to save him. I spoke a few words to him then, and again in the evening, though with uncommon reluctance, there being many soldiers round us. I prayed with him, and found very great freedom to speak to him and to all that were present. He had no plea, but saw himself an undone sinner without help, and almost without hope. Some of us visited him twice or thrice a day, and on Thursday his soul was set at liberty. From that time he witnessed a good confession to all that spoke to him. Every one that saw him go to the place where he was shot could not but admire the serene joy that appeared in his countenance. He said but little, but his calm, happy death made a deep impression on many of our soldiers; for they could not but discern the difference between him and one they saw die awhile before at Dublin, who showed the greatest reluctance, the field-officer of the day being obliged to ride up to him several times to tell him he must die; while Joseph Newton was not above ten minutes on his knees before he dropped the signal, and went to paradise.

I thought now was the time to try what could be done among the soldiers. I therefore told several that as many as had a mind might come to my room every night after roll-calling, and I would sing, read, and pray with them as well as I could. They came, and crowded my room; and in a little while I had a class of them. But about the beginning of the year 1759 I was ordered for Scotland on the recruiting service. I found this not to be easy work for a Christian; yet, through mercy, I was kept from outward sin.

After an absence of four months, the French being expected to invade Ireland, we were ordered to join the regiment, which lay encamped near Kilkenny, and found my little flock, having had no one to look after them, were all scattered. The first morning we met (in a field adjoining) there were but three of us. But our number increased every time we met; and before our camp broke up, I had a little society gathered again. And here it was that I got the name of a preacher; for it being frequently late in the evenings before we could meet, before I had sung and prayed our light was gone out, so that I could not see to read, but was obliged to say something to them without a book, or send them away empty.

It was well I did not begin to preach among very knowing men; for they might soon have silenced me, as a little thing would have done it: but here there was none to hinder me but the commanding officer, and he did not choose to do it. Though he did not like the Methodists, yet he wanted us all to be very good, as we did not know how soon our valour might be tried by the French. Therefore we had very strict orders against swearing, drunkenness, &c.; but those orders did not effect any great reformation.

When we left the camp, as we still expected an invasion, we were scattered abroad in cantonments all over the south of Ireland. This hurt such of us as were weak in the faith very much. None can tell, but such as have tried, how hard it is for a soldier to stand his ground among so many unreasonable as well as ungodly men; for such were most of the officers as well as soldiers: men whose tender mercies were cruel.

I had myself suffered much loss in my mind for a year, and consequently had little inclination for preaching. Hence, when we got the route for Galway, I was not at all sorry that there was no society to solicit me to preach among them. Even my friends among the officers were much concerned for me, as many serjeants were preferred to commissions: they said they doubted they could do nothing for me, as I made myself so ridiculous. Indeed, this did not move me. But my unhappiness of mind was the great hindrance to my preaching. Yet in Galway it was that I had the most clear, undoubted seals to my mission, in the conviction and conversion of souls who never had heard any other Methodist preacher. Some of them are a comfort to me to this day; and some of them are fallen asleep in Jesus.

In 1761 we marched for Dublin again, and the following year back to Galway. All this time, from 1758 to 1763, I walked in darkness, and had no light. I fell into it by degrees; but by what particular thing, I am at a loss to know. But this I know, my case was truly deplorable; and yet I did, not give way to any known sin, neither did I miss any means of grace. Nay, I often went to the Lord's table when, to all sense and feeling, I was as dead as a stone. My gracious tears were all dried up. My stony heart could not melt. And yet I heard the greatest preachers, read the best books I knew, and conversed or corresponded with the most gracious Christians I could hear of. Nay, I frequently exhorted or preached the whole time; yea, and in that season had apparent success to my labors. I remark this, to refute an idle conceit, that none are fit to teach others, but such as are happy themselves. I know that many times, though I forgot it while preaching, I was as miserable as a devil, both before and after. And it was often suggested to me, "Judas may cast out devils, and notwithstanding all this be only an outcast." I often saw myself like one enclosed all around with hewn stone; my strength and my hope perished from the Lord. As I knew very little of myself when the Lord justified me, He saw good to show me now my utter helplessness, by leading me into the painful school of self-knowledge. And a dull scholar I proved, being five years in learning what others have learned in less than five months.

Yet notwithstanding my wretchedness, our little society at Galway was wonderfully blessed. As there was about this time a glorious revival in many parts of the three kingdoms, I communicated to them, from time to time, the intelligence I received of the work; and the fire soon kindled among them also. All were happy or in earnest but me; and I durst tell very few my sad case, for fear of hurting them. This was often the language of my heart

"My soul in sin so rooted stands,
No common miracle can move:
I know my spirit's cure demands
Thy whole omnipotence of love.

"But whether Thou hast ever healed
A spirit so desperate as mine,

It lies, alas! from me concealed,
In lowest depths of love Divine."

If it be asked, what could induce me to continue in the means of grace? I answer, I never doubted my former experience of the truth and reality of religion; and, besides an unseen hand that upheld me, I retained a full conviction, that in the favour of God alone there was life and happiness. So I was determined to be happy in the favour of God, or refuse every other comfort.

It was when I was thus in darkness and in the deep, that the Lord, in a moment, restored to me the joy of His salvation. This was like a plenteous shower, upon a parched and dry land, that soon made my soul like a watered garden. The Lord now led me into green pastures, beside the still waters. What a change was this! The soul that was, before, all tumult and confusion, was now all joy and peace through believing. This was about June, 1763.

And yet I soon found I had not attained what J. Dillon and S. Hoey informed me they had attained; namely, a mind constantly stayed upon God, and kept in perfect peace.

Being about this time confined to my room by a violent inflammation in my cheek, my pain made me pray the more earnestly, that the peace of God might keep my heart and mind also. The Lord heard and gave me a glorious answer. I felt such a sudden and such a delightful change, as I never before conceived possible. My joy was indeed unspeakable; my hope full of immortality; and my peace flowed like a river. I then understood those words as I never did before: "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Just then we were ordered to the north of Ireland, to quell a set of rioters, called Hearts of Oak. Being something better, I marched on till we came to Carrick-on-Shannon, where our surgeon told me I must go no farther, at the peril of my life. My excessive pain, and the being left behind, would at some other times have tried me sufficiently; but now,

"All was calm, and joy, and peace."

And here it was that I first understood how the blessed martyrs could clap their hands in the flames, for although for some nights my pain was excruciating; yet all was tranquillity within.

The little society here, and the McNeily's family in particular, took remarkable care of me. The Lord grant they may find mercy of Him in that day! This state continued several months; but having none to direct me, and not being sufficiently aware of the need there was for constant watchfulness and prayer, I fell by degrees from that heaven of love.

In the beginning of 1764 I was called to suffer a little for the testimony of Jesus. And indeed but a little; for what were a few threatenings, a little reproach and shame, a few stones or rotten eggs, to what many of the dear servants of God have suffered even in this age?

Our lieutenant colonel did not care what a soldier's religion was, provided he did his duty; but our major, a warm blunderer, to whom the command of the regiment was left for a time, thought

it a disgrace to have a serjeant a preacher among them. He therefore resolved to drive me out of preaching, if possible. I shall not enter upon a detail of the several means he used for this purpose, as I believe he was ashamed of them himself before I left him. He found me so much the soldier, however, as not to be frightened out of what I thought was my duty. Yet I found it no easy matter to walk the streets of Newry, a gazing-stock to both old and young. At last, as he found he could not prevent my preaching, he hit upon a method to get quit of me; namely, to put me into the tenth company, which was soon to be reduced. And thus it was that the Lord thrust me out into the harvest; for I was determined not to leave the army till some clear providence set me free. Before the time came for the reduction of the company, some of the friendly officers wanted me to stay, and said, they would get the major to put some old sergeant in my place. I begged they would not, and they acquiesced. Some of them, indeed, wished I could persuade all their men to be religious, for they had no trouble with the Methodist soldiers, but enough with the others. Yet they told me, they feared what our enthusiasm would turn to; and mentioned Cromwell, who could preach and pray one part of the day, and kill and plunder the other.

Never were words more applicable to these fearful men than the following:--

"The same in your esteem,
Falsehood and truth ye join;
The wild pretender's dream,
And real work Divine;

"Between the substance and the show
No difference you can find;
For colours all, full well we know,
Are equal to the blind."

Were the chaplains men of real piety and courage, much good might be done in the army; but the chaplaincy is generally a kind of sinecure, and the care of souls is left to any worthless wretch that will do it at an easy rate. When we lay in one city, the care of four or five regiments was left to an unhappy man, who was an object of common ridicule among the soldiers for his perpetual drunkenness.

But although my commanding officer could not hinder me from preaching, and God gave me to see the fruit of my labors, yet I was not thoroughly satisfied in my own mind that it was my duty to preach: but this spring, at Waterford, God revived His work wonderfully among that society, and set my mind free from every scruple; so that when Mr. Wesley wrote me Word, that if I left the army, he had immediate work for me, I had no objection, but the precarious state of my health; for by preaching loud and long, and by reading at all hours, I had brought myself so low, that our surgeon sometimes thought me in a consumption. Mr. Wesley told me, in answer to my objection, that our Master had all power in heaven and in earth; and that as my day, so should my strength be. And in the latter end of 1764 I found myself at liberty to go where Providence directed.

I was now entering upon a new scene of life; and though I was twenty-eight years of age, I was an utter stranger to mankind: hence I imagined that blunt honesty, with innocency, would bear me through anything; but I have since learned, that we need the wisdom of the serpent, as well as

the innocence of the dove, in our dealings with men, even about their souls. I mention this as an apology for some parts of my conduct, which had not always a due mixture of calm wisdom; my native impetuosity often hurrying me beyond the bounds of moderation, -- a thing too common with well-meaning zealous young men.

I would observe farther, that I was kept in such watchfulness and tenderness of conscience, nine years after I knew something of religion among the soldiery, as, to my grief and shame, I have not always retained since that period. I was then continually among the open enemies of religion, which partly obliged me to vigilance; but being since then chiefly among the professed friends of religion, how often have I been off my watch! But, whatever I have fallen into, I could never preach till I recovered a sense of the Divine acceptance. O, where are we safe, beyond the power of sinning, but in paradise?

When I came to Dublin, our society and preachers received me in the kindest manner; and a comfortable time I spent with them that winter.

One of our captains, without my knowledge, now recommended me to a late nobleman, who, he told me, had an easy place for me, and desired my answer in two or three days. I thanked him, and told him I had chosen another employment.

Here I was acquainted with Dr. Davis, whose case is worth relating. He was formerly remarkable for a peculiar lively turn of wit on all occasions, and happy was the company that could get him to spend the evening with them. But being persuaded by a friend to hear John Carr, one of our local preachers, his companions, alas! lost their merry Andrew. He told me that he went to see the preacher merely to take him off, as he expressed it: "But," said he, "while I was leaning on my cane, looking at him through my fingers, during his first prayer, an arrow went to my heart, which sent me home bruised and wounded." He then sought the true Physician, who soon brought him to a healthful mind.

The regiment of dragoons of which he was surgeon marched into Dublin while I was there. One day, being at the soldiers' infirmary, a serious man, the porter of the house, one Francis May, said to him, "Sir, We want prayer and a word of exhortation very much in this house: would you pray with two or three, sir, if I get them together?" "Really, Frank," said the doctor, "I never prayed in my life, but with two or three serious people; and I know not how to begin with any other." "Sir," said Frank, "it is high time you should begin. Begin today, sir; begin now!" The doctor was prevailed on. Away went Frank, and informed through all the house, that Dr. Davis was going to preach to them. Down came every soul that could crawl, -- the sick, the lame, and the lazy, -- to the long room, where the chaplains used to read prayers. Away came Frank to the doctor. "Now, sir," said he, "I have got a few of them." When the doctor came to the room door, and saw the place full, he was for going back. "Nay, sir," said Frank, "you cannot go back for your life! There they are; the Lord has delivered them into your hands; and will you start from His work?" In short, the doctor went in, stood on a form, sung, and prayed; and having his pocket Bible with him, he read a portion to them, discoursed an hour and a half, and, from that time, preached to the soldiers wherever he could. As I knew his dangerous situation, I was a little afraid for him. But God took care of him; for going to visit some prisoners in Newgate, who had a malignant fever, he caught the infection, and finished his course rejoicing in God his Saviour.

We had several remarkable conversions while I was in Ireland. One or two more may be mentioned. We often think it lost labor to talk to a man about his soul while drunk; but I know to the contrary. I knew one in the north of Ireland who, going home one summer evening much in liquor, saw a crowd of people on a green at some distance; and, imagining it to be a cock-fight, he would see it before he went home. The preacher, being in the application of his discourse, said, "Are there any drunkards here?" &c. The poor fellow, looking up, said, "Yes, I am one." At that instant he was seized with such concern for his soul, as never left him till he became a new man.

I add another remarkable case. We had a little society in the county of Wexford, who used to be much pestered with a Popish mob. They met in a long barn, with the door near one end. The rabble wanted sadly to know what they did at their private meetings; but as the barn belonged to one that was no Methodist, they durst not break open the door. At length they contrived that one of them should get into the barn before the people came, and let his companions in at a proper time. To conceal himself the better, he got into a sack, and lay down behind the door. When the society were all in, they fastened the door as usual. Soon after came the mob, hallooing and shouting to their friend to let them in: but God found other work for him; for being charmed with the first hymn, he thought it a thousand pities (as he afterwards said) to disturb them while singing it. And when the prayer began, the power of God did so confound him, that he roared out with might and main; and, not having power to get out of the sack, lay bawling and screaming. At last one ventured to see what was the matter, and, helping him out, brought him up, confessing his sins, and crying for mercy; which was the beginning of a lasting work in his soul.

But to return. This winter three of the preachers going to Chapel-Izod, where one of them was to preach, as there was room in the coach, they invited me to accompany them. A river through which we were to pass happened to overflow part of the road. Our coachman, thinking to drive in the most shallow water, drove near a wall; but the wheels turning on a large stone upset us. Through mercy we got out, with little more damage than being well wet but the coachman stood up to the neck, like one distracted, crying, "Murder, murder!" At last he got out; and then I and two others (Mr. Johnson and Dempster) walked home, and were no worse.

In the spring, there being no preacher in the Waterford circuit, I went thither, and spent some time very agreeably among my former acquaintances. And now it was that I saw what spirit many of the Irish Papists were of. While I carried a sword by my side, few of them cared to speak their minds; but now, that restraint being removed, several of them told me to my face, that they thought it would be doing both God and the church service, to burn all such as me in one fire! The infatuation of many of them, owing to the ignorance they are kept in, cannot be described; for upon the least pretence, and often without any, they rise in large parties, well armed, to destroy the lives and properties of their neighbors, oppose the magistracy, and even insult the army.

About this time, a party of the light horse, being on foot, were conveying one of the Whiteboys to Kilkenny gaol. In going through a village, the Papists crossed the way with a mock funeral. When they had got the soldiers in the midst, they threw down their coffin full of stones, and fell on old and young with the greatest fury. The soldiers defended themselves, till the serjeant and three or four more were killed, and several desperately wounded. For this, five of them were hanged at Kilkenny. They all died "innocent," they said, "as the child unborn!" So did five more,

who were executed a little while before, for burning a mill, and burying the miller up to the neck. I could not understand at first how most of the Papists that die here by the hands of the executioner, die declaring their innocency, till I found out the secret: having confessed all their crimes to the priest, and received his absolution, they believed themselves guiltless, and were forbidden to make confession to the heretics. However, we had the comfort to see several of them brought to the experience of real Christianity. And there is no doubt but if there were a few preachers of Mr. Walsh's spirit, we should see many more.

Mr. Wesley having signified to me, some time before, that I might travel with him if I had a mind, I gladly embraced the opportunity, and met him at Limerick, in June, 1765. This and the next year, I had an opportunity of seeing most of our large societies in the three kingdoms; and, had my health, capacity, and industry, kept pace with my opportunities, it might have been a time of extraordinary improvement. Besides all other advantages, I had constantly before me such an example of redeeming time, as I hope will be of service to me while I live. But however profitable my traveling with Mr. Wesley might be, as the exercise was too much, I was obliged to give it up.

It was also of service to me to spend some time in London, among some of our old, happy Methodists who bore with my weaknesses, and by their prayers and example confirmed me more and more in the truth as it is in Jesus.

What the Lord has been doing by me in Kent, Essex, Norwich, Manchester, Macclesfield, in the Yarm and Thirsk circuits, and in Scotland, is known to Him. I bless God that I have seen the work prosper and increase in most of the circuits I have been in; not indeed in consequence of my preaching, so much as by some regard to our discipline, and the labor of my colleagues. I have been happy, in having those in general with me who were not drones, but hearty in the work of God. And their love to discipline has not been labor in vain. To God alone be all the glory!

Before I conclude, I must not forget to mention one circumstance, in order to encourage others, and to justify the observation, "that we hardly know what we are capable of, till we are put to the trial."

When I was in Scotland, I remarked that many of the clergy were men of sense and piety, and took real pains in their work. And yet there was in many places a want of care and zeal for the spiritual welfare of the poor Highlanders. Many of these, coming for employment to the larger towns, were destitute of all help for their souls, as they did not understand English. In Edinburgh and Glasgow there have been places of worship built for them within these few years, and well supplied; but in Aberdeen, Perth, and Greenock they still had none to help. When Mr. McNab went to Scotland, in 1769, he began to preach to them as well as he could, and wanted me to come to his help. Mr. Wesley accordingly appointed me for Scotland at the ensuing Conference, and desired me to try to recover my Erse: but of this I had no hope; as I could not read a verse of it, and never spoke two minutes in it on religious subjects in my life.

However, when I came to Perth, and saw their forlorn condition, several motives induced me to make a trial. I therefore bought a New Testament in the modern Gaelic, and got one of the society who could read it to give me some instructions. By Christmas I had made such a progress, that my teacher was positive I could preach in it, and would needs invite the Highlanders to come

and hear me. But I knew my deficiency better than he did: however, I was prevailed upon to let him invite them. He gave out the psalm, and sang it for me. When I began to pray in Erse, I should have been set fast, had I not learned the Lord's Prayer beforehand. When I began to speak, I was often obliged to break off, and address the people in English. But, by the grace of God, in less than four years I could officiate in that language two hours together, without a word of English. While we were thus employed, the ministers in Perth, and in several other places, wished us good luck in the name of the Lord. This was by far the most delightful work I ever had. But it was often hard enough, as I commonly preached at Greenock in English, at seven in the morning; then spent two hours, from ten to twelve, with the Highlanders; walked to Port Glasgow, and preached in the streets at four; then walked back to Greenock, and preached at six o'clock, and then met the society. Although by this means I had many an aching head and pained breast, yet it was delightful to see hundreds attending to my blundering preaching, with streaming eyes, and attention still as night; or to hear them, in their simple way, singing the praises of God in their own tongue. If ever God said to my heart, "Go, and I will be with thee," it was then, when, with much trembling and deep sighs, I have gone to preach to them, hardly knowing what to say. I extol the name of my adorable Master, that my labors were not in vain. How gladly would I have spent my life with these dear souls! But my health would not permit it; so I was obliged to leave them.

To conclude. How graciously did my heavenly Father strive with me by His Spirit even from my infant days! And when I was an outcast, and lost as to anything of religion, He reclaimed the wanderer, and brought me to His fold; then led me into the wilderness to show me my heart; healed my backslidings, comforted and fortified me for sufferings; and, knowing my feebleness, led me gradually on to preach to those who most needed my assistance.

And when He saw a little affliction needful, He sent it. And a profitable time it proved to me; all thanks to the Sender! I have since seen such beauty in holiness, and in the imitation of Christ, and have had such discoveries of the boundless love of God, as I never had before. O for an eternity to praise Him in

If ever man could say the following lines, surely I may

"Pardoned for all that I have done,
My mouth as in the dust I hide,
And glory give to God alone,
My God for ever pacified!"

Stockton, March, 1781

* * *

Mr. Atmore states, that Mr. Wright was a truly upright and pious man; a faithful dispenser of the word of God; an ardent lover and conscientious observer of the Methodist discipline; and for about twenty-eight years an acceptable and useful preacher of God's word. He died in peace and triumph, in London, May 13th, 1791, in the fifty-fifth year of his age; and his remains were interred in Mr. Wesley's vault, behind the chapel in City-road.

The following account of his sickness and death was given by one who was a witness of both:--

"In the beginning of the winter of 1790 Mr. Wright caught cold, which, falling upon his lungs, threw him into a consumption. He struggled through the winter with great difficulty; and when attending Mr. Wesley's funeral, March 9th, 1791, said it was most probable that he should be the next that should be laid in that vault; which proved to be the fact.

"In April he was taken with a violent pain in both his sides, so as not to be able to lie on either of them; nor yet on his back, as his cough was exceedingly troublesome. His fever was high, and his pulse quick, every night, till towards morning, when he began to perspire, which afforded him a little temporary ease. He continued thus for about a fortnight, when he was seized one night with very violent pain, which he supposed to be a symptom of immediate death: but at this he was not in the least dismayed. He remarked, that in the year 1762 he had entered into a superior light and greater liberty than he had ever enjoyed before; and from that time had walked constantly in the light of God's countenance, and could not be satisfied any day without a direct and clear witness of his acceptance with God. He had several remarkable manifestations of the Lord's mercy in the time of his affliction. In one of these he said, 'I am a witness that the blood of Christ does cleanse from all sin. O, the goodness of God to a poor sinner! The Lord hath finished His work, has cleansed me, and filled me with His fulness. O, what a weight of glory will that be, since Thy weight of grace, O Lord, is now so great!' It pleased the Lord to exercise him with strong pain; but no word dropped from his lips that implied any approach to murmuring or complaining. The joy of the Lord was his strength, and his hope was full of immortality. He continued in a happy state of mind till the morning on which the welcome messenger arrived, when he said, 'Jesus is come! He is now in my heart.' He was sensible to the last, and sunk gradually, with a serene and pleasant countenance, into the arms of his Redeemer, and expired without a sigh or a groan, while a few friends were in the act of commending his spirit to the love and care of Him who gave it."

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Part 4
THE LIFE OF MR. THOMAS HANBY
Written by Himself

Letter To The Rev. John Wesley

Rev. and Dear Sir,

My father removed from Barnard-Castle, in the county of Durham, to live in the city of Carlisle, where he was employed by a company of gentlemen, to carry on a branch of the woollen manufactory. Here he married my mother, who was a person of some small property; by whom he had three children, myself being the youngest. I was born December 16th, 1733.

After some years, the factory was given up, and my parents came to live at Barnard-Castle again. My mother died when I was about seven years of age, and my father soon after. He was much addicted to drunkenness, which made him neglect the care of his family; by which means he

reduced his helpless offspring to a variety of afflictions. I lived some time with an aunt, who had been a person of considerable fortune, but was reduced by the extravagancy of my uncle, my father's brother. It is true, I was put to school for some years; but made no considerable progress in learning. Before I was twelve, I was put out to a trade; Whereby a kind Providence enabled me to provide for myself such things as I stood in need of.

The first serious impression that I remember, was when I was about six years of age. I was in a yard belonging to the house where we lived, in Barnard-Castle, and looking up to heaven, I was struck with wonder, and called aloud, "God Almighty." But such horror seized me, as made me run home, and shut the door with all speed. My mother reprov'd me, and said I had been doing some mischief; but I assured her I had not. She then insisted upon knowing the cause of my uncommon haste, and of my shutting the door with such violence. I told her I was in the yard, and called aloud, "God Almighty," and I was afraid. What she thought, I cannot say; but she said no more to me upon the subject. A few years after, I was greatly alarmed by my sister talking of the day of judgment, which I had not heard of before. But these serious impressions wore off, and I began to be

"Rough in my manners, and untamed my mind."

When I was about thirteen, hearing the bishop was coming to confirm the children in our town, I began to think some kind of reformation and preparation was necessary. Accordingly, I applied to a relation, one John Robinson, a maltster, who was a sincere man, and esteemed and beloved by all men. He taught me all he knew; namely, many questions and answers, with a great number of prayers; instructed me in the Church Catechism, (for, though I had learned it when at school, I had now entirely forgot it,) and, in short, made me, I thought, a very good boy. The Sabbath came when the bishop was to confirm; and I, having passed my examination with the minister, was introduced to the bishop. This was in the forenoon; and towards evening I went with some of my companions into the fields, and played at our usual games. But, before I went to bed, horror of conscience seized me, and I thought I heard a voice say, "Thy confirmation is made void; for thou hast broken the Sabbath." What to do now I knew not. However, I began to make myself good, by reading and repeating many prayers.

In this state I continued, till it pleased God, of His infinite mercy, to send a poor man, one Joseph Cheesebrough, a shoemaker, and a Methodist, from Leeds; who having received the truth himself; was willing to impart it to others; not by preaching or exhortation, but by friendly discourse with his former acquaintance, for he was a Barnard-Castle man. Joseph Garnet, one of our preachers, now with God, and a few others, first received the truth. They met together in an upper chamber for fear of the mob. They read the Scriptures, and the books you had then published, sang hymns, and prayed. I went one evening with a few of my ungodly companions; and as they were disposed to mock, I joined with them. However, I found something within that was far from justifying my conduct, and a secret persuasion that those despised and persecuted people were able to show me the way of salvation. I went again the next night, (for they met every night,) and begged I might be permitted to come in among them. Accordingly, I was admitted, and found myself sweetly drawn to seek an unknown God. From that time I missed no opportunity of assembling with them. My cousin Robinson went at the same time; but the minister sent for him, and labored to convince him that he and the Methodists were all in an error; and, to prove it, he

showed him several old Puritanical books, which treated on the new birth, &c., and told him, "It is a false religion, because it is an old religion!" My cousin, at that time, and for four years after, was an entire stranger to himself and his need of a Saviour; the minister prevailed on him to leave the Methodists; and my great opinion of his piety made me, though contrary to my inclinations, leave them also. The minister told my cousin, provided he would form a religious society upon rational principles, he would sometimes come himself. He accordingly did, and in a little time we had a larger society than the Methodists, of formal professors who could play at cards, take their pleasures, and conform to the world in almost everything. During this period, God still worked up on my tender mind, and I was fervent in prayer, reading, and every other exercise of religious duty. I was sometimes much tempted, but knew not that it was temptation. I also found remarkable comforts, but knew not what they meant. I thought I would pray at the same place again; which I did, and was greatly surprised not to meet with the same joy. In this state of ignorance I continued till our society dwindled away, and none remained but my cousin and me. I said to him one night, "I fear we are wrong in leaving the Methodists; we can meet with none who can show us the way of salvation like them: come, and let us go and join them again." He had some objections, but my importunity prevailed with him. Accordingly we went, and, it being their class-meeting, we were admitted. In about twelve months he found peace, and ever after continued in the way, a very serious, steady, and circumspect walker, till the Lord took him to Himself.

About this time Mr. Whitford, the first Methodist preacher, came to Barnard-Castle. He preached abroad to a very large but unruly congregation. I was much affected, especially when he repeated those words, "O, let not Christ's precious blood be shed in vain!" (Mr. Whitford left the Methodists some years after, and turned Calvinist, and I suppose would now be shocked to use the words which had such an effect upon my mind, that I never could forget them.) After Mr. Whitford, we were favored with Mr. Tucker, Mr. Turnough, Mr. John Fenwick, Mr. Rowel, and others; who often preached to us while the blood ran down their faces, by the blows and pointed arrows thrown at them while they were preaching. Soon after you, sir, paid us a visit, but were interrupted by the fire-engine being played on the audience. I, and our few friends, did all we could to prevent it, but were overpowered by the multitude.

God continued to draw me with strong desires, and I spent much time praying in the fields, woods, and barns. Any place and every place was now a closet to my mourning soul, who longed for the Day-Star to arise in my poor benighted heart. And it pleased Infinite Mercy, while I was praying in a dark place, (greatly terrified for fear I should see the devil,) that the Lord set my weary soul at liberty. The next day the Lord was pleased to withdraw the ecstasy of joy, though I had no condemnation, and I had well-nigh given up my confidence, thinking it was nothing but a heated imagination. But the Lord met me again, while I was in the fields, my usual place of retirement; and from that time I was enabled to keep a weak hold of the precious Lord Jesus.

When I was about eighteen, I had a desire to see Newcastle-upon-Tyne; thinking, if I was among more experienced Christians, I might be taught the ways of the Lord more perfectly. I stayed a few months there, and boarded with our worthy friend, Mr. Robert Carr, whose tenderness for my youth, and truly Christian behavior, were of singular use to me; for which I shall ever love and esteem him. By attending preaching, night and morning, and conversing with many mature Christians, my understanding was much enlightened; and I think I may say, through all-sufficient mercy, that I grew in the fear and knowledge of God.

When I returned to Barnard-Castle, I stayed some time there, and told my beloved friends all I could remember of the many excellent sermons I had heard in Newcastle, the nature of their discipline, and the Christian spirit of the society in that place.

Having profited so much by my Newcastle journey, I thought I would take one more journey to Leeds, and after that I meant to settle at home for life. Accordingly I went, and here Providence was equally kind, in casting my lot into Mr. Richard Watkinson's family; where they put themselves to some inconvenience in boarding and accommodating me with a very agreeable lodging. I have often had a thankful remembrance of their kindness to me, and I hope the Lord will reward them for it.

My business now was that of stuff-making; and as I loved to labor hard, I was able to procure more than my necessities required. My method was, as formerly, to be much in the fields, praying and meditating. I also attended all the means of grace; and on the Sabbath I frequently took a walk with Mr. Watkinson into the country, where he preached.

During this period, I can truly say, I walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost; and my delight was in the law of the Lord, and in His law I meditated day and night.

About this time, a sudden impression was made upon my mind, that I ought to preach the gospel. I concluded it was nothing but temptation, and would not for a moment encourage such a thought. But it came again, and with it "a horror of great darkness fell upon me," like that mentioned in Gen. xv. 12, and I was truly miserable. I remembered the wormwood and the gall that the preachers drank at Barnard-Castle; and I said in my heart, I will not preach. But the terrors of the Lord made me afraid, and His fear took hold upon me. I was in great bitterness of spirit, because of this conviction. Sometimes I thought it was from God; at other times I thought it was all from the devil. In this perplexed situation I continued some time, without ever mentioning my case to any one. I would frequently retire into my closet, and express myself in words like these: "Lord, of what use is my existence in this world? I am profitable neither to God nor man! I cannot preach; for I am a fool, and a child. O, let me die; for it is better for me to die than to live."

However, I was willing to preach, provided I was sure it was the will of God concerning me. But

"This way, and that, I turn'd my anxious mind;"

when a friend of mine, one John Smith, told me of a poor woman in the society who was supposed to be dying, and that she was wonderfully happy. I had read in your tracts the accounts of many happy deaths, but had never seen one. I desired my friend, if he could, to introduce me to see her. He promised to call on me the next night. He did so; and as we were going, I prayed to the Lord that He would remove my intolerable load, and that if it was His will I should preach, He would show it to the dying saint I was going to visit. I said, "Lord, Thou canst as easily do this, as Thou canst cause her to triumph over death. If Thou wilt but show me a token by which I may know Thy will, then I will preach Thy word wherever Thou shalt please to send me."

We came to the house where the sick woman lay, and, as I was an entire stranger to her and every body besides, I stood at a distance. Mr. Shent came in, and prayed with her: I followed him to tell him our Barnard-Castle brethren would be glad of a visit from him. After I had delivered my message, I returned to the sick woman; and was told, she had made much inquiry for the young man who stood in the corner. I came to the bedside, and she looked me earnestly in the face, and said, "God has called you to preach the gospel; you have long rejected the call; but He will make you go. Obey the call, obey the call." She put such an emphasis upon, "He will make you go," that it shocked me exceedingly.

I now resolved, through the grace of God, to make a trial. Accordingly I sent word to Bramley, that preaching would be there the next Lord's day in the morning. As I went along, my mind was perfectly resigned. I did not think about what I should say; but my heart said, "If He will have me to preach, something will be given me to say that will be profitable; and if He has not sent me, it will be a less cross to be confounded before the people, than to be a preacher of the gospel."

I was rather behind the time, and the people were waiting, expecting brother Watkinson, as usual. They came to me, and asked where he was, and what must be done. I said in my heart, "The Lord will provide Himself a sacrifice." I stepped to the place, gave out a hymn, prayed, and took those words for my text, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." The people trembled for fear of me, and prayed heartily. God was pleased to visit us: two persons received a sense of pardon. I preached again at noon, and at Armley in the evening. This, dear sir, was my beginning, and what I looked upon as my call from God.

I was now occasionally employed by Mr. Shent, and the other preachers, to take part of a circuit for them.

In 1754 brother Mitchell desired me to come and help them in the Staffordshire circuit for a few months. Accordingly I went to Birmingham, Wednesbury, &c. Brother Crab was then along with us; and, as we were too many for the few places about Birmingham, I made an excursion into the wilds of Derbyshire, preached at Wootton, near Weaver-hill, the Ford, Snelson, and Ashburn, where there had been no such a being as a Methodist preacher. I had often found a great desire to preach in that town, but was at a loss how to introduce myself. However, I providentially heard of a serious man, Mr. Thomas Thompson, who kept the toll-gate, about half a mile from the town. I took Thomas White with me, from Barton-Forge. We came to Mr. Thompson's, and introduced ourselves in the best manner we could. He informed a few of his neighbors, that there was a preacher at his house. Accordingly, Mr. Hurd's family, Mr. Peach's, and a few others came in the evening; I suppose as many as they durst invite. I talked to them, and expounded a part of the eighth chapter of the Romans. I found much liberty in my own soul, and the power of God rested upon the people, who were deeply affected. I stayed a few days, preaching morning and evening to as many as the house would hold. Miss Beresford condescended to assemble with us; and the Lord opened her heart, as the heart of Lydia. When I had been preaching Christ as a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, she cried out, "O precious gospel! O precious gospel!" From that time she continued steadfast, growing in grace, till the Lord took her in glorious triumph to Himself.

I left Ashburn for about a fortnight, to visit my new friends in Snelson, Wootton, the Ford, Bottom house, &c., and returned again. I now found I must preach no more at the toll-gate house:

the commissioners of the road had forbidden my friend Mr. Thompson to admit me. But Mr. Hurd, a gentleman farmer, by the desire of his family, whose hearts the Lord had touched, suffered me to preach at his house. It was now that a furious mob arose while I was preaching, and beset the house, and sprang in among us like so many lions. I soon perceived that I was the object of their rage. My mind was variously agitated: yet I durst not but cry aloud as long as I could be heard; but at last I was overpowered with noise. Some of my friends, in defending me, were bleeding among the mob, and with difficulty I escaped out of their hands. But as Mr. Thompson, Mr. Isaac Peach, Mr. Hurd's family, Miss Beresford, and a few others remained steady, I was constrained to repeat my visits, till the Lord gave us peace. Mr. Thompson grew in the knowledge and love of God, till the Lord took him to Himself.

In a few weeks I returned again to Leek, and put up at one of the principal inns, in hopes of seeing some of the society, to encourage them to suffer patiently for the sake of Him who suffered death for them. I had ordered dinner; but, before it was ready, the mob collected together in a large body, and beset the inn. The landlord came to me in great confusion, and entreated me to leave the place immediately, or his house would be pulled down, and I should be murdered. I was obliged to obey. I mounted my horse in the yard, and rode through the mob, amidst stones, dirt, &c., whilst they were gathering in vast numbers from every part of the town, crying, "Kill him, kill him." There was from this time no access to Leek, till the chief men of this mob died miserably; and of the rest, some went for soldiers, and all of them were dispersed, except one man, who was alive a few months ago, in miserable circumstances.

I had frequently passed through Burton-upon-Trent, in my way to Ashby-de-la-Zouch; and found a desire to preach in that place, which appeared to me to be fit for Him who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. I obtained leave to preach in a large house belonging to a shoe-maker. Many attended, and I had reason to believe some were awakened. I gave out preaching for another day, and went accordingly. The town was alarmed; and a mob (as I understood afterwards) were hired and made drunk, by the principal persons in town, effectually to prevent my preaching. It was in the winter season, and a dark night. All was quiet till I gave out a hymn. Then they approached the house; broke first the window shutters, and then dashed the windows in. The head of this mob was a forgerman, half an idiot, who had bound himself under an oath he would that night have my liver. He brought the pipe of a large bellows, with which he made a frightful noise, and which was to be the instrument of my death. He made what way he could to me, but was rather retarded by the multitude that was before him. I observed him with the fury of a fiend; but knew not well what to do. To attempt to preach was in vain; for I could not be heard. I stepped off the chair, and got into a chamber unperceived by my enemy. When he found I was gone, he insisted upon going up stairs; and it was impossible to hinder him, and the numbers that were with him. It came into my mind, "Go down stairs, escape for thy life." I went down, and walked into the shoemaker's shop, unobserved by any one, though I passed through part of the mob. Soon after he got up stairs, searched the closets, beds, chests, &c.; and when he could not find me, foamed at the mouth like a mad dog. Then there was a cry in the street, "He is in the shop; he is in the shop." I now concluded all was over with me, and said, "Lord, give me strength to suffer as a Christian; nor may I count my life dear unto myself for Thy sake." I went under the shoemaker's cutting-board meantime the mob were not long in breaking open two strong doors, that led into the shop. They did not see me; but one of them put down his hand where I was, and cried out, "He is here; he is here." I had now no other means to use; so I committed myself into their hands.

They hurried me into the house, and a very stout man, one of those who had been made drunk for the purpose, approached me: but his countenance fell: he took hold of my hand, and said, "Follow me." I imagined he intended to take me and throw me into the river, and I was content. I committed myself to the disposal of a kind Providence, expecting nothing but death. With difficulty he got me through the mob; and as he was one of the best boxers in the town, nobody durst oppose him. When we came to the door, he drew me short by the corner up a narrow street, put me before him, and said, "Run." I made my way to the fields, and he kept behind, keeping the rest off, then helping me over walls and hedges, till we had lost them all. I remained in the fields till midnight, and returned with a friend into town, and lodged till early in the morning when I rode away.

After some time I went again to Leek stayed ten days, and joined twenty-four in a society. A lawyer then raised a furious mob who beset the house where I lodged. My few friends kept them off for a considerable time. But at last they lost all patience: they broke in, and were determined to drag me away, but it pleased the Lord, that a woman, who then neither feared God nor regarded man, opened a window that looked into the yard, and desired me to come into her house. Here I stayed till about two o'clock in the morning, and then made my escape over the mountains to the Bottom-house. This woman is yet alive; but she is a new woman, and in our society. The next day the mob were not a little chagrined to find they had lost their prey; and, had no other way to avenge themselves, than to burn me in effigy.

Soon after I was pressed in spirit to visit Burton-upon-Trent once more. The mob soon gathered: and had it not been for a peculiar Providence, in turning one of the head of them on my side, I believe I should have had that night the honor of martyrdom.

In weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in joy and sorrow, in weakness and trembling, were my days now spent. And I have frequently thought, if God would excuse me from this hard task, how gladly should I embrace the life of a shoebblack or of a shepherd's boy. I was surrounded with death, and could seldom expect to survive another day, because of the fury of the people. And yet it was, "Woe unto thee, if thou preach not the gospel."

The summer following, 1755, the Conference was held at Leeds, where I was admitted as a traveling preacher. The next year I was sent to Canterbury. My little stock of money was nearly exhausted by the time I got to London; and though it was rather too long a journey for a winter's day, I was under a necessity to push forward, not having money enough to keep me and my horse upon the road all night. It was about eight o'clock at night when I got within sight of the lamps in the city. Two men, with large pistols then rushed out upon me from a narrow lane, and demanded my money. They took my watch and all the money I had in the world, which was two shillings and eightpence. (Indeed, sometimes, if a halfpenny would have purchased the three kingdoms, I had it not for weeks together.) I believe this robbery was permitted for good. It was at the time we expected an invasion from France, and the city of Canterbury was full of soldiers. They were two soldiers who robbed me, and this excited a curiosity in their comrades to hear the preacher who had been robbed; and it pleased God to convince many of them. About ten were in society before this; and when I came away, they were increased to sixty.

Several of the following years I spent in Scotland; and I think this was, in general, the happiest period of my life. In 1763 brother Roberts and I came to Dundee. I preached in the evening, and he the next morning, when we parted. I came to Edinburgh, and he went to Aberdeen. Some time after, I had a strong desire to give Dundee a fair trial. Accordingly I went there, and stayed three or four months. I continued preaching in the open air till the 10th of November. And it was there God met with many poor sinners, and truly awakened them to a sense of their misery. So that before I left the place, there were near a hundred joined in our society. About this time Mr. Erskine published Mr. Hervey's Letters, with a preface equally bitter. O the precious convictions those letters destroyed! They made me mourn in secret places. Mr. Erskine being much esteemed in the religious world, and recommending them through the whole kingdom, our enemies made their advantage of them. These made the late Lady Gardiner leave us, after expressing a thousand times, in my hearing, the great profit she received by hearing our preaching. Many were then brought to the birth, but by those letters their convictions were stifled. What a pity good men should help to destroy the real work of God in the hearts of men!

In 1765 I was appointed to labor in the Leeds circuit. Here the Lord was pleased to try me, by the death of a most amiable wife and my only child. O, how great a debtor to that grace which forbids our murmuring at the dispensations of Providence, though it allows us to sorrow, but not as men without hope!

In 1766 I labored in the Birstal circuit; in 1767, in Staffordshire; in 1768, in Bedfordshire; in 1769 and 1770, in Newcastle; in 1771, in Edinburgh and Glasgow. From hence I made a short visit to my old friends at Dundee; and, notwithstanding the many difficulties they had had to encounter, I found many of them serious and steady. In 1772 and 1773 I labored in Staffordshire again; in 1774 and 1775, in Gloucestershire; in 1776 and 1777, in Macclesfield. There the Lord was pleased again to afflict me in a very tender part, by making a second breach in my family.

"Our lives are ever in the power of death."

In 1778 I was appointed for Liverpool. I am now going on in my second year, among a loving, kind, good people, for whom I feel the greatest affection, and hope my weak labors are acceptable.

Thus, dear sir, I have given you a short account of my life; but fain I would do something for Him who has loved me and given Himself for me. My sentiments in religion are the same [as] they ever were. I believe man by nature is sinful and helpless; that his only remedy is in Jesus Christ, who tasted death for every man; that the Holy Spirit works conversion in the soul, and a fitness for the kingdom of heaven, by transforming it into the image of the ever-blessed God. This conformity I most ardently long for; and hope, dear sir, you will entreat the Father of mercies for your affectionate son and servant in the gospel,

Thomas Hanby
Liverpool, November 12th, 1779

* * *

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF MR. THOMAS HANBY,
Minister of the gospel

Nottingham, January 11th, 1797

Dear Sir,

As the friends of our much-esteemed brother and faithful minister of Christ, Mr. Hanby, will wish to see some account of his removal from our world to the regions of immortal glory, where the servants of Jesus rest from their labors, the following particulars will undoubtedly be acceptable to them, as well as to many of your readers.

On Christmas Day last Mr. Hanby expounded part of the second chapter of St. Luke's gospel, at six o'clock in the morning, in the chapel at Nottingham: in the forenoon he preached upon Isaiah ix. 6, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor;" and in the evening, from 1 Tim. lii. 16, "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness." Little did those who heard him think that this was the last time that he was to bear a public testimony for his blessed Master; yet so it proved. O, how necessary to be always ready! "Blessed is that servant who when his Lord cometh shall be found watching." He also met four or five classes the same day. I hope that the people to whom he spoke will not soon forget the instructions he then gave them. In the evening he was fatigued, and not well; and next morning much worse.

On Monday forenoon he had a violent pain in his stomach, owing, as was supposed, to the gall-stones not passing: (a disorder to which he was subject:) he made use of some medicines which were prescribed for him when he was taken ill of the same complaint at the last London Conference. On Monday evening and Tuesday he thought himself something better. Doctor Marsden was sent for, who had been useful to him when ill of the same disorder before. The doctor prescribed several things for him; but, alas! all was in vain!

When I came home to see my family on Wednesday, I found Mr. Hanby exceeding ill indeed: but he did not complain of pain; he was much oppressed with stupor, and yet quite sensible. In the afternoon the Rev. Mr. Hopper, minister of the Baptist congregation in Nottingham, called to see him. Mr. Hopper said, "I hope you find that Saviour whom you have preached to others, to be your support now?" Mr. Hanby replied, "I find my trust is in the Lord; but I do not enjoy much sensible comfort;" and complained of being oppressed with heaviness. The same kind friend called again on Thursday afternoon, and said, "Mr. Hanby, I wish you every blessing which I should wish to enjoy myself, if I was in your situation."

On Wednesday evening, seeing his affectionate partner in distress, he said, "God will be a Father to the fatherless, and a Husband to the widow;" and soon after, "I have left my all with God. What should I do, if I had my religion to seek now?" Speaking of the grave, he said, "There the weary are at rest."

On Thursday in the forenoon he was much engaged in prayer: and we also were exercised in the same way in his behalf, chiefly that the Lord would spare His faithful servant a little longer among us, if this might be for His glory. I asked him several times, if he found the Lord nearer to

him as he grew weaker; and he always answered, "Yes." He exhorted his daughter Jane to seek an interest in Christ; and the two younger children came and kissed their dying parent.

In the evening Dr. Taft called to see him, and said, "My good sir, how are you?" He answered, "I am departing: but I have fought the good fight." Being now exceeding weak, it was with great difficulty that he pronounced the last words. We saw, with the greatest concern, that his dissolution was hastening on very fast; and, deeply affected as we were, brother Lowe and I spent some time in solemn prayer, that the Lord would accompany His dear servant through the valley of the shadow of death; that a convoy of angels might be sent to conduct him to the paradise of God; and that an abundant entrance might be administered to him into the peaceful regions of everlasting day. O, what a solemn season of love was this! The power of the Highest overshadowed us, and the glory of God filled the place. We all found ourselves brought near the gates of heaven!

A few moments after we arose from our knees, and were watching to see this blessed man draw his last breath: he quietly, without a sigh or groan, fell asleep. Thus the benevolent and meek Thomas Hanby left this vale of tears, on Thursday, a little after eight o'clock in the evening, December the 29th, 1796, aged sixty-three years.

His body was committed to the ground on the 2d of January, in the chapel, attended by a crowded assembly. Had the men of the world seen all the tears that were shed for this man of God, they might have said with great propriety, "Behold how they loved him." The good Lord sanctify his removal to us all!

I remain yours affectionately,
T. Bartholomew

The removal of those who have been eminent for piety and usefulness in the church is an event which will deeply affect the minds of all who sincerely wish the prosperity of Zion; and more especially when we have been intimately acquainted, and closely united to such men of God. Ever since I heard of the death of my highly-esteemed friend and brother Mr. Hanby, I have felt what I cannot express. I am much concerned on account of his amiable widow and children, as their loss must be very great. But my grand concern is for the church. When those are taken away who have long been pillars in the house of the Lord, we may well tremble for the people. It is true, the Lord has the residue of the Spirit in His own hand, and He can pour it forth upon whomsoever He will: and it is also true, that those faithful servants of God have finished their work upon earth, they have died happy in the Lord, and left a good testimony behind them; and for this we ought to praise His name: but when we consider the loss which the church sustains when such long-trying and eminently faithful preachers of the word are called away, we cannot but lament their loss.

I have known Mr. Hanby well for near forty years, and have been particularly intimate with him for the last twelve years; therefore I can testify, from my own knowledge, that he was a man of a meek and quiet spirit. He bore the burden and the heat of the day, and patiently endured all the persecution, reproach, and contempt that an ignorant world could cast upon him. His natural temper was remarkably mild: I believe hardly any one ever saw him moved with anything like anger, or heard a rash or unguarded word drop from his lips. Yet, notwithstanding his easy and obliging disposition, where the cause of God and of a good conscience were concerned, he was

firm as a rock. During the forty-three years that he traveled and preached the gospel, I believe, no one can say that there was a blot upon his character, or even heard any complaint against him, unless it was for being too condescending and good-natured in matters of discipline, or too zealous in introducing the sacrament among us.

He certainly was both an acceptable and a very useful preacher, and universally beloved by the people. When he first visited Scotland, the Lord greatly blessed his labors, particularly at Dundee. For a considerable time before he went to that place; the inhabitants had been alarmed by an uncommon bright shining light, which appeared every night on a piece of ground near the town. Mr. Hanby, without any previous knowledge of that circumstance, happened to fix his pulpit upon the very spot where the light had been seen, which drew the attention of the inhabitants, and greatly increased his congregations.

Mr. Hanby was, in his day, a burning and a shining light; but he is now no longer an inhabitant of our vale of tears! Indeed, the first generation of Methodists, both people and preachers, are almost all gone to their eternal rest. Very few are left behind. Forgive me, brethren, if on this occasion I drop a tear, and in the fullness of my heart pray, that a double portion of that Spirit which influenced the first Methodist preachers may rest upon you who are likely to be their successors. Permit one who most sincerely loves you, but who will shortly follow Mr. Hanby, to entreat you, by the tender mercies of God, and by the love you bear to His blessed cause, to labor with all your might in maintaining the life and power of godliness, both in your own souls and those who hear you. Promote old genuine Methodism, which stands in the renewal of the soul in righteousness and true holiness. Remember, brethren, that the whole weight of the cause of God will very soon rest upon your shoulders and seriously consider, how much will then depend upon your walking closely with God, upon that state of mind in which you live in His sight, and labor in His vineyard. How happy will it be for you, and how well for the people, if you daily experience, and upon good ground can say, with the holy apostle, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the body, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me!" Many eyes are upon you, and you have still numerous enemies to contend with: for notwithstanding outward persecution is in a great measure ceased, so that your opponents are not so furious as they once were, yet they are not less subtle and dangerous: therefore you have still need of the whole armor of God, that through His strength you may conquer all that oppose you.

You see one and another of those venerable men, who acted the part of fathers toward you, are called away; and those who now stand at the helm will soon follow them. I know not how your minds may be affected with these things; but I assure you I feel what I cannot express.

The death of our valuable friend has brought to my remembrance the lines that Dr. Watts wrote on the death of a great and good man, and which, I think, with a little alteration, may be applied to Mr. Hanby.

"Great Gouge to dust! How awful is the sound!
How vast the stroke is! and how wide the wound!
Yea, 'tis a vast uncommon death!
Yea, 'tis a wound immeasurably wide;

No vulgar mortal died
When he resign'd his breath.
The Muse that mourns a nation's fall
Should wail at Gouge's funeral;
Should mingle majesty and groans,
Such as she sings to sinking thrones,
And in deep-sounding numbers tell
How Sion trembled when this pillar fell!
Sion grows weak, and England poor:
Nature herself, with all Her store,
Can furnish such a pomp for death no more.
Ye remnants of the sacred tribe,
Who feel the loss, come share the smart,
And mix your groans with mine:
Where is the tongue that can describe
Infinite things with equal art,
Or language so divine?"

I am your very affectionate brother,
J. Pawson

* * *

London, February 10th, 1797

My Dear Friend,

The dying sayings of those who have long adorned the gospel of Christ by a holy life and conversation, and more especially when they have faithfully preached that gospel to mankind, are highly esteemed by the children of God of all denominations: this consideration has induced me to add some further particulars respecting our much-lamented friend Mr. Hanby.

Being earnestly pressed by our friends at Nottingham to go over and preach a sermon on that mournful occasion, I very reluctantly took a journey to that house of sorrow. My mind, indeed, was much afflicted for the death of my friend; for which reason, as well as for others, I judged myself to be a very improper person to undertake such a work: but I yielded to the importunity of the people, being glad to find that they entertained a sincere regard for him who had faithfully labored among them. By so doing, I had an opportunity to speak in the name of the Lord to crowded congregations, to drop a tear over the grave of my dear friend, and I also learned the following particulars concerning him

On the Tuesday after Mr. Hanby was taken ill, he desired his eldest daughter to read to him the 16th chapter of St. John's gospel. It is well known that this, and the chapters connected therewith, are peculiarly affecting, as they contain the last solemn discourse which our Lord delivered while upon earth, as well as His last prayer with His disciples. Many dying Christians have desired these chapters to be read to them.

On Wednesday evening a friend said, "I hope you find that the Lord is good to you." He replied, "The Lord is my rock; upon what He hath done and suffered is all my dependence; His precious death and intercession is all my hope." At another time he said, "The Lord is better and better to me: He has taken away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Sensibly feeling his own weakness, he said, "Helpless, poor, and needy, but "Whosoever cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out;" -- and added, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they shall comfort me. I will fear no evil." Being in extreme pain, he said, "This is great work." One who was present asked, "What is great work?" He replied, "Dying work is great work."

On Thursday afternoon, when very near death, he said, " 'I am the resurrection and the life,' saith the Lord: 'whosoever believeth in Me, though he was dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.' Believe ye this?" Mrs. Hanby, seeing, with the deepest sorrow, the dissolution of her best friend hastening on apace, said, "Can you speak to me?" He replied, "Yes, I can tell you to cast your care upon the Lord, for He careth for you: He will be a Father to the fatherless, and a Husband to the widow."

Although his pain was very acute, yet his understanding was quite clear to the last; so that he could readily quote the above remarkably pertinent passages of that blessed word of God which he had so greatly delighted in for many years, and no doubt found it spirit and life to his soul.

May we follow him as he followed Christ, that in due time we also may depart in peace, our eyes having seen the salvation of God.

So prays your affectionate friend,
J. Pawson

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ON MR. THOMAS HANBY, PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL
By A Young Lady

Soldier of Christ, farewell! thy race is run,
Thou' hast kept the faith, and nobly served thy Lord,
Fought the good fight, the glorious victory won,
And now hast enter'd on thy great reward.

Departed saint! and shall we mourn thy flight?
Or bid our breasts with holy triumph swell
To greet thy entrance on the realms of light,
Check the full tear, the bursting sigh repel?

The crown of righteousness is now thine own;
Thine to behold our God's unclouded face;
With heavenly harps before the eternal throne,

To join the Wesleys in the songs of praise.

Yet why from numbers drops the gushing tear?
Scotia, your valued friend has Jordan cross'd:
Yes; weep, ye children of his faith and prayer,
Another father hath our Israel lost.

But, no!-- hold fast your hope unto the end:
You shall be stars to glitter in his crown;
You shall with him the heavenly mount ascend
In God's great day, his ministry to own.

The Lord who first our spreading churches raised,
Will still vouchsafe His all-sufficient grace,
To bless the assemblies where His name is praised,
And bid another fill our Hanby's place.

Call'd by Jehovah in the bloom of youth
The hallow'd standard of the cross to raise,
Boldly he preach'd the gospel's sacred truth,
The joyful tidings of unbounded grace.

His bosom glowing with celestial love,
He calmly suffer'd persecution's ire,
Repaid his enemies with prayers, and strove
To pluck the brands from everlasting fire.

A true expounder of the sacred word,
The weak he strengthen'd, and the careless warn'd;
Cut to the heart, the trembling sinner heard
The awful judgments of that God he scorn'd.

A lively preacher more than forty years,
He faithfully fulfill'd his high behest:
Rear'd by his pious ministerial cares,
Lo, ransom'd thousands rise to call him bless'd.

Call'd by his Master to the painful test,
He nobly bore the consecrated cross.
You who have known the virtues he possess'd,
Alone can fully estimate his loss.

Just granted here to hail Immanuel's birth,
Then summon'd to behold His face above,
To join in heaven the ransom'd sons of earth,
And share the purchase of redeeming love.

Disrobed of all his terrors, Death drew nigh,
Behind a band of shining seraphs stood,
He pointed Hanby to the opening sky,
And dipt his dart in the atoning blood.

The faithful Christian felt the stingless wound,
And to his God resign'd his fleeting breath,
Beheld heaven's portals through the gloom around,
And shouted "Victory!" in the arms of death.

O bless'd conclusion of a glorious race!
The goal attain'd, the promised prize is given:
With holy joy thy blissful soul we trace,
Escaped from earth to happiness and heaven.

A. R. C.

* * * * *

Part 5
THE LIFE OF MR. ALEXANDER MATHER
Written by Himself

Letter To The Rev. John Wesley

Rev. Sir,

1. I was born at Brechin, in North Britain, in February, 1733, of reputable parents, who made it their business to bring me up in the fear of God. They instructed me early in the principles of religion, and took particular care to keep me from evil company: so that, when I grew up, I was an utter stranger to the vices common among men. And I took pleasure in reading good books, and learning our catechisms by heart. When I was at the Latin school, it was the custom of our master every Lord's day, after the evening service, to hear what we could remember of the sermons, and to pray with us. Under one of his prayers, (when I was about ten years old,) I was struck with strong convictions; and these never quite left me, but I always retained a desire to be a Christian.

2. Soon after this, out of a childish frolic, I went away with a party of the rebels. But I knew not what I did. I hereby exposed myself to many hardships and dangers. But the Lord delivered me out of all. Many mighty ones fell on Culloden-heath, and in the way to Inverness, and indeed on every side; yet I was mercifully preserved. But when I came near my father's house, there was no entrance for me; and I knew not where to go, till my mother resolved to take me to a relation of hers, near Perth.

3. We had a large river to cross, which was much swelled by the late rains. We were just got into the boat, when a gentleman on horseback came and begged us to stay and take him in,

which we accordingly did. He seemed much fatigued. My mother desired me to hold his horse, which I did, twisting the bridle round my hand. When we were about the middle of the river, the horse took fright, and leaped out of the boat, taking me and the oars and both the boatmen with him; so that none were left in the boat, but my mother and the gentleman, without any means of helping themselves. The horse swam to the opposite shore, dragging me with him; then turned back, and swam to the shore we had left. He then jumped out, pulling me just above the water; but I there lost my hold, and fell back into the river. It carried me down, rolling me over and over, till it brought me to the side of the boat, which was strangely got to the same shore. They caught hold of me, and pulled me in.

4. Here I cannot but remark several providential incidents: (1) That both the boatmen should get safe to that side of the water. (2) Yet, when they were there, they should be able to get the boat, with my mother and the gentleman safe in it. (3) Yet the horse did not leave me on the opposite side, where to all appearance I must have perished. (4) Yet, notwithstanding the impetuosity of the stream, the horse should reach the land above the boat. Had it been below, I had probably been lost. I admire above all, the exact timing of every circumstance! Had I been brought to the same side first, I could have had no help: had the boatmen reached the opposite side, they in the boat could have had none. And had any of us been carried but a little lower, we must inevitably have been swallowed up in a whirlpool.

5. After having thrown up much water, I was so far recovered as to be able to take boat again. And having got safe over, we traveled twelve Scotch miles (eighteen English) before night. But we could not travel without much danger, as the country was full of parties, both horse and foot, who abused all the strangers they met with, and often took them prisoners. When we came near a town, we inquired of one we met where we could have a quiet lodging. She said, she could recommend us to no inn; for they would inform the soldiers of us, who were very rude to all strangers, especially to women; but if we would put up with the house of a poor man, she knew one that she thought would receive us. So she conducted us to a little cottage, where we found the man engaged in family worship. When it was ended, he looked upon my mother, and said, "Good wife, I have no place fit to entertain you, who appear to have a good home somewhere. Neither can I protect you, if the soldiers hear you are in my house. But if you please to sit by the fire, with a little straw for the lad to lie on, you are welcome." They then gave us something to eat and drink, which we received with thankfulness to God. The good woman then laid me down on the straw, and sat by my mother till the morning; when, having been commended to God in prayer by our host, we went on our journey.

6. My mother's brother was a considerable farmer, in the Carse of Gowry, near Perth. Thither we got before sunset, and were kindly received, till my mother told him her design of leaving me there. But his wife opposed it much, fearing lest, if it was discovered, they should be ruined for harboring me. However, my uncle, seeing the distress my mother was in, overruled her, and said I should stay. And the next morning he sent a servant with my mother, who saw her safe home.

7. I stayed the Sunday at my uncle's. But on Monday morning, before sunrise, he called me, (his wife having prevailed,) and told me, "You must go hence." So I set off with one to guide me across the mountains. He then left me, to find my way as I could, to a place and a person I had

never heard of before; but I had a line to the man. Providence brought me to the place; but the man was not at home. However, he came the next day, and received me kindly. Here I stayed till about midsummer, and then removed to a distant relation's, where I stayed till November. It was then judged I might go home safely; but when I came, my father would not let me come into his house. Nay, he went and made information against me to the commanding officer; and I should have been sent to prison, had not a gentleman of the town interfered for me, and procured leave for me to lodge at my father's house. In the morning a file of musketeers came to take me into custody, and brought me to the officer. After asking many questions, he told me, "You may go home." But, when I came to the door, the soldiers, not knowing his order, were going to carry me to prison; till he looked out of the window, and bade them let me go. However, my father would not put me to school any more, but kept me to his business, that of baking.

8. I continued with my father till the beginning of May, 1751; when, being well acquainted with my business, I determined to go abroad. I set out with another young man, who was engaged in Perth. Here a place was provided for me in a pious family, where I remained till after Christmas. Two persons then came from London, with one of whom I contracted an intimate acquaintance. One Lord's day she asked me to go with her to the Episcopal meeting. It affected me much, and from that time I attended it whenever I could. And I cannot but say, it was of great use to my soul, and has proved so ever since.

9. About this time I formed a purpose of going to London; and having taken leave of my relations, we set sail from Montrose about the middle of June, 1752. When I came to London, I knew no one there; but the kind hand of God was over me. I found a brother of my father's, who, being of the same trade, took me to work with him, till he procured me a place in a serious family at Billingsgate. But as I was a foreigner, my master was summoned to Guildhall, and obliged to put me away. In a little time I got me another place, near Whitechapel-bars. And as I was strong and active, my master persuaded me to engage for a year certain. Afterwards he did not use me well: till one day, being in a passion, he ordered me instantly to quit his house; which I immediately did.

10. In the year 1753 my present wife, who was born near where I was, and had lived several years with my parents in my infancy, heard I was in London, and resolved to see me. We had not seen one another for many years, and were both glad of the meeting; and as I was then out of place, we had opportunity of seeing each other frequently. On February 14th we were married. I had then forgot the resolutions I had often made of living wholly to God, whenever I should marry; but He soon brought them back to my remembrance, by laying affliction upon my wife. I now began to be in good earnest for salvation. I bought up all opportunities for prayer. I resolved to break through all opposition, and to serve God with all my heart.

11. But it still lay heavy upon my mind, that I had not performed my vow of praying with my wife. And my convictions increased day by day, till my appetite was gone, and my sleep departed from me; my bones were filled as with a sore disease, and my tears were my meat day and night. I now broke through, and prayed with my wife; and we never after left the practice. It was not long after this, that she knew God to be a pardoning God. And all that summer we continued praying and striving together, and steadily walking in all the ordinances of God.

12. After living at Hampstead some time, I removed to a place in St. Katherine's. While I was here, I was one day going hastily along the street, and a loaded cart stood in it, which nearly filled it up. However, I went on, thinking I could get by; but just as I was going by, it moved, caught my basket, crushed me up against the wall, and dragged me along till we came against a shop window, which gave way, and released me. Every one that saw it supposed I should be crushed to death, or at least that my arms or legs would be broken. But I received no hurt at all, besides a little bruise on the back of my hand.

13. In September, 1753, I was hired to Mr. Marriott. Our meeting was not expected on either side: he had been inquiring the character of another, which he did not approve of; and I was inquiring for a master, when he came and asked me if I was out of place. I answered, "Yes." He asked if I would keep good hours; which I promised to do. So we agreed, and I entered upon his service. Here I found what I had long desired, a family wherein was the worship of God. This stirred me up to be more earnest in seeking Him; to be exact in praying by myself every morning, and with my wife every afternoon. And we continued seeking Him with our whole heart, and shunning whatever we thought offensive to Him. We used, likewise, every means of grace. I have sometimes gone to my knees when I was going to bed, and have continued in that position till two o'clock, when I was called to go to work.

14. My wife had some time since found a degree of peace with God. But I could find no peace; nor could I tell what hindered, unless it were the baking of pans, as they called it, on Sundays. I would gladly have refrained from this, but then I must have left my place; and I had no hope of finding another place which would not have been liable to the same inconvenience. However, I resolved, as soon as Christmas was over, to give up my place at all events. Meantime my flesh consumed away, like as a moth fretting a garment. And my bones were ready to start through my skin; for I had no rest day or night. The following Sunday, my wife and I ventured for the first time to the holy communion; and I found some comfort; but the sense of my profaning the Sabbath soon took it away. I now resolved to delay no longer than the next day, being willing to suffer rather than to sin. Accordingly on Monday morning, as soon as my master came down stairs, I gave him warning: he did not then speak one word; but soon after he came into the shop, and asked me if I had got another place. I answered, "No." He said, "Why, then, would you leave this?" I answered, "Because I dare not commit sin by breaking the Sabbath, as I have done." He used many arguments with me, but in vain. I told him, "I must abide by the word of God, whatever be the consequence; but I will not go away till you suit yourself with another man."

15. God now gave me much confidence, and I found much power to pray, that if it was not His will we should part, He would incline my master to give it up. And the same day he went, with a neighboring baker, to all of the trade in Shoreditch and Bishopsgate without, proposing that they should all enter into an agreement to give it up at once. All but two agreed. He then advertised for a meeting of master-bakers upon the subject; but nothing could be concluded. Afterwards, I supposed, he asked the advice of our brethren at the Foundry. After he had taken all these steps, more than I could reasonably expect, he told me, "I have done all I can, and now I hope you will be content." I sincerely thanked him for what he had done, but told him I could not stay any longer than till he had suited himself. But I continued in prayer. And on Sunday evening, after family worship, he stopped me, and said, "I have done today what will please you: I have stayed at home and told all my customers I will no more bake on a Sunday." I told him, "If you have done this out of

conscience toward God, be assured it will end well." And so it did. That very year his trade considerably increased. And he had a large augmentation of his fortune, so that he was enabled to relieve many that were in want, and also to lay up abundance for his children. May they herein tread in their father's steps!

16. He then asked me, how I came to scruple baking on Sundays. And I told him simply how God had dealt with my soul. And I believe it was then he first felt that affection for me, which continued to his dying day. (From that time both he and my good mistress were particularly kind to me and mine; and when, some years after, my station in London placed me in some sense over them, there were none in the society that more fully submitted to every branch of discipline.) It was then he asked me to go with him to the Foundery, which I did at five the next morning. When I came back, I told my wife where I had been. It grieved her much, as she believed all the idle reports she had heard; many of which she rehearsed, and added, "Now our peace is broken for ever." This stirred me up to be more earnest in prayer, but did not prevent my going every morning. On Sunday she was persuaded to go with me, though much afraid of my being drawn into some wrong way. John Nelson preached an alarming discourse, which I hoped would affect her much. But, on the contrary, she was much disgusted, saying, "He has shown me the way to hell; and not the way to get out of it. But I thank God, He has shown me that Jesus Christ is the way; and has brought me out of it too." [This wording is puzzling, the way it reads. -- DVM] However, she went again the next Sunday. Mr. Charles Wesley then preached, and described the whole process of the work of God in the soul. She followed him step by step, till he came to the abiding witness of adoption, and here he left her behind. She was now both pleased and profited, and we now went on hand in hand in the ways of God. But still I did not find the Spirit of adoption, though I sought it diligently, continuing instant in prayer, and attending the word every morning and evening. Indeed, this was not without difficulty; for I had no time for either but what I took from my sleep, which should have been from six to ten in the evening, and from half-past four to six in the morning. I now slept little and ate little, and the grief of my soul drank up my spirits. But yet I could not believe, though I continued in prayer and supplication day and night, seeking God in sincerity of heart, and carefully departing from evil.

17. About this time my wife and I were permitted to stay at the meeting of one of the classes. I was much pleased and refreshed; but she said, "They had all agreed what to say, in order to catch us." Such is the folly of prejudice! It was soon after this that you returned from the Bristol Hot-wells, (being just recovered from your consumption,) namely, on Easter-eve, 1754. The next day you preached at West-street, April 14th: it was the first time I ever saw or heard you. Under that sermon God set my heart at liberty, removing my sins from me, as far as the east is from the west: which the very change of my countenance testified, before my tongue could utter it. I had no great transport of joy; but my load was gone, and I could praise God from the ground of my heart, all my sorrow, and fear, and anguish of spirit, being changed into a solid peace.

18. But on Monday, in the afternoon, as I was going along, I began to think, "You fancy your sins are forgiven, but you are deceived." I had but a little time given way to these thoughts, before I was quite miserable. And when I got home, my wife immediately asked, "What is the matter with you?" I said, "Matter enough: I have deceived my own soul. I wish I had my sorrow again." She strongly urged me not to reason, but believe; to look unto Jesus, as giving Himself for me. I was encouraged. I soon recovered my peace, which, by the mercy of God, I have not lost

since: Soon after we both joined the society, and met in brother Goode's class: and this, among all the means of grace, was peculiarly useful to my soul.

19. About this time my elder brother, who used the sea, after being wrecked, got his passage to London. He was easily convinced of sin, and soon after converted to God. So being all of one heart and one mind, we rejoiced in God all the day long. But it was not long before I had strong impressions upon my mind, that God had called me to preach. I mentioned this in my band, after I had often sought God by fasting and prayer. We set apart some days for the same exercises. Afterwards they advised me to mention it to you. You said, "This is a common temptation among young men. Several have mentioned it to me. But the next thing I hear of them is, that they are married, or upon the point of it." I said, "Sir, I am married already." You said, "Care not for it; but seek God by fasting and prayer." I answered, "This I have done." You strongly recommended patience and perseverance therein; and said, you doubted not but God would soon make the way plain before my face.

20. Soon after you appointed me to be the leader of a band, and in a little time of a class. And God blessed me in both: but this did not at all alter my conviction that I must preach; nay, it grew stronger and stronger, till, having no rest day or night, I was constrained to come to you again, and tell you just what I felt. You told me, "To be a Methodist preacher is not the way to ease, honor, pleasure, or profit. It is a life of much labor and reproach. They often fare hard, often are in want. They are liable to be stoned, beaten, and abused in various manners. Consider this before you engage in so uncomfortable a way of life." I replied, I had no desire to engage therein, unless it was the call of God; and I did not regard what I suffered, in doing the will of God. You said, "You may then make a trial tomorrow morning at Snowfields chapel." I did so. The Monday following you appointed me for Wapping chapel, and for the Foundery on Tuesday morning. It was near ten at night when I received the message. I soon went to work, but was engaged in meditation and prayer for assistance all the time I was making my dough. As soon as I had done, (the rest of the family being in bed,) I went to prayer, in which I found great liberty. I then read in my Bible to find a text, and continued reading and praying, till two o'clock. It was then time to call my fellow-servant, and we went to work together, being employed, as usual, till near four, in preparing the bread for the even. All this time I was still in meditation and prayer, but could not fix upon a text. Soon after four he went to bed again, and I went to prayer, till a quarter before five, when I went to the Foundery, but with much fear and trembling; and when I took up the Hymn-Book, I was so faint, that I could not speak so as to be understood. The people therefore could not sing; and as I was no singer, we were all at a stand. This did not a little increase my agitation, which was so great that I could not keep one of my joints from shaking. However, in a while I went on; and after prayer, opened the Bible on those words, "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God with your body and spirit, which are God's." I now left the determination of this weighty affair with you, desiring that if you judged I was called of God to preach, you would employ me, (as my business would permit,) just when and where you pleased.

21. In a little time I was more employed than my strength would well allow. I had no time for preaching, but what I took from my sleep; so that I had frequently not eight hours of sleep in a week. This, with hard labor, constant abstemiousness, and frequent fasting, brought me so low, that in a little more than two years I was hardly able to follow my business. My master was often afraid I should kill myself: and perhaps his fear was not groundless. I have frequently put off my

shirts as wet with sweat as if they had been dipped in water. After hastening to finish by business abroad, I have come home all on a sweat in the evening, changed my clothes, and run to preach at one or another chapel: then walked or run back, changed my clothes, and gone to work at ten, wrought hard all night, and preached at five the next morning. I ran back to draw the bread at a quarter or half an hour past six; wrought hard in the bakehouse till eight; then hurried about with the bread till the afternoon, and perhaps at night set off again.

22. It is true, I need not have continued so long in this way. For you proposed my going to Ireland with you, as a traveling preacher, in the beginning of March, 1756. I cheerfully agreed thereto, as you promised my wife should be provided for in my absence. This I mentioned to one of my friends, who said, "No doubt he intends it; but when he is gone, the stewards will do as they please;" adding, "How can you labor in Ireland, while your wife is starving here?" I thought, however, I will talk with the stewards myself. I did so; and Mr. Broelts and Hobbins asked, "What will be sufficient for your wife?" I answered, "Four shillings a week." But this they were unwilling to allow. So I remained at my business, till another pointed out, which I followed till August, 1757. It was then agreed that I should travel, and that my wife should have that fixed allowance. This was the beginning of that settlement for preachers' wives, which (with the addition of forty shillings a year) continues to this day.

23. I was appointed for Epworth circuit in Lincolnshire; which then included the Gainsborough, Grimsby, and Sheffield circuits. I left London, August 15th, 1757, to walk to Epworth, about a hundred and fifty miles. My fellow-laborers were Thomas Hanby, Thomas Tobias, and afterwards Thomas Lee. It pleased God to give me much of His presence in my own soul, and to let me see some fruit of my labor. This supported me under the various exercises I met with. The first of these was at Rotherham, where John Thorpe, one of our local preachers, had just separated from us. He declared open war against us, particularly opposing what he called "my perfection." Yet it pleased God to raise up many witnesses of it; many that loved Him with all their hearts; several of whom are burning and shining lights, and several removed into Abraham's bosom. Yea, it was observed, that some of his own hearers, even while he was preaching against salvation from sin, were fully convinced of the necessity of it; and indeed never rested more till they were happy witnesses of it.

24. In autumn I was desired to go to Boston. I did so, and preached in a field on a Sunday evening, with tolerable quietness. The next time I went, Mr. Alwood and I judged it would be best to be in the market-place.. We began singing, when suddenly a large mob appeared, with a drum beating before them: meantime a great number of squibs [fireworks] were thrown among the people. Finding it was impossible to be heard, we purposed going to a friend's about a mile from the town. The moment we turned our backs, the dirt and stones flew like hail on every side. On the bridge, a man stopped us; but we broke from him, and went on, with the mob at our heels, throwing all that came to hand. Their number continually increasing, we thought it would be most advisable to face them, and try to get back to the town, where we had left our horses. My two companions immediately leaped over a wide ditch, which divided the field. But before I could follow them, one of the mob, coming behind me, struck up my heels, and gave me a violent fall. When I got up, my friends were out of sight, and the mob surrounded me on every side. I knew not which way to go, neither indeed how to go at all, being exceeding weak and spent, both with the fall and the many blows I had received. Being a little recovered, I tried to go through them, to a foot-bridge

that was over the ditch. They forbore throwing till I drew near the bridge, and then all cried out, "Ditch him, ditch him." And just on the side of the ditch one struck up my heels again. Yet he stood by me, and let me rise up, and walk quietly over the bridge. There I was in the middle of the mob, and had a large field to go through, parted from the road by high rails, which had a broad ditch on either side. When I came to the rails, I knew not how to get over, my breath being almost spent; and, if I could, I saw no likelihood of escaping the being thrown into the ditch: however, they let me crawl over, without much hurt. But as soon as I was on the road, the same person who stopped us on the bridge collared me, to drag me to the horse-pond, while the rest plastered me over afresh with dirt. But just as we came to the pond, a gentleman called out to him that held me, "Let the man go." He immediately let go his hold, and I passed by the pond.

25. I had still to walk through the whole town, my horse being at the far end of it. When I came into the street, they got the dirt out of the kennels, and threw it in my face. As no door was open to take me in, I was obliged now and then to turn and face them, (otherwise they seldom looked me in the face,) in order to get breath. When I came into the market-place, there was a general shout for the glorious victory. Before I got to the inn, I was just ready to lie down, when one struck me violently, in order to strike up my heels. But I kept my feet, I know not how; which I looked upon as a great mercy, as such a fall upon the stones might have done me much hurt. At the same time one threw a stone, which struck me on the temple. I then concluded, I must die in their hands. But, by the mercy of God, I was strangely brought through all the multitude, to the inn where I had alighted. Being sat down, my first thought was, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Indeed my mind (glory be to God!) was kept through the whole in perfect peace. By this time some of my friends, who had followed at a distance, were come in, and were washing my wound; when the mob came to the door, threatening what they would do to the house, if the landlord did not turn me out. He came in and said, "I cannot keep you here; for the mob will pull my house down." I told him, "Sir, I am in your house; but while I use it as an inn, it is mine. Turn me out at your peril. If you fear your house, apply to a magistrate for protection." He went to his landlord, who was a magistrate, and ordered him to take down the names of the chief rioters. After a while, I mounted my horse in the yard, and then, the gates being opened, rode through a shower of stones, and came safe to our friend's house. But I was so bruised, almost from head to foot, that when I was cold, I could hardly stir. And it was a full year before I quite recovered the hurts which I then received.

26. The next day I went back with a friend to the town. I soon found three of the rioters, to whom I could swear; but the rest were absconded. Hearing the justices were in the hall, we went thither without delay; and telling the clerk we had business with the court, we were speedily introduced. The chairman, after we had made our complaint, roughly said, "You are the aggressor. And now you have the impudence to come to us, requiring justice against others!" I answered, "I am here. If I have broken any law, inflict the penalty upon me. But, in the mean time, I require you, in His Majesty's name, to do justice upon these rioters." After more threats, I was desired to call upon one of them at his own house when the court was over. I did so, and he behaved exceedingly well, sending his serjeant for two of the rioters; one of whom brought his master to speak for him: but the justice told him plainly, "Either make it up with Mr. Mather, or I will send you to jail directly." They both then asked pardon, promised good behavior for the future, paid the expenses, and were dismissed. The third fled; but, a warrant being given, he was apprehended but upon the same terms he was released.

27. I cannot but remark another thing which happened this year. Nottingham had at this time no regular preaching. I had a strong desire to make a trial there, and came thither in the afternoon. At Matthew Bagshaw's I found John Johnson, of York, who said, "I am glad you are come; for here is a poor man, who is to die tomorrow, whose behavior is terrifying: he curses, swears, and threatens death to all that have given evidence against him; the jailer in particular. He will see no clergyman, but says he resolves to be a devil, that he may revenge himself. The minister has given me free leave to visit him. I went this morning; but he said, 'Give yourself no trouble about me. By this time tomorrow I shall be a devil, and then I will come and tear that villain in pieces.' " We immediately went to prayer, and vehemently wrestled with God on his behalf. After prayer, we went to him, and at first sight observed an entire change in his behavior. We inquired when this sudden change began, and found it was just while we were at prayer. But we had little opportunity of speaking to him, the minister (for whom he had sent) being just come: I could only say, as he passed by me heavily ironed, "Jesus Christ is both able and willing to strike off the heavier fetters of sin from your soul." He looked earnestly, but said nothing. We applied again to the throne of grace before and after the preaching; and likewise great part of the night. We went early in the morning, and he was brought to us in the parlor. We talked and prayed with him some time. After rising from prayer, he said to the jailer, "I now forgive and love you; and I hope, and pray, that you will forgive me." This was quickly noised about the town, which filled the yard with spectators, who crowded about the windows, which gave us an opportunity of speaking to them also. He now acknowledged the justice of his sentence, and was resigned to it, having a strong hope of finding mercy. We attended him into the yard, when his irons were knocked off, amidst a vast crowd, to whom we spake much on the occasion. Thence we accompanied him to the church, and afterwards to the cart, which stood at the gate, ready to receive him. But as he desired to walk between us, the sheriff gave him leave, and took much pains to keep off the crowd: at the end of the town, we sang part of that hymn,

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise!"

During the first three verses, he seemed lifted up;
but when we came to those word's in the fourth verse;

"His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood avail'd for me,"

he rejoiced with joy unspeakable. When we came to the place of execution, the minister prayed, and went away. The sheriff allowed us to pray with him again. And we committed his soul to God, in cheerful hope of meeting him again in Abraham's bosom.

28. In the year 1758, being stationed in Newcastle circuit, (which then reached as far as Musselborough,) I made a visit to Brechin, in my way to which I was seized with the bloody flux. As soon as I got home, I took my room. I was not able to come down stairs for a month. My wife was quite a stranger at Newcastle; but I could leave her and all things to God. I spoke freely to all who came to see me, not letting any escape out of my hands. Mr. Blair, the minister, came frequently; and his son, a physician, visited me several times a day. It was now I discharged the

clotted blood, which had lain in me ever since the riot at Boston. Yet I did not recover, till I prevailed on my mother to give me a large quantity of toast-and-water. The disorder was then presently stopped, and in a day or two I went down stairs.

29. The Sunday following, the sacrament was to be administered. I sent a line to Mr. Blair, and desired to be admitted to it, if it would not offend any of his parishioners. He immediately sent me a token, saying, "I will admit you, if they are all offended." I went on Sunday, the first day I was abroad. The service lasted from nine in the morning to five in the evening; but I received no hurt. The next morning I breakfasted at Mr. Blair's, with the minister that assisted at the sacrament. They were sensible, candid men. Mr. Blair desired me to give them an account of the work of God in England. But when I mentioned the greatness of the work, and the fewness of the laborers, he said, "Among so great a number of people, there must be many men of learning: why does not Mr. Wesley send them out?" This led me to mention the prerequisites of a Methodist preacher; namely, 1. A knowledge of God, as his God, as having pardoned all his sins. 2. A life and conversation suitable thereto. 3. A clear conviction that he was called of God to the work; otherwise he could not bear the crosses attending it. 4. Some fruit of his labor, in convincing and converting of sinners. Mr. Blair broke out, "If these are the prerequisites of a Methodist preacher, they must not come here for them." I preached twice before I left Brechin, to a vast concourse of people; and afterwards at Montrose; but I know not that it had any lasting effect, unless the removing of prejudice.

30. In 1759 I was stationed in York circuit, which then included Yarm, Scarborough, and Hull circuits. In this year the work at Whitby began, and we had a great outpouring of the Spirit in many places. The next year I was in Staffordshire, where it pleased God to work in a very eminent manner; at Darlaston in particular, where there was a small but steady society of long standing. Several of these had borne much persecution, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Ever since, their behavior has been unblamable: and yet none of them could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Some of these coming over to the prayer-meetings at Wednesbury, and hearing (what they thought they had never heard before) that they were to believe now; that they might come to Christ now, without any other qualification than a sense of their own sinfulness and helplessness; they were utterly astonished, and began to be amazed at their slowness of heart. Presently a prayer-meeting was set up at Darlaston. And in a little time many souls were set at liberty. The oldest stood out longest. After all they had done and suffered, they found it hard to come, as having done nothing. And when they were urged to it in a class or prayer meeting, they were ready to gnash with their teeth. But whether they would hear or forbear, God continued to add more and more souls to His genuine gospel. Nothing stood before it. Many of the servants and children of these old professors cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" Being pointed to the Lamb of God, they believed, and rejoiced in God their Saviour, to the utter astonishment of their unbelieving masters and parents. In one night it was common to see five or six (and sometimes more) praising God for His pardoning mercy. And not a few in Birmingham, Dudley, and Wolverhampton, as well as in Wednesbury and Darlaston, clearly testified, that the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed them from all sin.

31. Meantime the societies increased greatly. In Darlaston we purchased ground, and built a preaching-house; and in Birmingham we hired a large building. Satan was alarmed at this, and stirred up outward persecution, both at Birmingham and Wolverhampton. But it did us no hurt. Our

brethren went on, not counting their lives dear unto themselves. He then made the minds of some of the old Methodists evil affected towards their brethren. They began to speak much evil, particularly in their classes, of them and of this new doctrine. And any defect in these new converts (as they called them) was magnified to the utmost; and then brought as an undeniable proof that the whole matter was wrong. These were earnestly supported by Mr. J____s, formerly an itinerant, now a local preacher. To him they sent every tale that malice could invent, either against the work, or the instruments employed therein, my wife in particular; whom, indeed, God had been pleased to make eminently useful. This embarrassed me a little: however, we went on, and the work did not suffer much, till about the time of the Conference, when some of the preachers, going through the circuit, and hearing only one side, (though they might have heard both, as I was present,) both privately encouraged the opposition, and in their public discourses, dividing the people into the new and old believers, used many unkind expressions, to encourage the old and discourage the new believers, as they called them. This went hard with one that was not an old preacher, this being but the fourth year of my preaching, and the first of my acting as an assistant. However, by the grace of God, far less hurt was done than might reasonably have been expected.

32. As I wrote to you the most minute circumstances of the work, and you were there in the very height of it, you judged it best to place me in the circuit another year. But I made a false step in the beginning of it. Longing for peace, and preferring the judgment of other men to my own, I agreed that my wife should not hold any more prayer-meetings. Immediately the work began to decay, both as to its swiftness and extensiveness. And though I continued to insist as strongly as ever upon the same points, yet there was not the same effect, for want of seconding by prayer-meetings the blow which was given in preaching. Mr. Westell labored with me this year. We constantly attended Stroud and Painswick: at both places there was a large increase; as also in several other parts of the circuit, which then included Coventry and Shrewsbury.

33. After having been married near ten years, I had this year a son. May he prove a blessing to many, and a comfort to his parents! In May and June you desired me to visit Wales, and regulate the societies there. They were all then supplied by Mr. Taylor, who was exceedingly useful among them. But the people in general were difficult to get, and more so to keep, in society. In many places, however, they joined together; and not a few of them remain to this day.

34. In 1763 God revived His work in the Staffordshire circuit, especially at Birmingham; notwithstanding the disturbance which we constantly had during the preaching, and the danger of being murdered by the mob, when we came out of the house. No magistrate could quell the rioters; or rather, I should say, none would. For it is certain, any magistrate has power to preserve the peace, if he will. But at length Mr. Wortly Birch took them in hand: he laid some of the rioters in the dungeon, and left them there a night or two to cool. He fined the rest according to law; obliged them to pay the money down, and gave it to the poor. By this means their stout spirits were humbled, and we have had peace ever since. This year a preaching house was built at Stroud; and another at Wolverhampton. But this was not long-lived; for soon after the mob assembled, and pulled it down to the ground.

35. They had reigned here for a long time, insomuch that it was difficult for a Methodist to pass the streets. And now one could hardly appear in them but at the hazard of his life. The rioters

had broken most of their windows, and swore they would pull down their houses, and every preaching-house near. Hearing of this at Stroud, I rode over immediately, and found the whole country in terror, as they expected every night the mob from Wolverhampton, to pull down the preaching-houses at Dudley, Darlaston, and Wednesbury, with the houses of the Methodists. They came first to Darlaston, a place long famous for rioting, hoping to meet with good encouragement. But a hog-butcher, who lived near the house, hearing the alarm, leaped out of bed, seized his cleaver, and running out, swore death to the first that meddled with it. So unexpected a reception quite discouraged them, and made them run away faster than they came. Here we saw the good effect which the late revival had upon the town in general. There were few left who would either persecute themselves, or suffer others to do it.

36. But Wolverhampton itself was still in a flame. A friend who was to accompany me to the town had procured a pair of pocket-pistols, and offered me one. But I told him, "No; I am in God's work, and trust to His protection. And you must return your pistols, or I cannot accept of your company." He did so. When I came to the end of the town, the alarm was quickly spread. So that before we came into the main street, we had company enough. But they were restrained, so that we received little abuse, further than bad language. I immediately went to the justice, who granted a warrant; but the constable gave notice of it to the rioters, so that none was taken: some fled; some hid themselves; the rest set justice at defiance. This occasioned several neighboring justices to fix a day for meeting in the town. When they met, several of the rioters were brought before them. Three were bound over to appear at Stafford, where all the magistrates gave attendance. The proof against the rioters was full: yet the honorable jury acquitted them all!

37. This gave them fresh spirits: so they hasted home with ribbons flying, and were saluted with bells and bonfires, in one of which they burned me and my friend in effigy. Our friends now found it more dangerous than ever to come into the town, or get to their houses. Before I left Stafford, I waited on lord D____, with Mr. Hayes, attorney, the person who prepared the mob, and himself made the first breach in the house. I told him plain, "Either let Mr. Hayes rebuild the house, or we will try him for his life." He promised it should be rebuilt in such a time; and it was built accordingly. So did God deliver us out of this complicated trouble. And all the time His work prospered.

38. But what could not be done by persecution has been done by those who brought in a new doctrine among us. This soon checked, and has now well-nigh destroyed, both the root and branch of vital religion. They who receive this new light, not only despise and speak evil of those that begat them to God, but even deny the reality of that unspeakable blessing which they then received. They say, "We were then blind, and knew nothing." Happy ignorance! which enabled them to endure reproach, pain, want; yea, to carry their lives in their hands, counting nothing dear, but to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.

39. In August, 1770, I was stationed in Bristol circuit. Here I met with various exercises. But I was more than conqueror, and good was done in Bristol, and in several other places; particularly at Bath, where they were obliged first to enlarge, and then to gallery, the preaching-house. In the spring I was called to Monmouth, to open a preaching-house, which was duly licensed. We preached with tolerable quietness till Sunday evening. The church wardens then came before me, went in, and shut the doors. Meantime the street was all in an uproar: I went on

with Mrs. Hern and Miss Fortune, (my only companions,) till we met the mob, who opened to the right and left, and let us pass to the door. It was shut, but in a while I prevailed to have it opened. And one of them asked what authority I had to preach. I asked, who he was. He said, "The church warden." "Then you have no authority to question me. I shall not show mine, but to a proper person. And I desire you will either behave well, or withdraw." Another said, "Sir, will you show it me? I am the chief constable." I answered, "Sir, I will." While he was reading, the church warden looked over him, and said, "O sir, this will not do." I said, "Sir, it will do for me; and I require all of you who stay, to behave in a becoming manner." The chief constable then withdrew; but the crowd was so great, that they could not half get in. And those without were so noisy, that nothing could be heard. So after a time I judged it best to withdraw.

40. In the evening the mayor sent desiring me to attend him in the morning at the Town Hall. I went. Soon after came the mayor, the clerk of the peace, and all the chief men of the town. The rector and curate used some harsh words. The other gentlemen behaved civilly. But they asked so many questions, and spoke so many at a time, it was impossible to answer. I said, "Gentlemen, be pleased to speak one at a time." But this could not be done. Only they all agreed in desiring me to promise, that I would come no more. I told them, I would make no such promise; no, not if my life depended upon it. So we parted as we met, and the next day I got safe to Bristol.

41. In 1773 I was stationed at Canterbury. During my stay in this circuit we had a fair prospect of doing good at Gravesend. The congregations were large, and not a few appeared to be much affected. The society increased, and all things were in a flourishing condition, till a poor creature, one George Gould, appeared, who at first came as one of our friends. But no sooner had he gained the affections of the people, than he pulled off the mask, and preached Calvinism. And hereby such a wound was given to the society, as is not healed to this day.

42. In the year 1777 I was appointed for the Colne circuit. It was not long before, that the gallery in the preaching-house, being full of people, had fallen flat to the ground. And though no one was killed; yet some limbs were broken, and many poor people bruised. This obliged me to travel through many societies, in order to defray those large expenses, of taking care of those that were hurt, and rebuilding the gallery, as well as building and furnishing a house for the preacher. But whatever fatigue I had was abundantly made up by the kindness and liberality of our brethren.

43. Having prepared the materials for the preaching-house at Padiham, the next year, on the 1st of October we laid the foundation. But a person pretending a claim to the ground, when the wall was about a yard high, threw a part of it down. We bore this outrage, and proceeded in the work. This emboldened him to engage three masons, who came in the night, when the roof was on, wrested out the sides of both doors with the lintels, with a yard of the wall above. They broke the sides of the two large windows, near three feet on each side; they then made a large hole in the pillar between the two windows, intending to throw down the house. But suddenly such a panic seized them, that first one and then the other stopped short and ran away. These returned no more. But their employer, with the third man, resolved to finish their work. Presently he was himself struck with a fear of being killed, and ran away, dragging his fellow with him.

44. Being averse to law, we bore this also: but we set a watch on the house every night, till it was covered in and licensed, in hopes we should then be quiet. But on December the 21st he

brought two men at eleven in the forenoon, with a pickaxe and a crow, and directed them to begin at one of the doors, which was not quite repaired. The workmen stood amazed: but several of the townsmen quickly came to the place, two of whom were remarkably weak men, and one of them lame besides. One laid hold of the pickaxe, and one on the crow. They that held them were stout men, the terror of the country. Many took part on each side. I was in my room, and at first thought not to stir out. But fearing mischief might be done, I sent for a constable, and myself walked to the chapel. The young man was struggling with him that held the pickaxe, to whom I spoke, and he promised to be quiet. Meantime some took the crow from the other man, which their employer observing, struck a lad that helped them. He returned the blow. A battle ensued, wherein the gentleman was worsted, and rolled in the dirt.

45. Finding there was no other way, I procured a warrant from sergeant Aspinwall, for the chief rioters. This was served immediately. The next morning we waited upon him, at his house, and he bound them all over to the assizes. But I recollecting that Mr. W___n had said before the sergeant, he was willing to refer the whole affair to him, I sent him word, I was willing too; and desired him to name the time and place. But he would do neither. After preaching at Millend in the evening, I went to bed; but my sleep departed from me. However, I rose as usual; but before I went out of my room, I heard a knocking at the door. It was one from Padiham, who mournfully cried out, "O sir, we are all ruined! Mr. W___n has got a warrant for seven-and-twenty of us, and you are the first in it. We must all be at the segeant's by noon." I told him, I would be there. As soon as I came, I saw Mr. W___n just going into the yard. I followed him close, to the great joy of my friends. We were near forty in number. The sergeant coming to the door, I asked why I was summoned. He answered, "For a riot." I said, "Sir, you cannot but know that Mr. W. has done this out of mere litigiousness. But why should we trouble the whole country with our affairs? Cannot we settle it between ourselves?" To this Mr. W. agreed. So, as we had no bonds of arbitration ready, we both signed a memorandum to the same effect. The poor people then went home in peace. After some difficulties the bonds were signed; and after hearing all parties, the sergeant's sentence was, (1) That the ground (part of which we had purchased) should be equally divided between us and Mr. W.; and, (2) That he should pay us five pounds for the damage which he had done. Thus we were at length delivered out of our trouble, and peace re-established at Padiham.

46. What I may meet with hereafter, I know not: I can only say, I find it in my heart to spend and be spent for God, in promoting His glory and the salvation of men. To that end I am determined still to preach the whole Methodist doctrine, and to see that the discipline, to which God has led us, be executed in all its branches. I see more and more, that where it is not executed, little lasting good is done. I know this is not the way of ease, nor the way to popularity. But as I set out without a view to either, so I hope to continue, by the grace of God.

I remain

Your affectionate and dutiful son in the gospel,
Alexander Mather

* * *

After reading and considering the foregoing account, I observed to Mr. Mather, that he had wholly omitted one considerable branch of his experience, touching what is properly termed "the

great salvation." He wrote me a full and particular answer, the substance of which I have subjoined.

"I answer, 1. With regard to the time and place, it was at Botherham, in the year 1757, that I enjoyed it in a far larger degree than I ever did before, or do now. And although my situation the next year laid many hindrances in the way, yet I both preached it plainly, and strongly encouraged those that had before experienced it, and such as professed to receive it at that time, either at Sunderland or elsewhere. This I continued to do in 1759 and 1760: in which time many were made partakers of it, in York, at and near Pocklington, in Hull, and various other places. It was the enjoyment of this which supported me in the trials I met with at Wednesbury in the two following years; during which, many were added to the witnesses of it in Birmingham, Dudley, Darlaston, Wolverhampton, and Wednesbury. It was my own experience which emboldened me to assert it, even where it was opposed by our chief members, partly because of the faults of some that professed it; but chiefly because of the natural enmity of their hearts to God.

"What I had experienced in my own soul was an instantaneous deliverance from all those wrong tempers and affections which I had long and sensibly groaned under; an entire disengagement from every creature, with an entire devotedness to God: and from that moment, I found an unspeakable pleasure in doing the will of God in all things. I had also a power to do it, and the constant approbation both of my own conscience and of God. I had simplicity of heart, and a single eye to God, at all times and in all places; with such a fervent zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls, as swallowed up every other care and consideration. Above all, I had uninterrupted communion with God, whether sleeping or waking. O that it were with me, as when the candle of the Lord thus shone upon my head! While I call it to mind, my soul begins to wing its way toward that immediate enjoyment of God. May it never be retarded, but press into the glorious liberty, which is equally free for all the sons of God.

"As to the manner wherein this work was wrought, 1. After I was clearly justified, I was soon made sensible of my want of it. For although I was enabled to be very circumspect, and had a continual power over outward and inward sin, yet I felt in me what I knew was contrary to the mind which was in Christ, and what hindered me from enjoying and glorifying Him as I saw it was the privilege of a child of God to do. And such I knew myself to be, both from the fruit and the witness of His Spirit; which I felt in a strong degree, supporting me in conflicts of a very close and particular nature. 2. My conviction of the need of a farther change was abundantly increased by the searching preaching of Mr. Walsh, of blessed memory. This kept my conscience very tender, even to a degree of scrupulosity; and helped me to be much in private prayer, and kept me watching thereunto. 3. When I saw my call to preach, the difficulties attending that office showed me more and more the need of such a change, that I might bear all things: and by searching the Scriptures, I saw the possibility of it more clearly, and was stirred up to seek it more earnestly. 4. When I began traveling, I had no end, aim, or design, but to spend and be spent for God; not counting my life or any thing dear, so I might finish my course with joy; which indeed I expected would be very short, as 'I dealt my life at every blow.' I saw as clearly as I do now, that nothing furthers that end so much as a heart and life wholly devoted to God.

"This made me neglect the advantage I had in my youth of a tolerable acquaintance with Latin, which I could easily have recovered: but this and every other gain I counted but loss, that I

might win that intimacy with God, which I still think to be the life of preaching. Therefore I husbanded all the time that I could save from company, eating, or sleeping, to lay out in wrestling with God for myself and the flock: so I devoted to God some part of every leisure hour, over and above the hour from eleven to twelve in the forenoon, and from four to five in the afternoon. Herein I was sweetly drawn after God, and had many and large views of that salvation which I wanted, and which He had provided in His Son. The exceeding great and precious promises were clearly opened to me; and having a full assurance of the power and faithfulness of the Promiser, my soul often tasted of their sweetness. And though unbelief prevented my immediate possession, yet I had a blessed foretaste of them. This made me desire full enjoyment more and more. I abhorred whatever seemed to keep me from it. I sought out every obstruction. I was willing to offer up every Isaac, and inflamed with great ardor in wrestling with God; determined not to let Him go, till He emptied me of all sin, and filled me with Himself.

"This I believe He did, when I ventured upon Jesus as sufficient to save to the uttermost. He wrought in me what I cannot express, what I judge it is impossible to utter. Yet I was not long without reasoning; not concerning the work, -- of this I was absolutely sure; but whether such and such things as I soon discovered in myself were consistent with it. And this had its use, as it qualified me to advise others, who, though saved from sin, were tried in the same way.

"Upon this head I consulted Mr. Walsh, and his advice helped me in some degree; but God helped me much more in private prayer. Herein I was clearly satisfied, 1. That deliverance from sin does not imply deliverance from human infirmities. 2. That neither is it inconsistent with feeling our natural appetites, or with the regular gratification of them. And, 3. That salvation from sin is not inconsistent with temptations of various kinds. And all this you have clearly and fully declared in the 'Plain Account of Christian Perfection.'

"I have only to observe, that while my soul was following hard after God, I had frequent temptations to resume my Latin, and learn the other languages; especially when I observed some of my brethren who had made some progress therein, though they had not the same advantages with me. But the comfort I found in spending all my time as above, and the thought, that however this might recommend them to some hearers, yet they were not hereby more instrumental than before, either in awakening, converting, or building up souls, made me quite easy about it. This I have considered as the only business and peculiar glory of a Methodist preacher. Not that I think our brethren who have made this progress have not been useful in all these respects; but I think they are not more useful than they were when they were strangers to these things. And I doubt whether they are so useful as they might have been, had they employed the same time, the same diligence, and the same intenseness of thought, in the several branches of that work for which they willingly gave up all. For my own part, I want to feel the same principle ever actuating me, which I felt the moment I set out.

"Upon the whole, I find abundant cause to praise God, for the support He has given me under various trials, and the wonderful deliverance from them. I praise Him for so preserving me from impatience in them, that the enemy had no room to speak reproachfully. In all, He has given me free access to the throne of grace; often with a strong confidence of deliverance. I bless God, that the trials I have met with, even from my brethren, have never given me an inclination to decline the work; nor, for any time together, to be less active in any branch of it. I always

considered, I had nothing which I had not received; and that the design of the Giver was, that all should be used with singleness of heart, to please God and not man. I praise Him, that though some of the affairs I have been engaged in, being quite new to me, so deeply employed my thought as sometimes to divert me from that degree of communion with God in which is my only happiness, and without which my soul can never be at rest; yet He gives me always to see, that the fullness of the promise is every Christian's privilege; and that this and every branch of salvation is to be received now, by faith alone. And it can only be retained by the same means, by believing every moment. We cannot rest on anything that has been done, or that may be done hereafter. This would keep us from living a life of faith; which I conceive to be no other, than the now deriving virtue from Jesus, by which we enjoy and live to God. My soul is often on the stretch for the full enjoyment of this without interruption; nor can I discharge my conscience, without urging it upon all believers, now to come unto Him 'who is able to save unto the uttermost!' "

* * *

City-Road, London,
January 5th, 1780

I earnestly desire, that all our preachers would seriously consider the preceding account. And let them not be content, never to speak against the great salvation, either in public or private; and never to discourage either by word or deed any that think they have attained it: no; but prudently encourage them to "hold fast whereunto they have attained;" and strongly and explicitly exhort all believers to "go on to perfection;" yea, to expect full salvation from sin every moment, by mere grace, through simple faith.

John Wesley

* * *

Further Account of Mr. Mather
By the Rev. Joseph Benson

The following sketch of Mr. Mather's character and death is extracted from his funeral sermon, which was preached and published by Mr. Benson, in the year 1800:--

As the account which Mr. Mather gave of himself twenty years ago, contained in the third volume of the Magazine, published in 1780, undoubtedly is in the hands of many of you, it will not be necessary that I should say much concerning the former part of his life. It will be sufficient to observe two or three particulars, for the information of such as have not seen that account. He was born, he tells us, at Brechin, in Scotland, in February, 1733. His parents making it their care to instruct him early in the principles of religion, and to bring him up in the fear of God, he was preserved in a great measure, while young, from those follies and vices which children too generally fall into, and took pleasure in reading good books, and in other exercises of religion. And when about ten years of age, while the master of the school he attended was praying with his scholars, he received those good impressions which he says he never entirely lost: a lesson this to all parents and schoolmasters, to use all diligence in endeavoring to sow those seeds of grace in

the minds of their children and pupils, which, through the Divine blessing, may afterwards grow up and produce a plenteous harvest.

Mr. Mather in his youth was sundry times exposed to great and imminent dangers, in which, through the kind providence of God, he was most mercifully preserved. When about twenty years of age, he came to London, where in February, 1753, he was married to a country woman, with whom he had been acquainted in his childhood; and, in September following, was hired to a gentleman who carried on the baking business. Here he found, what, he says, he had long desired, a family in which God was worshipped. This excited him to greater earnestness in seeking Him, and to greater exactness in the use of prayer, and every other means of grace. And so much in earnest was he in this pursuit, that he sometimes continued on his knees from the time he should have gone to rest till two in the morning, when he was called to go to work.

Nevertheless, he did not for some time obtain either peace with God, or peace of mind, which he imputed to his being frequently employed in baking on the Lord's day. But in consequence of remonstrances on the subject, and proper steps being taken, this practice was soon given up by that family, and he, being induced to hear the word at the Foundery, was much edified, and soon made acquainted with, and enabled to embrace, the way of salvation through faith in Christ. This, as I have observed, was under a sermon of Mr. Wesley, on Easter-day, in 1754. His confidence, indeed, at first was not established, for he was soon assaulted with unbelief; but being exhorted to look to Jesus, and to confide in Him, as giving Himself for him, as all should do who are in a similar situation, he soon recovered his peace, which, he says, by the mercy of God, he had not lost thirty years after; and, I believe, did not lose to his dying day. It was not long before he began to find strong impressions upon his mind, that he was called to preach; which, after he had earnestly sought direction from God concerning it in fasting and prayer, he ventured to mention to those that met in band with him. They very properly joined with him in the same religious exercises, and afterwards urged him to consult Mr. Wesley on the subject; who advised him to continue to seek direction in a patient and persevering use of the same means of grace, and gave him reason to hope that God would soon make his way plain before him.

Soon after this, Mr. Wesley, to lead him on step by step, appointed him a leader of a band; and in a little time, a leader of a class; and God blessed him in both these offices. Nevertheless, his conviction that he must preach continued; nay, grew stronger and stronger; so that he was constrained to go to Mr. Wesley again, and open his mind to him. Mr. Wesley now thought proper to set before him the difficulties of the work, "that to be a Methodist preacher was not the way to ease, honor, pleasure, or emolument; that it was a life of much labor and reproach; that they often fared hard, were often in want, were liable to be stoned, beaten, and abused in various manners." He advised him to consider this before he engaged in so uncomfortable a way of life. Mr. Mather replied, that "he had no desire to engage therein, unless it were the call of God; and that he did not regard what he suffered in doing the will of God." Would to God that all who take upon them the sacred office of speaking in the name of Christ were of this spirit! Mr. Wesley then appointed him to make trial a few times. Being approved of he was soon employed as a local preacher, more than his strength could well bear. It seems he labored between two and three years in this way, following his business day by day, and taking from sleep the time employed in study and preaching; so that frequently, he says, he had not eight hours' sleep in a week. By this means, together with constant abstemiousness and fasting, he was brought so low in body as hardly to be

able to follow his business, and his master was very apprehensive his weakness would terminate in death. However, God supported him; and in August, 1757, which is forty-three years ago, he was received as a traveling preacher, and with Thomas Hanby, Thomas Tobias, and Thomas Lee, was sent into the Epworth circuit, which then included Gainsborough, Grimsby, Barrow, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield) and divers other circuits. Here it pleased God to give him much of His presence in his own soul, and to let him see some fruit of his labor.

Since that time till last spring, when, by excessive weakness he was obliged to desist, he has been constantly employed as a traveling preacher in the Methodist Connection; has labored in most circuits in the kingdom; has been peculiarly well received, and, I believe I may say, very useful in them all. In labors, you all know, he has been abundant; and, as he labored in dependence on Divine grace, and with a single eye to the glory of God, He who sent him did not suffer him to labor in vain, but gave him many seals to his ministry. Many, I am persuaded, were awakened, many justified, and believers in general edified, by his ministry, wherever he came. What sort of a preacher he was, you in general well know, having heard him frequently, not only during the last two years, in which he has had the care of this circuit, but many of you twenty seven or twenty-eight years ago, when also he labored in London, as you have likewise, since that time, often heard him occasionally. So that it is not necessary I should give you any character of him in this respect. You will generally allow, I think, that he had very clear and just views of the truth as it is in Jesus, in all its branches; and that his preaching was peculiarly instructive, and very forcible and impressive. He was never at a loss for abundance and variety of edifying matter; and, had he had the aid of a classical education, his discourses, through a better arrangement, would have appeared to much more advantage. His apprehension was peculiarly quick, his genius fertile, and his memory tenacious. Being naturally a man of strong passions, and Divine grace having softened and humbled his heart, he generally felt himself the truths he delivered to others, and, in consequence thereof, his hearers felt them too.

Indeed he had a feeling heart in every sense, especially towards persons in want and affliction; with whom he always sympathized, whom he was always ready to relieve according to his ability, and for the relief of whom he was often entrusted with considerable sums of money by some friends who were rich and benevolent, and whose almoner he was. He was a man of strict integrity, of exemplary conduct, and of great zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. This made him instant, in season and out of season, in his endeavors to spread the gospel of Christ, which he well knew to be the grand means God hath made choice of both to save mankind, and to advance His own glory. Nor did he confine his efforts for this purpose to the pulpit; but in private conversation, and in all companies where it could with propriety be done, he labored to diffuse the odor of the knowledge of God, and of the truths of His precious word. I have known few persons more careful than he was, to improve conversation to the edification of those present; or more apt to teach, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine. And as his life was consistent with his teaching, and he was "an example to believers in word, in behavior, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity," what he advanced was generally well received, and attended with a blessing.

As the work of God in general was dear to him, so especially the welfare of the Methodist Connection. This, with the doctrine and discipline thereof, lay very near his heart indeed; and when, at any time or place, matters wore a gloomy aspect, and circumstances arose which seemed

to militate against the safety or prosperity of our cause, it touched him to the quick, and he was very prone to yield to excessive grief. And this, perhaps, was his great failing: for that he had failings I do not deny; for I do not deny that he was man. His grief on these occasions sometimes wore the appearance of, and was mistaken for, anger; and perhaps I may allow that, in a sense, it was anger, even anger similar to that which He felt who, we are informed, "looked round about on the multitude with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." During these thirty years that I have known him I never knew anything affect him so deeply, as what he thought touched the cause of God, and affected the welfare of the Methodist Connection.

But I shall tire out your patience. One thing more it seems of importance I should observe before I give you an account of his last sickness and death. When he was laboring at Rotherham, in the year 1757, he tells us the Lord greatly deepened His work in his soul. He was delivered from those wrong tempers and affections which he had long and sensibly groaned under. He felt an entire disengagedness from every creature, with an entire devotedness to God; and from that moment found unspeakable pleasure in doing the will of God in all things, having also power to do it. And as he had the approbation of his own conscience, so he believed also he had the approbation of God. His heart then was undivided, and his eye single to the glory of God at all times and in all places; and he was inspired with that fervent zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls, which swallowed up every other care and consideration. And, above all, he had, he says, uninterrupted communion with God sleeping and waking. He seems to have retained this close union with Christ, and conformity to Him, for some time, but by no means till he wrote the account; which, as I said, was in the year 1780. I suppose, however, he frequently enjoyed it, and that it was his chief support under the many trials he met with from affliction and pain, from mobs, by scoffs and insults, by dirt, stones, and brickbats, with which he was sometimes attacked when about his Master's work; from false brethren, and from seeing the word of God hindered, and the societies and congregations divided and scattered, through strife and contention.

Speaking on this subject, he says, "I find abundant cause to praise God for the support He has given me, under various trials, and the wonderful deliverance He has granted me from them. I praise Him, for so preserving me from impatience in them, that the enemy has had no room to speak reproach fully. In all He has given me free access to the throne of grace; often with strong confidence of deliverance. I bless God that the trials I have met with, even from my brethren, have never given me an inclination to decline the work; nor for any time together to be less active in it. I always considered I had nothing which I had not received, and that the design of the Giver was, that all should be used with singleness of heart to please God and not man. I praise Him, that though some of the affairs I have been engaged in, being quite new to me, have so deeply employed my thoughts, as sometimes to divert me from that degree of communion with God in which is my only happiness, and without which my soul can never be at rest; yet He gives me always to see, that the fulness of the promise is every Christian's privilege, and that this and every other branch of salvation is to be received now by faith."

Such were his views, desires, and resolutions twenty years ago; and I believe they were not materially altered after that time. What his spirit and conduct were of late, many of you know better than I. He has been your minister, and the superintendent of the societies in this city and neighborhood, these two last years; and you have had frequent opportunities of observing how he conducted himself, and, which is the chief evidence of the power of grace, with what degree of

patience and resignation he supported the tedious, complicated, and painful affliction wherewith it pleased God to exercise and perfect him. For it was necessary that he, like his Master, should be perfected through sufferings. His sufferings, indeed, for some years, have occasionally been great; but for six or eight months nearly uninterrupted. At the time I last saw him, the time referred to before, his affliction was great indeed. And what I was then a witness to I shall never forget. The moment his dear friend Mr. Pawson and I entered the room, his pale face, his emaciated body, and his death-like appearance, struck and affected us exceedingly, and for some minutes we both remained silent, and wept. At length he attempted to address us; and with a low whisper, not being able to speak above his breath, he said, "Through the mercy of God I have got hither by a miracle: but why I am here, I know not; for I seem to be of no use." I said, "You are here that you may be an example of patience, by suffering the will of God, as you have long been of diligence in doing it. And doubtless you find this a harder duty than the other." "Indeed I do," said he; "but I find the grace of God sufficient for this also." He then expressed himself in the most clear, pertinent, and feeling manner, concerning our redemption by Christ, as I have mentioned above, and of his whole dependence being on this alone, and not on anything he had done or suffered for salvation. We were both much affected while he discoursed on this subject. After this he spoke concerning the Methodist Connection in a way which showed how much his soul was wrapped up in the prosperity of it; and gave us many cautions and advices, urging us especially to attend, at the Conference, to the state of the poor preachers, many of whom, he said, he knew to be in great want and distress. After he had quite spent himself with speaking to us on these and some other subjects, we kneeled down to pray, as we had reason to believe, for the last time. But we could not speak much. We could do little more than weep in silence, and gave vent to our tears and sighs. We then bade him farewell. Mr. Pawson, indeed, might intend to see him the next day; but I took my leave of him, not expecting to see him again, as it has happened, till the resurrection of the just.

He continued to be patient and resigned, as he had been all along from the first attack of his disorder, and retained his confidence in God, and his hope of everlasting life, to the very last; exemplifying, in a glorious manner, in his experience and behavior, the following well-known and striking description of a triumphant death:--

"Through nature's wreck, through vanquish'd agonies,
(Like the stars struggling through the midnight gloom,)
What gleams of joy! what more than human peace!
Where the frail mortal, -- the poor abject worm?
No, not in death the mortal to be found!
His conduct is a legacy for all,
Richer than Mammon's for his single heir.
His comforters he comforts: great in ruin,
With unreluctant grandeur, gives, not yields,
His soul sublime, and closes with his fate."

On Saturday night, August 16th, speaking to his much-esteemed friend, Mr. Robert Spence, of York, he said, "What I told you upon your first visiting me after my arrival at York, I still feel to be a truth, namely, that I have nowhere to look, nor anything else to depend upon for salvation, but Christ; and my confidence in Him is firm as a rock. My faith has frequently been assaulted during my affliction, in an unusual manner, but it has never shrunk in the least degree: I feel a blessed

evidence of my acceptance, and a sacred sense of God's presence being with me always. How comfortable are these words, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out!' 'God so loved us, that He gave His only Son' to be the propitiation for us. There is no other name, no other Redeemer; on Him my soul relies. Mine is a hope of more than forty years: it cannot easily be shaken."

On Monday, the 18th, being in extreme anguish, he said, "I long to be gone, I long to be gone;" and desired me to pray for his dismissal. After rising from my knees, I said, that this could only be asked with submission. He sweetly and reverently answered, "With great submission; with great submission." After pausing awhile, he said, "I am happy in Jesus, but my sufferings are very great;" and added,--

" 'Rivers of life Divine I see,
And trees of paradise.'

O, let me be there:-- I'll be there, there, there!
O that it might be this night!
O, hide me among these trees!
Here may I have an abiding place!

'Tis there, with the lambs of Thy flock,
There only I covet to rest.'

But if I may not have the privilege, the happiness, the honor of being with Thee this night, may I be resigned to Thy will. O that exercise of praise and thanksgiving! It has been the delight of my soul, my chief exercise on earth. I have loved Thy word, Thy law, Thy people, and I still love them.

'Let it not my Lord displease,
That I would die to be His guest.'

Jesus answers, 'Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee. Arise, My love, My fair one, and come away.' Jesus has made me all fair." Again, when laboring under the most extreme pain, anguish, and anxiety, (for his complicated afflictions racked his body with the most torturing sufferings, and bowed down his formerly strong spirits with the heaviest depression,) he most affectingly cried out, "O God, my heart is broken within me. Why are Thy chariot-wheels so long in coming? Lord, grant me patience;" and then, as though his prayers were immediately answered, he calmly said,

"To patient faith the prize is sure,
And they that to the end endure
The cross, shall wear the crown."

On Wednesday morning, the 20th, after a night of inexpressible suffering, he was composed, and slumbered a little. When he awoke he seemed surprised to find himself still in the body, and said, "Why did you call me back? I have been in paradise. As surely as I shall go there again, I have been in heaven this morning." Then, after taking leave of, and giving his dying advice

to, the family, he turned to Mrs. Mather, and said, "As for you, my dear, I can say nothing to you that I have not already said but" (pointing to the Bible) "that book is yours, and the Author of it." On this night, amongst many other heavenly breathings, I observed him to say, "O Jesus, whom I have loved, whom I do love, in whom I delight, I surrender myself unto Thee." This was a night of peculiar affliction, which he bore with the utmost degree of Christian patience.

On Friday, the 22d, about two hours before his departure, and nearly the last words he uttered, he was heard to say, "I now know that I have not sought Thee in vain; I have not, -- I have not, -- I have not." And then, "O Thou that causedst light to shine out of darkness, shine upon my soul with the light of the knowledge of the Son of God. That name above every other name for ever dear, it dispels all my fears. O, proclaim, proclaim, Jesus! Tell me, shall I be with Him this night?" On being answered, "Yes, there is no doubt of it," he cried out, "He that I have served for near fifty years will not forsake me now. Glory be to God and the Lamb, for ever and ever! Amen! amen! amen!"

Soon after this his voice failing, he spoke very little audibly; but, by the motion of his lips, appeared engaged in silent ejaculations, till seeming to fall into a sweet slumber, he silently, and almost imperceptibly, breathed his soul into the arms of his loved and adored Redeemer, about four o'clock in the afternoon.

And now, my brethren, is not this most animating? Methinks, had we been present at such a close of such a life by such a man, we should have felt a little of the ardor described in the lines immediately following those above quoted:--

How our hearts burn'd within us at the scene!
Whence this brave bound o'er limits fix'd to man?
His God sustains him in his final hour!
His final hour brings glory to his God!
Man's glory Heaven vouchsafes to call her own.
We gaze, we weep mix'd tears of grief and joy!
Amazement strikes! Devotion bursts to flame!
Christians adore and infidels believe."

Thus lived, and thus died, Alexander Mather; than whom, perhaps, no person has been more universally respected among us, as an intelligent and judicious man, a pious and exemplary Christian, a sympathizing and steady friend, and a faithful, diligent laborer in the Lord's vineyard. What was said of Demetrius by St. John, (as some of you heard from Mr. Bradburn this morning,) was indeed very applicable to him:-- "He had a good report of all men, and of the truth itself." May we, whether preachers or people, follow him as he followed Christ! Considering the end of his conversation, and how the Lord supported him in his last moments, may we imitate his faith and patience, and persevere in our endeavors to aid the good cause, which he so long labored to support and help forward in the earth: the cause which the apostles, the evangelists, the saints, and the martyrs of former ages, had so much at heart; which the Son of God Himself came from heaven to promote, and for which He did not think it too much to give His life. We ourselves, also, let us remember, are ready to be offered; and the time of our departure is likewise at hand. Let us, like our departed friend, make it our chief care to "fight the good fight, to finish our course, and keep

the faith;" that for us also, through the same Redeemer, and in consequence of redemption in Him, there may be laid up "a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, may give us in that day; and not to us only, but to all that love His appearing." Amen! amen!

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A Further Account of the Late Mr. Alexander Mather

by Mr. John Pawson

"The memory of the just," says Solomon, "is blessed;" and the holy psalmist assures us, "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." Agreeably to this, the apostle exhorts us to call to mind the faith and piety of those who have gone before us. "Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." As if he had said, Be ye animated by their example, and quickened to greater diligence in the service of your great Master, by the consideration of the goodness and mercy of God, extended to those who have finished their course upon earth with joy; expect that the Lord will deal as bountifully with you as He did with them; and in the diligent improvement of your privileges, and in the constant exercise of the grace daily granted you, copy the example of those holy persons who, having been faithful unto death, now inherit the crown of life.

We have abundant reason to praise the Lord, that not a few have been raised up amongst us in the present age, who, with the greatest truth, may be said to have been burning and shining lights in their generation, and who have been eminently useful in the church of God; as well by being instrumental in increasing the number of true believers, as by building up the children of God in their most holy faith. When such venerable men are called away by death, it is natural to suppose that the survivors, who have the cause of God at heart, will be deeply affected, and greatly lament their loss.

Among the many who, through Divine grace, have distinguished themselves, not only as men of deep piety, but as being eminently useful in the hand of the Lord, the late Mr. Mather has been exceeded by very few in the present age, perhaps by none, except those very extraordinary men of God who were the highly-honored instruments of laying the foundation of the present revival of pure and undefiled religion in this and the neighboring nations.

Mr. Mather, as appears from the account he hath given us in the Methodist Magazine, for the year 1780, pages 91, 147, 199, entered upon his public labors in the work of the Lord in 1757; so that he was forty-three years employed as a traveling preacher. What violent persecution and great difficulties he had then to encounter, and with what resolution, and zeal for the honor of God, and the salvation of souls, and with what meekness, patience, and unwearied perseverance, he endured all those trials, will appear to those who will take the pains to read the account referred to. As he has only brought that narrative down to the year 1777, when he was stationed in Colne circuit, and as it has pleased God, in His adorable providence; to call His faithful servant hence, it will be expected by many that I, who have been so long and so intimately acquainted with him, should favor the public with a history of the remaining part of his life and labors: but as he has left

no account of these himself, I am at a loss for materials, and shall not be able fully to answer the expectation of his numerous friends.

That he was highly acceptable wherever he was stationed, all, I believe, will acknowledge; and as none could exceed him in diligence, so he was, in general, very useful. The Lord attended his labors with an abundant blessing. It may easily be learned in what circuits he was stationed, from the time he breaks off his narrative, till he finished his work upon earth, by those who will take the trouble to look into the Minutes of our several Conferences. And therefore, as I am not able to say what particular success attended his labors in those circuits, I shall waive relating that here. However, as from the year 1791 to 1794 he was stationed at Hull, and the three following years at Manchester, and in the year 1797 at Leeds, I beg leave to observe, that in all those places there was a considerable revival of the work of God. Many persons in those circuits were awakened, and brought to the saving knowledge of God in a short time. This work was attended with some irregularities, and much noise and confusion. On such occasions, indeed, there are never wanting headstrong and imprudent persons who have far more zeal than discretion. These would take the work out of the hands of God into their own, and drive the people forward much faster than they can go, and persuade them to profess faith before their judgment is rightly informed concerning the nature of faith, or their conscience awakened to a sense of Sin; and by so doing ruin the work of God. These hot-headed persons generally look upon all to be gold which glitters; and account all to be enemies to the work of God who are not as rash and as ignorant as themselves. Hence, it requires no small degree of prudence, as well as courage, to withstand them, and to preserve others from running into their error. Mr. Mather, having had large experience of the different ways in which the Lord generally carries on His work, acted with wonderful prudence; and as he was a man that would use his authority when occasion required, he resolutely insisted upon proper order being kept in those prayer-meetings, which were well attended, and in which much good was done. By this means he preserved the work from that reproach and contempt which, in some other places, were brought upon it, where decorum and regularity were not maintained. In the mean time, he took great care of, and treated with remarkable tenderness, those who professed faith in Christ, and who were so suddenly and powerfully brought out of darkness into light. He well knew that these newborn souls required much nursing; that, however lively or happy they might appear to be for the present, yet they were in general exceedingly ignorant, and quite unestablished; and therefore he not only took abundance of pains with them himself, but he also was careful to appoint them to meet with those leaders who, he knew, would carefully and tenderly instruct them. Accordingly, many of this description were preserved, and continue steady at this day, who, in all probability, if those means had not been used, would have soon turned back into the world again. [12]

Mr. Mather certainly had a remarkably strong natural understanding, and a mind capable of great improvement. And if his lot had been cast in a different line of life, so that he had had the advantages of a liberal education, he might have been one of the greatest lawyers, or the most eminent statesmen, in the present age. But the Lord designed him to move in a much higher sphere; and as He had deeply engaged his heart to Himself, by a sound conversion, so He led him to improve his understanding by reading and meditating upon His own blessed word, in order that, possessing a large degree of heavenly wisdom, he might be eminent in winning souls unto God. He did not, it is true, seek to improve his mind, as he informs us, by laboring to learn different languages. This did not appear to him the most excellent way for a preacher of the gospel to walk

in. Not that he despised human learning, or learned men: he highly esteemed both. But he was led to study men and things much more than books, except the holy book of God. And here he was well read, and had attained as clear and as deep an acquaintance with the Scriptures, as perhaps any of his brethren. He certainly acquired a large stock of useful knowledge, so that he was well qualified to fill up his station in the church of God, and to transact the most difficult business that came before him.

Considered as a man, he was possessed of real greatness of mind, so that where the honor of God or the salvation of souls was concerned, as he would spare no pains, so he dreaded no danger, and was not ashamed to speak with his enemy in the gate. He feared the face of no man. He was remarkably ready in answering those who opposed the work of God, in however high a station they might stand: for although he highly revered magistrates, and gave honor to whom honor was due, yet he was not to be terrified from his duty by the threatenings of any man, but would resolutely go forward with his work, in the name and in the strength of the Lord God. He had a large share of trials of this kind, being obliged more than once to appear before rulers, and answer for himself. But the Lord in whom he trusted did not leave him to himself on those occasions, but made him remarkably useful in procuring peace for His poor persecuted and oppressed people, and in delivering them out of the hands of their unreasonable and cruel enemies, on different occasions. At such times he would do that which many others could not, as he had a constitution which would bear the greatest fatigue, and endure the greatest hardship. And it may be said with the greatest degree of truth, that he never spared himself, but wore out his health and strength in hard labor, and in continual toil, night and day, till at last the weary wheels of life stood still, his natural strength being fairly worn out, so that he could labor no more.

For many years, as he interested himself in everything which concerned our Connection, so he was constantly employed in the greatest difficulties which happened among us. And as no one was better qualified for this kind of work, so no man would more heartily or more cheerfully engage therein. Inasmuch as for many years past I have acted in concert with him, on a variety of very trying occasions, I can testify, from my own knowledge, what unwearied pains he has taken, both with his tongue and his pen, what patience and longsuffering he has exercised, when having to do either with very ignorant or with headstrong men, in order to preserve or restore peace to particular societies. On all such occasions, although I sometimes differed in judgment from him, yet I most sincerely believe that his eye was single, and that he only wished to promote the honor of God, and the prosperity of His work.

As he has given us an account of the Lord's dealings with himself in the Magazine before mentioned, and as Mr. Benson has repeated a part of this, and added some edifying reflections upon his long and deep experience, in that excellent sermon published in the Magazine for last December, it is needless for me to say much upon this head. It is certain, however, that his experience as a Christian was both deep and clear. As he could not rest without a clear manifestation of the love of God, so, I am persuaded, he retained his confidence in the Redeemer, through the whole of his travels, to his latest moments. And not only so, but, soon after he was satisfied of his interest in Christ, he was convinced of the necessity of being wholly sanctified; and as he then had the privilege of sitting under the heart-searching ministry of Mr. Wesley, and also of the late Mr. Walsh, he never rested till the Lord brought him into this glorious liberty. And although he informs us that he did not always retain that degree of grace which was then given him,

yet I am inclined to believe that he never wholly lost that blessing, but reaped much advantage from what the Lord then communicated to him as long as he lived.

He was generally exceeding lively in his own soul; and hence he conducted the worship of God in the most animating and spirited manner. As I was stationed with him in London the year before he died, I could not but observe, that in meeting the penitents, at the intercession, and on many other occasions, he appeared with all the sprightliness and vigor of youth; and even at our watch-nights and lovefeasts he took a large share of the work, and went through the whole in the most lively and edifying manner. Indeed, he seemed as if he were never weary in the service of his blessed Master.

As he well knew the importance of secret prayer, so he spent much time in this holy exercise. He kept up a constant intercourse with God, and made all his requests known to Him, both for himself, his friends, the church of God, and the nation at large. He had learned from the sacred Scriptures the necessity of living by faith in the Redeemer; and knew by blessed experience how great a privilege it is to be admitted into the presence-chamber of an infinitely gracious God, to lay all our wants and weaknesses open before Him, and in the name of Jesus, and in the power of His Spirit, to wrestle in prayer for the accomplishment of all the precious promises recorded in the Bible. He could not have maintained his ground against the violent opposition which he frequently met with, nor could he have endured the heavy trials he was obliged to pass through, had he not thus given himself up to prayer. I most sincerely wish that, in this respect, we may all copy his example; and that we may so walk with God through life, that, like him, we may be divinely supported and comforted in death, so as to leave the same blessed testimony behind us which he has done.

As he lived near to God in private, so in his conversation with his friends he was generally cheerful, yet serious, solid, spiritual, and instructive. He never appeared to be at a loss for a subject for edifying discourse, and had generally much freedom of mind, when engaged in Christian conversation.

Our blessed Lord informs us, "that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" and that "out of the good treasure of the heart the good man bringeth forth good things." These words were remarkably verified in my friend. For as the word of God dwelt richly in him, as the apostle says it ought to do in every Christian, so his zeal for the honor of God, and the desire he felt to edify those he conversed with, led him to make a proper use of that sacred treasure which was lodged in his memory. There is but too much reason to fear that it is again becoming unfashionable to introduce religious subjects in conversing with our friends. This, in my opinion, is no sign of a growth in grace, but rather the contrary. If we are only serious, spiritual, and devout, when in the house of God, why do we pray that He would make us always so? And if we only show the people the necessity of living in the presence of God while we are in the pulpit, but when conversing with them appear as if we had no design to be so ourselves, I fear our discourses will have no very lasting effect upon them.

As Mr. Mather was acquainted with the state of religion throughout our Connection, and with every remarkable event which happened amongst us, whether prosperous or adverse, by keeping up a general correspondence with the principal people, as well as with many of the

preachers; so he brought everything before the Lord in prayer, or thanksgiving, as occasion required. For as no one had the prosperity of the work of God more deeply at heart, so, I believe, no man more constantly and fervently wrestled with the Lord in prayer for the enlargement, as well as the establishment, of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world, than he did.

He was a man of remarkably tender feelings; and as he constantly visited the afflicted, the tempted, and those who were in distress, so he was always ready to pray with, to comfort, encourage, and relieve all such, to the utmost of his power. In this respect he had the advantage of many of his brethren, as we have reason to believe that several wealthy and well-disposed persons made him their almoner, and he had considerable sums to dispose of, as he saw necessity required. Hence he was able to assist several of our poor preachers, and their distressed families, in the course of the year, which the Conference had little or no knowledge of. And I have known him to contribute very liberally towards the relief of some particular persons who had before used him exceedingly ill, when he saw them brought into distressing circumstances. When on certain occasions it was said, "But such a one has acted very improperly, and deserves no notice," it was usual for him to reply, "It is very true: but yet he is now in distress; therefore we should help him out of it as well as we can." I will not say, that he was never imposed upon, or that he never relieved persons who made a bad use of his bounty. I am inclined to believe the contrary, and that his compassion for the distressed led him more than once to plead the cause of some very unworthy objects. But allowing this to be the case, he erred on the charitable side, and therefore may well be excused.

At the general Conferences he took an active part in all our affairs. During the life of Mr. Wesley, he was for many years, what some persons called, his right-hand man. He certainly assisted him very much on various difficult occasions, and was a principal member of the select Committee which he made choice of to advise and assist him in various important affairs which from time to time were laid before the Conference. And since Mr. Wesley's death it is well known that nothing of any moment was done amongst us, but he was more or less concerned therein. The preachers in general paid a great regard to his judgment; as many of them had been long acquainted with him, and were well satisfied of his uprightness, and that he had not only the interest of particular persons, but also of the whole Connection, very much at heart. I never was yet acquainted with the man who was more ready to serve a friend than he was. It seemed to give him the most sensible pleasure to engage in any extraordinarily difficult affairs, in order to assist those who desired his help: and he certainly was well qualified to transact almost any kind of business; for he was blessed with a large share of sense, and had a general knowledge of men and things. I have now attended thirty-nine Conferences, and I never knew him absent from any, till the last year: and as he had, in all these years, been concerned in stationing the preachers, and in the most difficult parts of our business, especially since the death of our honored father, for which he was certainly well qualified; so, many of us thought we could not do well without him. But herein the wonderful goodness of God, and the methods, He takes to convince mankind that the greatest, the wisest, and the most useful of men are no more than instruments in His hand, are very observable. And no one must glory in man; but let him that glorieth glory in the Lord, and confess, to the praise of His name, that the help that is done upon earth He doeth it Himself.

It is certain that the Lord confers a high degree of honor upon the person whom He is pleased to make an instrument for the spiritual good of mankind; yet let no one vainly think that the

Lord cannot carry on His work without him. He needs no man to accomplish His purposes. He is never at a loss for proper instruments, because He can make them. The residue of the Spirit is with Him, and He can pour it forth upon whomsoever He will. And, to the honor of the infinitely wise and blessed God, I cannot but observe, that when He calls any one from this world, however useful he may have been, He fills up his place with another; so that the man, however great or good he may have been, and however necessary apparently to that body of people with whom he was connected, is scarcely missed by them. For when any one has faithfully served his generation, and finished the work which the Lord called him to do, he is removed from his labors, and another steps into his place. I am inclined to think that all who attended our last Conference will readily allow that they saw this remarkably verified; for although we all lamented the absence of our valuable friend, who had assisted us on all occasions, especially at the time of Conference, to the uttermost of his power, yet such was the goodness of God to us, that we got through our business remarkably well, and scarcely missed him who had been so exceedingly active on former occasions.

But although I so highly esteemed Mr. Mather, and praise the Lord for the grace and gifts which were in him, yet I am far from supposing that he was wholly free from human infirmity. O, no; he had his weaknesses, and, no doubt, was deeply sensible of and humbled before God on account of them. But, with many other truly amiable and useful men, I have known him blamed by some persons where I thought he deserved praise. A complaint was made against him some years ago, and was believed by many, that he was growing rich by the gospel, and was laying up treasures upon earth. Those who know what the income of a Methodist preacher is, cannot but know, at the same time, that this is impossible. In vindication of my faithful friend, I would observe, that his first wife, as well as himself, was a very great economist. They managed their little property with extraordinary prudence. For many years she had no servant, and conducted all her household affairs with such frugality, that they were enabled to assist his aged father, who by his own imprudent conduct was greatly reduced in his circumstances, and who had treated his son with cruelty when he was yet a boy of twelve years of age. Here Mr. Mather set an example worthy the imitation of all children, by returning good for evil, when his unkind father fell into distress in his old age. But this was not all: by the good management of their temporal concerns, they were enabled to do that for their son which others could not have done without very considerable assistance from some other quarter. Not that Mr. Mather sought high things for his son, or that he wished to make him great in this world: very far from it. He placed him in such a line of life, where, if Divine Providence had not interposed, he never would have made any considerable figure in life. Three different times was this good man disappointed in placing out his son, so that he did not know what course to take. Then it was that a child of so many prayers was owned of God, and unexpectedly led into that line of life in which I doubt not but he is made a blessing to mankind. And I am happy to have it to say, that the son has had the honor and satisfaction to make the last hours of so kind a father as easy and happy as filial affection and tenderness could possibly make them, having, what I do not doubt he sincerely wished, the painful pleasure to accommodate his father at his house for some weeks before he made his exit. So kind, so tender, so affectionate a father certainly deserved the best return a son could make; and I heartily praise the Lord on his behalf, he was not disappointed. But all Christian parents are not thus highly favored. The kindness of parents to their children is too often but ill requited, and their old age is embittered by the bad conduct of those in whom they greatly delighted, and on whose account they have suffered much. But Mr. Mather's last moments were made as easy as the utmost

attention of a most affectionate wife, who was ready to lay down her own life for his sake, and of a dutiful son, who seriously thought that he could never do enough for his father. Thus did the Lord make all his bed in his sickness, according to His promise, as His servant had ever shown himself ready to visit and comfort the afflicted and the dying in their distresses.

Persons who act in a public station, either in the church or in the world, let them be as prudent as they may, are sure to give offence to some people. Innocence itself could not pass through the world without blame. And though Mr. Mather was highly esteemed by very many, yet he was set at nought, despised, and condemned by others. Hence I well know that I shall not be able to give such an account of him as will meet with the approbation of those on both sides. This I judge to be impracticable. But my design is to be impartial; and therefore, as for the honor of God I would endeavor to set forth those Christian virtues in which he excelled, so I would not attempt to represent him as an angel, but only as a man liable to mistakes and human infirmities.

Considered as a minister, he certainly was highly honored of God, not only in that he was blessed with very excellent gifts, and qualifications for the work unto which the Lord had called him, but in that his labors in the gospel were attended with very considerable success. His understanding was remarkably clear in the whole mystery of man's redemption by Christ Jesus, in the nature and extent of gospel salvation, and in the way which the blessed God hath pointed out for fallen man to be put in possession of all the unsearchable riches of Christ. For although he was born in Scotland, and brought up a Presbyterian yet it is well known that he was strongly attached to the Established Church. He attended the service of the church and the sacrament whenever opportunity served, and exhorted others to do the same. He was blessed with a sound judgment, a quick apprehension, and a retentive memory. He firmly believed that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man, and faithfully and constantly offered salvation to all, in His name. His zeal for the salvation of souls was very great, and his diligence in the work was highly exemplary. He was favored with a strong constitution, which he did not spare. By traveling long journeys, in bad roads, in all sorts of weather, and often preaching three, sometimes four, yea, five times a day, he wore it out in hard labor, till his Lord said unto him, "Come up hither." It may be said of him, with the greatest propriety, "In labors more abundant;" for he certainly followed the apostle's rule, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season." He rushed through every open door, and was instrumental in opening not a few, planting the gospel in many places. And, according to the direction given to the prophet, he lifted up his voice like a trumpet, and cried aloud to sinners of all sorts, solemnly warning them, in the name of the Lord, to break off their sins by repentance, and to turn to the great Shepherd and Bishop of immortal souls.

He bore a faithful testimony against that dangerous error, that a man may be in a state of favor and acceptance with God, and yet have no evidence of it. He constantly and strongly insisted upon the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, and the abiding witness of the Holy Spirit, and clearly proved these precious doctrines by the express testimony of the holy Scripture. But if he excelled in any thing above another, in preaching, it was in building up believers in their most holy faith, teaching them how to improve their present privileges, and exercise the grace already received, in bringing forth fruit unto holiness, in waiting upon God in all His ordinances, and in the steady and constant performance of every social and relative duty. Add to this, that he was remarkable for teaching and exhorting all to press forward toward the mark for the prize of their high calling. For as he firmly believed that the design of our Lord in all that He did and

suffered for us was, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and restore us not only to the favor, but also to the image, of God; and as he well knew the mighty opposition this glorious truth met with from the carnal mind which is in every man by nature, as well as from some of the friends of religion; he saw it to be his duty clearly to state, fully to prove, and zealously to insist upon this blessed truth, so that those who attended upon his ministry might see the nature of this great salvation, and be stirred up to follow after, in order that they might apprehend that for which they were apprehended of God in Christ Jesus.

He constantly preached a free, a full, and a present salvation; having clear views of the meaning of that expressive word, "By grace ye are saved through faith." He had witnessed the saving, sanctifying power of living faith in his own soul; and therefore, after the example of his Lord, he proclaimed, "According to thy faith be it done unto thee." "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." But being well experienced in the deep things of God, he was not easily deceived by external appearances. His preaching was not only experimental, explaining every part of the work of God upon the soul, but it was also practical. He taught the necessity of carrying religion into every part of our conduct, into the closet, the family, the shop, or the market, in order that in all things it might appear that we walk with God, and live under a sense of His presence, continually saying in our hearts, "Thou God seest me!" My highly-esteemed friend was led out in this line of preaching so much on some occasions, that he was sometimes represented as a legal preacher. He saw, with heart-felt grief, that conformity to this world, in its various branches, was breaking in like a flood upon our societies. He saw that there was not that depth of solid piety, that degree of serious godliness in many, that he wished to see in all. And he was not without a degree of fear, that some preachers were not always upon their guard against that levity of spirit which too many of the people are carried away with, and that they did not sufficiently see the destructive tendency of what the apostle calls "foolish talking and jesting." He was very far from pleading the cause of what has been properly enough called "sour godliness;" but still he thought that our Lord's words had their meaning, and were of deep importance, "For every idle word that a man shall speak, he shall give an account in the day of judgment." As he knew that he was called to imitate Christ and His apostles, so he was persuaded that levity of spirit, and unprofitable conversation, were not sanctioned by their example.

With what diligence and constancy, with what holy zeal and fervency of spirit, with what natural eloquence and Divine pathos, he delivered the whole counsel of God from the pulpit, thousands and tens of thousands can testify: many of whom can joyfully confess, to the honor of God, that they are seals to his ministry; and many others, that they have been established and built up in the truth by his instrumentality.

When he first began to act in a public capacity, he had a considerable natural defect in his delivery: he spoke with such extreme quickness, that very few could understand him; yet with care and perseverance he entirely overcame this infirmity.

As Mr. Mather was clear and explicit upon every part of the Christian doctrine, experience, and practice; so he was exact in enforcing every branch of our excellent discipline. Meeting the societies, regulating the bands, holding lovefeasts, keeping watchnights, and excluding improper persons from the society, were all constantly attended to by him. He took great care to fill up the duties of that station in which he stood, and never would leave any part of the work

which he apprehended to belong to him to any other person: he was so very particular herein, that he sometimes gave offence to the brethren who labored with him; but in this also he acted from principle. Whether we view him as a Christian, a minister, a husband, a father, or a friend, as he took the word of God for his rule, and the Spirit of God for his Guide and Helper, so he acted in these several relations, as a man of God, a faithful servant of his beloved Master.

Thus did my dear friend spend his forty-three years of itinerancy among us; and wore out as firm a constitution in diligent and faithful labor, as almost any man was ever blessed with. But, like Moses, he had "respect to the recompence of reward which awaits those who turn many to righteousness. And as he spent his life in the service of God, he found the advantage arising from it upon his death-bed. He then had the supporting and comforting presence of the Lord with him, so that he bore with unbroken patience a very long and painful illness, and witnessed in death the sufficiency of Divine grace to make him more than conqueror over his last enemy. How wonderfully he was supported, how graciously he was comforted, how joyfully he looked death in the face, and with what holy triumph he finished his course upon earth, and entered into the joy of his Lord, hath already been made known to the world; and, in consideration of this, let those be ashamed who have loaded this faithful servant of God with reproach, who have poured out floods of contempt upon him, to the wounding of his character, and hindering of his usefulness, as far as their influence would go. But he is now hid from the scourge of the tongue; and though they send forth their arrows, even bitter words, they can wound him no more.

My beloved brethren, we have lived to see our master taken from our head, our Joshua, our chief leader, under God, removed into Abraham's bosom: we have seen our elders in Israel, one after another, taken away, so that very few of them are left behind: Messrs. Hanby, Thompson, Murlin, Purz, Roberts, and Mather, have all taken their everlasting flight, in a very few years; and we shall soon follow them. Let us, then, "work while it is called today." Let us copy their pious example: let us follow them as they followed Christ; and, if it be possible, let us labor to excel them in holiness and usefulness: let us fervently and constantly pray, that a double portion of that spirit by which they were influenced may be poured out upon us all, so that we may finish well at the last, and unite with our dear brethren who are gone before us, in singing everlasting praises to our God and Saviour.

It is not likely that I should remain much longer with you; but my daily prayer shall be, as long as I am spared, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ may ever bless and be present with you; that He may make all of you, not only burning and shining lights in the church, but also an abundant blessing in your generation, so that when I shall sleep with my fathers, you may still be planting and watering in the vineyard of the Lord, till you also enter into your Master's joy. Take courage, my brethren: though men die, yet the Lord liveth; and He hath promised to be with you always, even to the end. Be much in prayer for the prosperity of Sion. Be very serious, watchful, and heavenly-minded. Be dead to the world, and alive to God. Be very zealous for the honor of your Lord, and exceedingly diligent in the work unto which He hath called you. Preach the gospel with all simplicity and clearness, and in the spirit and power of Elias. In a word, be primitive Methodists, Methodists altogether! That you may be such, is the ardent prayer of your affectionate brother and sincere friend,

J. Pawson

* * *

But lo, the Lord for ever lives,
And freely still His Spirit gives;
Who never ties to one His grace,
Can other faithful prophets raise:
He doth His laborers remove,
Yet carries on His work of love;
By whom He will, delights to send,
And bless His church, till time shall end.
Forth issuing from Jehovah's throne,
Sent by the Father and the Son,
The Holy Ghost His fulness pours,
In glorious, everlasting showers:
The King of saints resides below,
His Spirit shall our vale o'erflow;
Bring back the garden of the Lord,
And show us paradise restored."

In addition to what my dear friend Mr. Pawson has said of that good man Mr. Mather, I beg leave to mention a few things respecting him which occurred the last year. As I was much in company with him from the time that I came to London in 1799, and more especially after his illness commenced, I had a greater opportunity of knowing his spirit and conversation than I had ever had before. And, I must say, the more I knew him, the more I saw of his great excellency. Never shall I forget the faithful and affectionate manner in which he spake to two persons in this city, who had been indulged with society-tickets, from time to time, but had seldom, or never, met in class for some years. It seemed to me, at the time, to be his final warning to them, to take up their cross and deny themselves, or expect the entire loss of every serious impression. I believe he never was in that house afterwards.

During his illness, one Saturday morning when the preachers had met, as usual, to fix their labor for the ensuing week, and consult on the most likely way to promote the increase of genuine godliness in the circuit, he desired we might all of us go into his room, that he might take, what he thought, his final leave of us here below. It was indeed an affecting time! We loved him as a father; and with the affection and tenderness of a parent, he exhorted and charged us to preach the same truths we had received and delivered; to keep to the Methodist discipline; and, above all, to live near to God in prayer; adding, "That gospel which I have preached in the best manner I was able; I bless God I now find to be the power of God unto salvation. I know I have not followed a cunningly devised fable but I have nothing to depend on but Christ:--

'This all my hope, this all my plea,
Jesus hath lived, hath died for me!'

Yet I know that whatever I have done in the cause of Methodism, I have done with a single eye to the glory of God, and for the good of the body of preachers and people. I now expect soon to

leave you. I love you all, and pray God to be with you, and with all the Connection." We joined in prayer and praise, and he took leave of us in the most tender and friendly manner possible. When my wife was coming out of the room soon after, he held out his hand to her, and said, "O Mrs. Wood, live for eternity: the Judge is at the door, and I rejoice that He is."

The day following was a day of exquisite pain and affliction, and most of those who saw him thought he could not continue long; but he was happily resigned to the Divine will, whether for life or death. That evening, before preaching, Mr. Grant called to see him; to whom he said, when going into the chapel, "Give my love to the people, and tell them I have not followed a cunningly devised fable: I now prove the word of truth to be the power of God to the salvation of my soul."

I think it was about June 10th, that, after a little respite, he was taken much worse. I sat up with him that night. He was delirious most of the time, and his short slumbers, during the intervals of ease, were soon followed by the most acute pain imaginable. But during the whole night, all that he said, even when delirious, evidenced the piety and devotion of his heart. One thing I particularly marked with pleasure; namely, the grateful sense he had of every little attention shown him, however trifling and unworthy of notice. Indeed, this shone forth through the whole of his illness, and often did he express himself in the following manner:-- "What abundant cause have I to praise God, that, in this time of suffering, I have every comfort and convenience in life; and, above all, an assurance that I shall be with Christ for ever!" Indeed, praise filled up the chief part of his time in his affliction.

His unwearied diligence in the work of the ministry; his kindness and fidelity as a friend; his tender sympathy with the poor and afflicted; his strict punctuality in keeping to time, and performing of promises; his readiness to forgive the grossest affronts, and overcome evil with good; and his deep piety towards God, have rendered his example highly worthy of imitation, and left an indelible impression of gratitude, affection, and esteem on the hearts of thousands to whom he had held forth the word of life. May I follow him as he followed Christ, and meet him when pain and parting shall for ever cease!

J. Wood

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We subjoin to the above the following letter, addressed by Mr. Mather to the preachers in the London District, assembled there, May 13th, 1800:

Very Dear Brethren,

Being by sickness prevented from attending to the duties belonging to the chairman of the District, when called to it at Canterbury, I nominated brother Wood, with a part of you, to transact the business then needful to be done; the whole of which they, I doubt not, will lay before you tomorrow, for your full investigation and final decision.

The same unerring hand still rests upon me, and sees good to deny me the pleasure of assembling with you: a pleasure with which I have long been indulged on these occasions. Yet He

enables me to assure you, that I have not, for near fifty years, followed a cunningly devised fable, either in what I have received or taught. That word, which has been my support in every former trial, I prove, in the present long affliction, to be the power of God to my salvation; and that in such a degree, that I would neither do nor suffer less for its promotion in the world, than, by grace, I have been able to do and suffer, since August 15th, 1757: nor since March 2d, 1791; you helping by your prayers, and that rich supply of the Spirit of His grace being vouchsafed, which He has afforded his worthless servant, when looked unto. Meantime, I now, 1. Recommend unto you brother Wood, as my substitute in the District-Meeting and Stationing-Committee: since, if spared so long, it is not probable I shall be capable of enduring the fatigues of attending. 2. I exhort, as you all wish the prosperity of the work, that you would gladly submit to the fullest and most minute examination of every part of your conduct, conversation, doctrine, and discipline, as is set forth in your Minutes, beginning with mine. For I am ready to submit to every censure you may lay on me, and to acknowledge and amend everything you may point out as wrong. And I entreat that you will herein give not a tacit consent to these things, but an express assurance of your hearty approbation. If you know, as I do and feel, the former will little avail in a dying moment. I hope you will be able to say, (from the London District, to the Conference,) "We bear the most unequivocal testimony to our brethren's good conduct in every part of their office." Thus, you shall never be ashamed to speak with any enemy in the gate.

To God I commend you, and wish to be commended by you all, till we are admitted to His glory. Even so, prays your weak but still affectionate friend and brother in Christ,

A. Mather

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Letter From Mr. Alexander Mather to the Rev. John Wesley

Evesham, December 17th, 1760

Honored Sir,

Grace, mercy, and peace be with you and yours! Glory to be God, His work prospers in many parts of this Round! Particularly in Staffordshire, where our congregations are so large, that we can scarce contain them. And God, who brings them together, does work among them: and not among the outward hearers only, but also among our old members; so that above forty have found the Lord this last quarter. Most of these have been long seeking; some five, some seven, some ten years; yea, some from the first of your going to Wednesbury. Nor do I perceive that the reason of their not finding sooner has been, as it sometimes is, their negligence or disorderly walking: no; for the most part, they have been diligent in all the means, and blameless in their lives.

Although at Wednesbury several have been added, and many converted this last quarter, yet the most remarkable part of the work of God has been in that old, persecuted, steadfast society, Darlaston; who, in the midst of all the parties that have been in Staffordshire, have stood unmoved to their first principles; never encouraging any other party, no, nor suffering any of a different judgment so much as to sing a hymn amongst them. And this their steadfastness was the more

surprising, as there were but about seven in the whole society (which consisted of forty-eight members) who professed saving faith at Michaelmas last. But, glory be to God their number and their grace are greatly increased. Now there are above thirty out of the forty-eight who have saving faith, and have received it within these last six weeks; yea, many in a fortnight. And as their grace, so their number has increased thirty-three this quarter. Twenty-seven of them I joined last Thursday and Friday; many of whom had scarce ever heard till that week. Is anything too hard for the Almighty? Thou workest, and who can stay Thy hand?

The remarkable work amongst the outward people was occasioned by an apprentice of Mr. Thomas Day, whose heart the Lord touched in such a manner on Sunday night, December 7th, that he could not rest, but roared the whole night, to the great alarm of the whole family and the neighborhood. They prayed with him; but he still remained miserable till Monday morning, when his distress was such, that his crying brought many together, insomuch that the house was filled and surrounded with people: before whom it pleased God to deliver him, and so to inflame his heart with love, and fill his mouth with praise, that the beholders were astonished. It pleased God also to open his mouth to speak to those who were present, so that none (no, not the most stout-hearted and greatest enemies to godliness) were able to resist the spirit and power wherewith he spake. They fell before his word, cried for mercy, and above twelve were delivered that day. So the whole exercise of that day was prayer and praise, as also of the two days following. When the boy went from house to house, even the wicked, who could not withstand his word, being cut to their hearts, cried for mercy; to whom he pointed out Christ, and His willingness to receive them; and praying with them, many were delivered who had scarce heard a sermon. So visible is the change, that they abandon all their former ways and company, and are full of love. It would rejoice your heart to see them under the word; particularly two children, about nine years of age, who talk so feelingly of the love of God, that they would amaze you. Nor was the flame quenched last Friday, the boy being still employed as before. This whole town, young and old, seems alarmed, and come in troops to the preaching at Wednesbury. O Lord! maintain Thy glorious cause, and ride prosperously in the gospel chariot, till the nations bow before Thee; and take Thou all the glory, for Thou art worthy! O, pray for me, that I may have wisdom in all things!

I am, dear Sir,
Your affectionate son and servant in the gospel,
A. Mather

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Letter to Mr. William Marriott, Jun., of London

Very Dear Master Marriott,

Yours of the 2d ult. found me in the midst of our late Conference, where a great variety of new and important matters were agitated, and, as far as they then could be, settled, after the most serious deliberations we were capable of using, with an eye to the general good of a large body, at that time much divided in sentiment on some of the subjects which came then under consideration. Although it was agreed by all that these things, in their use and manner, were not essential to the present or the eternal salvation of man; yet it was very necessary that they should be settled for the

peace and prosperity of our Connection. How far this most valuable end will be answered by the things agreed upon, time will prove the best evidence. But it may be said, as matters then stood, that everything was done to keep as near as possible to our old path.

There were, however, many pleasing circumstances connected with the Conference, and one which was very awful. The congregations were exceedingly large, and many of the people came from distant parts. Among the men who differed in judgment much moderation prevailed, with a larger measure of unity and brotherly love than I have observed for many years, accompanied by an earnest desire in all to be more devoted and useful than ever.

The awful circumstance to which I alluded fell upon a most valuable man, a member of this society. Having declined business, he brought his wife to Leeds, to spend a week at the Conference; which they did with much pleasure and spiritual profit. On their return, in a single-horse chaise, (in which they came,) they left the main road to go to Thorp-Arch, (a watering place,) to spend a few days. The road being bad, the chaise was overturned. The woman was wounded in her forehead, and otherwise bruised; while the man appeared to have received no hurt from the fall. He disentangled the horse, and with two handkerchiefs bound up the wound his wife had received. He appeared to be as composed in mind as free from bodily injury. Not being near any house, and unable to get up the carriage, they stayed in the rain till a kind Providence sent a man to their aid. By his help they raised the chaise upon the wheels again. At this moment Mr. Fox grew pale; which being observed by the stranger, he caught him in his arms, and Mr. Fox instantly died!

To him, sudden death was doubtless sudden glory. He was a truly pious, exemplary, humane, and very beneficent man. In him the society has lost a useful and an ornamental member; the world a shining example of meekness, gentleness, and every Christian virtue; his dear wife, a kind, tender, and exceedingly affectionate husband; and, above all, the poor a liberal and generous benefactor, whose compassionate heart was ever touched with seeing or hearing of their distress. He was as ready to show his commiseration for their distress by the rising tear, as to relieve it by the liberal hand.

All these losses turn so much the more to the eternal gain of him who is now reaping the full reward of all his love to God, manifested in his love to man. This, sir, speaks to us, "Go, and do thou likewise. Be ye therefore ready also; for at an hour when you think not, the Son of man cometh." May our loins be found girt, and our lights burning, and we ourselves as men who wait for their Lord's return from the wedding; that when He knocketh, we may open to Him immediately! So shall we be blessed, whether He approaches in the evening or the morning, at midnight or at cock-crowing. So shall the end of all our mercies, means, and correspondence be fully answered; and my dear young friend will not regret that I have, without design, filled my paper with some hints of this truly excellent man, and of his sudden transition from earth to paradise.

I shall only add, that such was the support which his dear wife found under her loss, that, though she was an entire stranger, on a common, with the remains of her husband put into the carriage with her, to bring to the inhospitable village, where scarcely a door was open to admit them, -- the people at two inns and a private house having shut their doors at her approach, -- yet

she was enabled to bear all with much fortitude and Divine resignation. O sir, what but true religion, that which flows from the soul's knowledge of its interest in Christ, can avail under such circumstances? O my dear William, secure this! The way to obtain this you have expressed in your letter, -- believing in Christ Jesus. To Him I commend you, and am joined by mine in love to your dear parents, and Master Thomas.

Your affectionate friend,
A. Mather
Hull, September 4th, 1793

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Part 6
THE LIFE OF MR. WILLIAM HUNTER
Written by Himself

Letter to the Rev. John Wesley

August 18th, 1779

Rev. and Dear Sir,

According to your desire, I take the opportunity to write a little of the dealings of God with me; but, as I have not kept any account in writing, many things have slipped my mind.

I was born in Northumberland, at a little village near Placey, in the year 1728. I was put to school early, and taught to read the Scriptures from a child; but delighted most in the historical parts of them. I felt a degree of the fear of God when very young, and sweet drawings of love. Sometimes the thoughts of death were very dreadful to me, so that I felt very unhappy. I once dreamed that Satan came to me, and would have me; when I waked, was full of fear, and prayed much that I might be delivered from him; and the impressions abode upon my mind for many days: but as I had nobody to teach me the right way of coming to Christ, these good impressions gradually wore off.

When I was about fourteen, my father being a farmer, I was put to learn all the branches of farming. My father was very severe with me, and I dreaded him much: and yet I was often guilty of much disobedience against him; for which I have been much ashamed before the Lord.

The first time you came to Placey, I, with several of my father's family, came to hear you: some of my brothers were much taken with you, and, I trust, will have cause to bless God for it for ever.

When I was about sixteen, I heard Mr. Hopper: as soon as he began to speak, his words affected me deeply, not with terror, but with love. I had a taste of heaven; it seemed as though I was created anew; there was a wonderful change in my tempers and conduct; I laid aside everything that I thought was contrary to the will of God, and practiced all religious duties. I

attended preaching on all occasions, and felt much sweetness therein, and love to those that I believed were devoted to God.

I went on in this way for some time, till my companions began to take notice of me, and call me Methodist. Some of them set upon me one Sunday, and cursed and swore bitterly at me, telling me I was going to leave the Church, and the religion I was brought up in. This had a strange effect upon me. I gave way to them: they prevailed upon me to go to the alehouse; there I was overtaken by my old sins again. The Spirit of the Lord departed from me: my heart became as hard as a stone. Darkness covered my mind again, and I was as senseless to the things of God, as though I had never known anything at all about them.

I went on in this wretched state many months, living totally without God in the world. Through the advice of a young man, I went to hear preaching again. A great light was communicated to my understanding by the word, and it pierced my conscience like a sword. I felt my inward parts to be very wickedness; all the sins of my life stared me in the face, and lay as a heavy burden upon my conscience. I roared for disquietness of heart, and wept and made supplication. I was convinced I could not help myself, that I could not do anything to reconcile myself to God; and I had many fears lest the day of grace was past. O, the distress of soul I went through for many months! It was as though I had been forsaken of God, and hell was already begun in me. But the Lord was pleased to give me power over sin. I forsook every sinful way, and all my sinful companions. I sought the Lord with all my heart in all the means of grace. I attended preaching on all occasions, and read the Scriptures with great diligence: the way of salvation, revealed therein through Christ, was made clear to me; and I pleaded nothing but the merits of Christ for forgiveness. I often rose in the night to read and pray; and the language of my heart was,--

"If I ne'er find the sacred road,
I'll perish crying out for God."

I felt great love to the Methodists, especially to the preachers, as the servants of the most high God, sent to teach us the way of salvation. The people took notice of me, talked with me, and wished me to cast in my lot amongst them. I did so, though I did not think myself worthy; and I bless God, I have never felt a desire to leave them since. I continued mourning after the Lord, and at length He heard my cry. One day, as I remember, I was reading in a book, where the writer was answering that objection concerning the day of grace being past: the Lord was pleased to send me deliverance; I found springing hope, and a sense of His goodness. How did I admire the love of God, and the love of Jesus Christ to me! All my thoughts were swallowed up in heavenly contemplation; and I could truly say, "The Lord is my life and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me."

I now tried what the Spirit had wrought in me by the marks laid down in Holy Scripture; and hence I found reason to believe that I belonged to Christ, and was a child of God. I made a freewill offering of all I had, to be His for ever; and I thank Him, from the ground of my heart, that I have been kept in the same mind to this day; though I have great cause to be ashamed that I have made no better improvement, and often mourn and weep on that account.

When I had thus found the goodness of God to my own soul, I could not forbear speaking of it to others; and the Lord gave me wonderful light and courage in His blessed work. He helped me to reprove sin, wherever I met with it, with humility, meekness, and much prayer; yet without fearing the face of any man; though many said, I was out of my mind; yea, and wished me out of the world. The Lord enabled me to set my face as a flint, and to bear a testimony for Him, wherever I went and I was much blessed in so doing.

There was a little town not far from ours, where I sometimes went, got a few poor people together, and talked to them about their souls. I often read the Scriptures to them, and sometimes made some remarks thereon. The Lord was pleased to bless my weak endeavors among them; so that a few of them gathered together, and the preacher joined them in a society, and put me in to be the leader. I met with many trials in this little way, and was often tempted to give it up; but I durst not.

I used to travel far on the Lord's day, to hear the word of God. If it happened the preacher did not come, I was pressed upon to give an exhortation to the people. This I frequently did; but I often went home distressed to the last degree, through a deep sense of my own unworthiness: yet it was not always so. At other times I was happy and lively, having strong evidence that I was doing the will of God. Meantime several of the preachers spoke to me about traveling: but the importance of the work made me afraid; till in the year 1767, at the London Conference, Mr. Rowell recommended me, and I was taken in upon trial. I was then appointed for the Barnard-Castle circuit, and entered upon my work with great fear: there seemed many difficulties in my way: however, I gave myself up to the Lord, and He was pleased to give me favor in the eyes of the people.

Two years after I was stationed in Yarm circuit. I was afterwards appointed to Barnard-Castle circuit again; and God was pleased to bless my labor, with that of the other preachers. We had such a work of God in several parts of this circuit as I never saw. Hardly anything of the kind in England hath exceeded it, both with regard to its swiftness and depth: the power of God bore all down before it, and it seemed as if God was about to convert all the world.

After I left this circuit, I was placed at Hull, then at York, and afterwards in the Scarborough circuit. We had a gracious increase of the work of God here; and I never found more enlargement of heart. We broke up much fresh ground, took in many new places, and many souls were converted to God. The last year you appointed me for the Thirsk circuit. This has been a year of trial; but the Lord has stood by me, and I am strengthened.

What success I may have for time to come, I cannot tell. It is still my one desire to give myself wholly to the Lord, and to His blessed work. I wish to live to better purpose than I have yet done; to be more fruitful in His house, and in the world. I am conscious of many defects in myself, and feel my need of Christ every moment. My soul hangs upon Him, and I experience salvation from day to day: and I trust He that has kept me till now will keep me to the end.

Wishing you all peace and prosperity, I remain, Rev. and dear Sir,

Your affectionate son in the gospel of Christ,

William Hunter

* * *

Postscript

Richmond, August 29th 1779

Concerning the account I gave you at London, as I writ it in haste, I believe it is very imperfect: several things have occurred to my mind since, which I should have put in, if I had then remembered them.

As touching that greater salvation, being saved from inbred sin, I shall simply relate what I know of the dealings of God with me in this respect.

For some time after I knew the goodness of God to my soul, I was very happy I sung in His ways for joy of heart, and His consolations were not small in me. I thought, indeed, I should learn war no more. It was then

"I rode on the sky, Freely justified I,
Nor envied Elijah his seat;
My soul mounted higher
In a chariot of fire,
And the moon it was under my feet.

"Jesus all the day long
Was my joy and my song;
O that all His salvation may see!
He hath loved me, I cried,
He hath suffer'd and died,
To redeem such a rebel as me."

But afterwards it pleased Infinite Wisdom to open a new scene to me. I began to be exercised with many uncommon temptations, and felt my own heart ready to comply with the same: this brought me into great straits, and I began to call in question the work of grace in my soul. O, the pain and anguish I felt for weeks together! Yet all this while I was very earnest with the Lord, my soul gave to Him, and I often said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Under this exercise I learned several things. As, first, that my nature was not so much changed as I thought: I found many things in me which opposed the grace of God; so that, without continual watching and prayer, I was capable of committing the very same sins which I had been guilty of before. 2. I began to be more acquainted with Satan's devices, and found power from God to resist them. 3. I had very affecting views of Christ as my great High Priest, who was touched with a feeling of all my infirmities. 4. The Scriptures were precious to me, and I found great comfort in reading them. And, lastly, I was conscious of the need of a far greater change in my nature than I had yet experienced. But I then read mostly the Calvinists' writings, who all write, that sin must be in believers till death: yet I found my mind at times deeply engaged in prayer to be saved from all sin.

Thus I went on for a long time, sometimes up and sometimes down, till it pleased God to bring me to hear you at Newcastle. You preached, I well remember, from the First Epistle of John i. 9: "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This was a precious time to me. While you were preaching, a Divine light shone in upon my heart with the word, and I was clearly convinced of the doctrine of sanctification, and the attainableness of it. I came home with full purpose of heart, not to rest till I was made a living witness of it. I had now a clear view, 1. Of the holiness of God; and saw that sin could not dwell with Him. 2. I had a clear view of the purity and perfection of His law, which is a transcript of the Divine nature. And, 3. I felt my great unlikeness to both: and, although I felt no condemnation, yet, in the view of these things, I felt much pain in my spirit, and my soul was humbled in the dust before Him! O, how I longed to be made like Him; to love Him with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength! I had glorious discoveries of the grand provision made in the new covenant for the complete salvation of the soul; and I went on in joyful expectation, crying to the Lord to put me in possession of all He had purchased for me, and promised to me. Sometimes I seemed to be upon the threshold, just stepping into glorious liberty; but again fear and unbelief prevailed, and I started back. This cast my mind into great perplexity, and I often reasoned concerning the truth of the thing.

It would be tedious to relate the various exercises I went through for several years, without opening my mind to any one. I do not remember that I ever conversed with one upon the subject, or ever heard any one discourse upon it. Only, I think, about eighteen years ago, it pleased God that I heard Mr. Olivers preach a sermon upon the subject. His text was, "Let us go on unto perfection." His doctrine was clear, and his arguments strong. My heart consented to the whole truth, and I had clearer views of the way of attaining it, namely, by faith, than ever before. This added new vigor to my spirit, and I seemed to be more on the wing than ever. I prayed and wept at His footstool, that he would show me all His salvation. And He gave me to experience such a measure of His grace as I never knew before; a great measure of heavenly light and Divine power spread through all my soul; I found unbelief taken away out of my heart; my soul was filled with such faith as I never felt before; my love to Christ was like fire, and I had such views of Him, as my life, my portion, my all, as swallowed me up; and O, how I longed to be with Him! A change passed upon all the powers of my soul, and I felt a great increase of holy and heavenly tempers. I may say, with humility, it was as though I was emptied of all evil, and filled with heaven and God.

Thus, under the influence of His power and grace, I rode upon the sky. My soul fed on angels' food, and I truly ate the bread of heaven. I had more glorious discoveries than ever of the gospel of God our Saviour, and especially in His saving the soul from all sin. I enjoyed such an evidence of this in my own mind, as put me beyond all doubt: and yet I never had such a sense of my own littleness, helplessness and unworthiness as now. So true it is, that only grace can humble the soul.

From the time the Lord gave me to experience this grace, I became an advocate for the glorious doctrine of Christian perfection: according to the gift He has been pleased to give me, I bear a testimony of it wherever I go; and I never find my soul so happy as when I preach most upon the blessed subject.

Thus I have simply related what I know of the work of God in my heart. I desire to give Him all the glory. But I have great cause to be ashamed before Him for my unfaithfulness. I feel I need His grace every moment: I stand by faith; I have as much need of Christ as ever; I may truly say,

"Every moment, Lord, I want
The merit of Thy death."

Glory be to His name, I find my soul united to Him, and my heart cries, "None but Christ!" I am kept by His power; I enjoy salvation; my heart is fixed, my anchor is sure and steadfast. I believe nothing shall separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

I conclude with saying, Though the whole of our salvation is from the Lord, yet He deals with us as rational creatures. He gives us light and conviction of our lost state; then the heart is humbled, and the soul bows before Him. He then speaks peace. This is done in a moment, and faith in the soul is the root of all Christian holiness. Thus the work of sanctification is begun in the heart, and the person is in a capacity of living to God, and growing in grace. If He finds us faithful in a little, He shows us there is a state of greater liberty provided for us. The soul being open to the Divine teaching, He shows us our want of this. We seek it with our whole heart, and He is pleased to put us in possession of it. This too is generally given in a moment, and perfectly frees the mind from all evil tempers, and enables us to love the Lord with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves.

Being thus perfected in love, we are much more qualified to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, than ever. O precious salvation! let me ever be a witness of it!

* * *

An Account of the last Affliction and Death
of Mr. William Hunter, Preacher of the Gospel;
communicated in a Letter from Mr. Thomas Dodd,
of Nenthead, to Mr. Mather

On the 17th of July, 1797, Mr. Hunter came to my house, having previously wrote him to come and take care of the society at Nenthead in my absence, being then at Tynemouth for the benefit of my health. When I came home on the 27th, I was struck with Mr. Hunter's appearance, which was greatly altered from the last time I saw him, which was on the 18th of April. On inquiring how he was, he said, "Very poorly;" and intimated he was much exhausted by meeting the classes, and preaching twice on the Sunday before. At night he preached for the last time, from Matt. xxiv. 44, "Be ye also ready;" and made many excellent remarks upon the subject, to which the people seriously attended, as unto the words of a dying man. In the morning he looked refreshed and pleasant, though very weak, and in the course of the day frequently walked out with me; but towards evening he began to breathe with difficulty. About one o'clock in the morning he called us up, and said, "I am almost dead." I was greatly affected with his humble, quiet, composed

confidence in God. The preacher and the Christian shone with peculiar luster: it was evident that he possessed what he had long been with holy fervor inculcating upon others.

In the morning he got up about nine o'clock, and came down stairs; but it was too plain that his dissolution was approaching apace. On the 30th he breathed with less difficulty, and the fever was much abated; which I attributed to his drinking plentifully of lemonade. When he spoke, which was but seldom, his words were solemn and affecting. On Monday, the 31st, he frequently forgot himself, and had various symptoms of death about him. I was afraid he would lose his senses for want of sleep, having had none for four or five days. August 1st, he frequently said, "I am a monument of God's goodness: glory be unto His name for ever and ever!" In the evening he said, "The Lord is my strength, and my song; He also is become my salvation;" and added, "The Lord be praised for ever and ever." "I am a monument of God's rich mercy." I asked, "If you die with us, shall a funeral sermon be preached on the occasion?" He answered, "Yes; and you must preach it." I requested he would name a portion of Scripture. After a short pause, he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.) A person present happening to say, "Mr. Hunter gets no sleep;" he replied, "Sleeping or waking, all is well: glory be to God for ever!" About ten he gave out his favorite hymn, --

"I long to behold Him array'd
With glory and light from above;
The King in His beauty display'd,
His beauty of holiest love," &c.

He then prayed with great fervor.

On the 2d the pins of the tabernacle seemed to slacken apace, and the pitcher was ready to break at the fountain, and all the animal powers were almost exhausted, and refused to do their respective offices. In the evening, when I sat down by him, he frequently took my hand in his, and attempted to say something respecting the Divine law, but was not able to speak. At length he cried out aloud, "Glory be to God, He has fulfilled all righteousness! If this was not included in His obedience, it would be imperfect; and then what should we do?" His whole salvation he rested on the merits of the Redeemer. While the bed was making, he sat in a chair, and desired we would sing the above-mentioned hymn; which was done in a solemn manner, during which his happy soul was swallowed up in the love of God. He then prayed with an holy fervor and devotion suitable to the occasion. About one o'clock in the morning we were called up to see him die; but he got over this struggle, and lay in quiet slumbers till eight o'clock. When I entered the room, he said, "There is much to do before we can die: but I have no fear; my whole heart is devoted to God; I have not followed cunningly devised fables." When any persons came to see him, he was very particular in recommending to them the service of God, with all its attendant comforts; nor did he suffer any to depart without pouring out his solemn benediction upon them. He frequently repeated Mr. Wesley's hymn, --

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

He would then burst into tears of joy; and, taking my hand and kissing it, said, "O, how I love you, my brother!" Coming out of a short slumber, and fixing his eyes on the opposite side of the room, he cried out, "Precious Christ! precious Jesus! What a sight is this! A poor unworthy creature dying, full of faith and joy in the Holy Ghost." Adding, --

"A feeble saint shall win the day,
Though death and hell obstruct the way."

When he was raised up to drink a little wine and water, he said with an air of holy triumph, "O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" In the evening he attempted frequently to whisper something weighty respecting the goodness of God; and got out, "Offer me up to God in prayer." About nine o'clock he whispered in my ear, "Pray and praise." And indeed, when we prayed in his presence, the glory of God filled the place. He would often whisper, "When will my Lord come?" and when I observed, "God's time is a good time," he replied, "All is well; all is well."

On Saturday, when I entered the room, he took my hand, but could not speak. Asking him, if he felt much pain, he laid his hand upon his right breast. Through the whole of Mr. Hunter's affliction there appeared such perfect resignation to the will of God, that I durst not pray for life or death; but that God would treat His servant according to the good pleasure of His unerring goodness. On Wednesday he desired that the preachers might be informed of his case and situation. I asked, if he meant the preachers then assembled in Conference. He replied, "All of them: let them know I have never varied from the Methodist doctrine and discipline, from my first setting out." Whenever he had an interval of ease, he discovered much patience and humility, and was a pleasing ornament of his profession. On the 9th, after prayer in the evening, as I was sitting by him, I happened to say, "What has the world to call happiness, compared to this?" not thinking that he heard me; but he replied, "It is all a cheat." I then asked, if he had much pain. He laid his hand as usual on his right breast, and said, "But all is well." His whole deportment fully evidenced undissembled piety and true godliness. On Thursday my wife asked him, if he was desirous of being gone. He answered, "I am passive." He said little more till the evening, when all the powers of his soul seemed deeply engaged with God and eternal things.

On Saturday morning, the 12th, at four o'clock, those who sat up with him called us up to see him depart. When I entered the room, I asked, if he knew me. He whispered, "Yes." I said, "Is God present with you?" he replied three times, "yes." Upon wetting his lips, he said, "Glory be to God! We should praise Him for everything." In the evening he took a cup of cocoa; and, after changing his linen, he was blessed with an interval of ease, and looked pleasant and cheerful. I read to him, in a slow soft manner, the 32d and 35th chapters of Isaiah; and observed on the conclusion, "How beautiful is the word of the Lord!" He lifted up his hands and eyes, and cried, "May all the ends of the earth praise Him!" Sunday, the 13th, he appeared on the threshold of eternity. I said to him, "Sir, you are very weak this morning." "Yes," he replied; "but the Lord is strong: glory be to His precious name for ever!" In the evening he nearly fainted. When he opened his eyes, he whispered, "All is well: there is nothing wrong." When I prayed by him, he was perfectly sensible, and exerted his remaining strength in hearty amens. I put my hand into his, when leaving the room, and asked, if he knew me. He answered, in a broken whisper, "Very well." He then, as well as he was able, blessed the children present, and exhorted them to seek the Lord.

About four in the morning of the 14th I was hastily called; and after being a few minutes in the room, the happy spirit of this blessed man of God took its flight into the regions of eternal repose. Thus died, as he had lived, Mr. William Hunter, full of Divine peace, love, and joy. During the seventeen days of his affliction the enemy was not permitted to approach him; for perfect love cast out fear; and, in the fullest sense of the word, he rejoiced evermore, prayed without ceasing, and in everything gave thanks unto God. I said in my heart, and with my whole heart, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord! Let my last end be like his!"

Thomas Dodd
Nenthead, Alston-Moor,
September 6th, 1797

* * *

A farther Account of Mr. Hunter, by an affectionate Friend, whose acquaintance with him commenced between twenty and thirty years ago

October 6th, 1797

Dear Sir,

Hearing a letter read this morning, which gave a relation of the happy and peaceful departure of Mr. Hunter, whose ministry I sat under at York, in the years 1773 and 1774, it brought to my mind several circumstances relating to that blessed man, which, upon further consideration, I thought might be useful and acceptable, not only to his numerous friends in various parts of England and Scotland, where he labored with great fidelity and uprightness, but likewise to all who desire to follow him as he followed Christ.

At the time of my first acquaintance with him, he enjoyed much of the power of religion, as his spirit and temper, as well as his conversation and preaching, abundantly demonstrated. I remember to have heard him say, that when he first entered upon the laborious work of a Methodist preacher, his discourses were confined chiefly to the first principles of religion, exhorting and inviting sinners to repent, and pointing them to Jesus Christ, in order that they might obtain, through faith, the pardon of their sins. But after a season his mind was more engaged in building up believers in their most holy faith, and showing them the way, both by precept and example, of obtaining deliverance from their evil tempers, and increasing in holiness of heart and life.

You doubtless remember that his understanding in the things of God was truly enlightened, and his method of expressing himself was solid and weighty, which gave additional force to the arguments he produced in favor of godliness, so that they sunk deep into the minds of those who heard him. His expressions were plain and strong, accompanied with genuine simplicity, and such a sense of the importance of his office, that few could hear him without being impressed by the subject which he treated upon. The same serious deportment which he maintained in the pulpit, he supported wherever he went. His speech indeed was slow and deliberate, but without any affectation. Heavenly wisdom dropped from his lips, and manifested that his piety was uniform, and that he lived and walked in the Spirit; so that, whether in the pulpit, or in private conversation,

he was always the same. In his intercourse with the people, his great object was their edification, always leading the conversation to something suitable to the state they were in. I may say, with the strictest propriety, that he was a wise master builder in the church of Christ, and well acquainted with Divine things, which he had learned from the Holy Scriptures, as well as from his own experience, and the knowledge he acquired of the temptations, trials, and afflictions which others had gone through. These qualifications rendered his visits among us very useful. We never were favored with his company without receiving some benefit. He either discovered to us the devices of Satan; or more clearly pointed out the way of faith; or unfolded some part of Christian experience with which we were unacquainted. He faithfully labored to strengthen the weak hands, and to confirm the feeble knees. I may likewise add, that his fellow-laborer in the work trod in the same excellent path; which rendered our intercourse with them exceeding profitable. Our hearts were softened, and our desires continually enlarged, to obtain further degrees of redeeming love. By these happy means we were strengthened and encouraged to persevere in the good way, and improve the Divine impressions we received from time to time under the word.

Mr. Hunter's deportment was grave and serious, without any mixture of lightness or trifling. His humility shone in a variety of instances. When in the company of his brethren the preachers, his unassuming and modest carriage before them showed that he preferred each in honor to himself. It seemed as if he continually recollected our Lord's words, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." He confined his labors chiefly to the flock over which he was appointed; never appearing forward to engage in anything where he thought himself not particularly called. Hence, although he was united to the Methodists in the closest and most affectionate union, yet he very seldom took any active part in the Connection, except that of bringing sinners to God through faith in Christ, and building up believers in peace and purity.

In looking over some of my papers, I found the following remarks from a sermon of Mr. Hunter's, preached in the year 1781, on Christian holiness. Whether I had committed them to writing at the time I heard him preach, or procured them from some friend, I cannot now recollect; but I beg leave to transcribe them, hoping they may be useful to those who are desirous of obtaining purity of heart. The discourse was upon Hebrews vi. 1. After exhorting believers to go on to perfection, Mr. Hunter observed, that, "without this, we cannot increase in the Divine life, nor obtain a becoming meetness for glory. When our eye is fixed on Christ, and all the powers of the mind are engaged in this great and blessed exercise, then the work of sanctification is carried on in all its parts. Sin grows weaker and weaker; Divine love spreads through the soul. Faith grows; and the love of God and man increases. In this temper of mind, the believer pants after the full enjoyment of God, and earnestly prays for the accomplishment of His great and precious promises. Thus, in the exercise of His talents, and in the use of all the means of grace, the blessed moment comes; -- the soul lays hold of this, or some similar promise, by the strong arm of faith, 'I will save you from all your uncleannesses.' The Holy Spirit spreads His powerful influences through the heart, like a refiner's fire, and burns up, root and branch, all the remains of indwelling sin. The Lord speaks to the heart, 'Thou art Mine: I have redeemed thee.' The great mountain of corruption is at once removed. The soul enters into its holy habitation; it lives and rests in God; and continually says, 'Here will I dwell; for I have desired it.' When we enter into this great and glorious liberty, the Lord enlarges our capacity, and enables us to make swifter progress in the Divine life. There is a gradual work carried on in the soul after the evils are destroyed, so that we

may say to all believers, 'Grow in grace; and go on to higher degrees of evangelical purity.' We receive no new gift, but larger measures of the same love and grace, which prepare and fit us for eternal life. His commands are not grievous; but we delight in doing and suffering His blessed will. There are many graces which the Lord communicates to His people, the value of which we should never know, if we were not called to suffer with Christ: but while we continue looking to the Lord, and exercising the talents imparted, they increase abundantly; and we learn to put every trial we meet with among those things that work together for our good. Thus the believer takes up his cross, and goes on through evil report and good report; not seeking the esteem of men; but always endeavoring to keep a good conscience, and approve himself to God. In this state, no distracting fears or doubts can depress the mind, either with regard to its present or future welfare."

I am, dear brother,
Yours in Christ,
F. P.

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Part 7
THE LIFE OF MR. ROBERT ROBERTS
Written by Himself

Letter to the Rev. John Wesley

Bolton, July 7th, 1779

Rev. and Dear Sir,

When you were at Liverpool in the spring, you desired me to write an account of my life; but at that time I had little thought of doing it, as I could not see that it would answer any valuable end. Having, however, had time to consider the matter seriously, I now judge it may be of some use to those into whose hands it may fall, especially to those among whom I have preached the word of God. I have therefore ventured to send you a sketch of the most material things I can recollect respecting myself; and I pray God that it may be a means of promoting His glory, and the cause of religion in the world.

I was born in the year 1731, at Upton, near Chester. My parents were respectable farmers. My mother died when I was but eight years of age, and my father when I was sixteen, to my unspeakable loss. They were industrious, frugal, and prudent, and took more care of their children's morals and education than most parents do. While my father lived, I was employed in his business; but after his decease, I was put apprentice to a wheelwright in Chester.

As I was brought up a member of the Established Church, I attended the Church service, but understood neither the prayers, preaching, articles, nor homilies, being ignorant of the Scriptures, and of the power of God. I have reason to believe, that the words of St. Paul were but too applicable to myself and the generality of those among whom I then lived: "We ourselves also

were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."

I was in great bondage through fear of death from my infancy, and an entire stranger to the way of peace. I had no notion of salvation through a Redeemer, and knew no more of the nature and necessity of the new birth than Nicodemus did. Nor do I remember that I ever heard one gospel sermon till I was above twenty years of age: so that I have reason to add, I was at that time "without Christ, being an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." And yet I was kept from the commission of scandalous sins. I was sober by constitution, diligent in business, and very careful. And as I went to church oftener than many, I was deemed by myself, and those who knew me, better than others. But I was a great sinner before God, and a child of wrath; my heart was deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; and my tempers, words, and actions were abominable in His sight with whom I have to do.

The first good impression, as far as I can recollect, that was made upon my mind, was by a few words dropped by Mr. Thomas Brisco, without any seeming design of his: but God sent them home to my heart, and they were as a nail fixed in a sure place. We had been school-fellows when very young; and when I went to live in Chester, we were intimate companions till he became religious. But then I avoided him, as though he had had the plague, because he was called a Methodist. Nevertheless, I retained a secret respect for him. About two years after his conversion, being in company with him and his brother, he happened to mention some rude usage they had met with that day as they returned from the church: among other things the people cried out, "There go the sanctified Methodists!" He pitied their ignorance, and with a good deal of fervor wished that what they had said were true; adding, "If I was sanctified, I should not be long out of heaven." He talked about death, as though he was not afraid of it, but rather as if it were a desirable event. This struck me indeed, and made a deep impression on my soul, and convinced me that there was something in religion which I was a stranger to.

From this time I determined a good opinion of the Methodists, and believed them to be the servants of the living God. I began to pray, and strive against sin; I likewise resolved to join the society, but not yet. For I knew, if I went among them, I must suffer persecution. At that time the Methodists were looked upon as the worst of men, and the most horrible things were laid to their charge that could be invented. They were represented as hypocrites, blasphemers, disturbers of the peace of families and of the nation; and to associate with them was said to be the way to destroy body, soul, and substance. Others, indeed, might curse and swear, get drunk, profane the Sabbath, and starve their families, and yet be in no danger of persecution or ill-treatment of any kind; but, on the contrary, were deemed innocent creatures, in comparison of the Methodists, &c. I thought, "I cannot bear this usage where I am known, and from my relations and neighbors; but, if I live to the expiration of my apprenticeship, I will go to London, or some other place where I am not known, and then I will be a Methodist."

When I was about twenty-one years of age, Mr. Brisco invited me to hear Mr. John Hampson. I went with him, but was very much ashamed, and afraid of being seen by any that knew me. However, I was well pleased with what the preacher said, and believed him to be a messenger from God. Notwithstanding this, I did not hear another preacher for near six months; for

I feared persecution. Nevertheless, I retained my good opinion of the people, and the way in which they worshipped God; and now and then I spoke a word in their favor. My desires increased, I prayed frequently, and more fervently, but was overcome by sin, although I wished to be delivered from it, and made many resolutions against it. But, alas! I was without wisdom and power, and too often was led captive by the enemy of souls. At length I took courage, and went to hear another preacher. The discourse was made useful to me, and likewise the conversation of some pious young men belonging to the society. I resolved, by Divine grace, to serve God, and save my soul. My mind became in a measure enlightened, and I was enabled to forsake my sins and sinful companions all at once. The latter was no hard task; for most of them fled from me, as soon as I was reported to be a Methodist: they were glad to get out of my way, lest I should reprove them, or cause them to be stigmatized with the same opprobrious name.

I now desired admission into the society; and after being examined by one of the preachers, respecting the state of my mind, my motives, &c., I was favored with that privilege; for such I then looked upon it to be, and I see it in the same point of light at this day. And I hope, and believe, I shall have reason to praise God to eternity that I ever was united with that despised people, whom God had greatly blessed; and I trust He will continue to bless them for ages to come.

I now constantly attended upon all the means of grace. I went to church, and received the sacrament almost every Lord's day. Divine light broke in upon my soul with so much clearness, that I was astonished at myself, and was ready to say, "Where have I been? and what have I been doing all my life till now?" I compared myself to a man who had lived all his life in a dungeon, and was brought suddenly out of it into the full blaze of day. The Scriptures seemed new; as also the Common-Prayer Book and everything that was spiritual. And I was fully convinced that the doctrines taught by the Methodists, and those contained in the word of God and the Common Prayers of the Church of England, must stand or fall together; there being no difference between them. I also saw that the Methodists had been greatly injured by slanders and evil reports; for instead of finding them to be hypocrites, disturbers of the peace of families, enthusiasts, &c., I found them sincere, peaceable, humble, and rational Christians; minding the things of this world in their place, and not neglecting those of another. For these reasons my soul was firmly united to them.

And now I met with what I expected; namely, persecution from relations, friends, and neighbors; and wherever I went, some railed, and others cursed me, and said, "it would be no more sin to kill me than to kill a mad dog." Others pitied me, and cursed the false prophets, as they called the preachers, who had deceived me, and driven me out of my senses. Into whatever street or lane in the city I went, I met with reproach and cruel mockings. This was a great trial to me; yet, by the grace of God, I bore it; though sometimes shame made it a sufficient exercise for all the patience, resolution, and grace I had. From my first setting out to be religious, I never denied the truth; neither would I suffer its professors to be spoken against, without vindicating them to the utmost of my power. And I thank God I always found somewhat to say that would either convince or stop the mouths of gain sayers; for I have always observed that the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, and that the enemies of the truth cannot stand before it.

I had not been long among the Methodists, before I was made sensible of my guilt, misery, and danger, and likewise of the absolute necessity of having an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ;

that my sins might be forgiven, and that I might be born again; without which, I knew I could not see the kingdom of God. I sought the Lord with earnestness day and night; and even wished it had been possible for me to live without sleep, that I might have spent all my time in this employment. Indeed, I did make a very little sleep serve, though I wrought hard every day. The consideration, that I had wasted so much of my short life, in a state of sin, ignorance, and rebellion against so good and merciful a God, greatly affected me, and I found it hard work to forgive the ministers I had sat under so long a time, for not instructing me in the essential doctrines of the gospel; for I was persuaded that if I had heard the truths of the gospel laid down in a clear manner, I should have been brought to an acquaintance with the Lord some years before.

It was in the month of June, 1754, that I joined the society; and about six weeks after I experienced that peace which passeth all understanding. The love of God was shed abroad in my heart, and His Spirit did bear witness with my spirit that I was His child. And now I blessed His holy name that ever I was born. I loved Him who had first loved me; and with joy declared His goodness to my fellow travelers, and we rejoiced together.

In a few weeks after I had found peace with God I began to see and feel the depravity of my nature in a greater degree than I ever had done before. At first I was dejected and cast down; then I began to doubt that I had deceived myself in concluding that the Lord was reconciled to me; and, my comfort decreasing, by and by I entirely cast away my confidence. And now a horrible dread overwhelmed my soul; and, to increase my distress, Satan threw his fiery darts at me, which stuck fast in my mind, particularly blasphemous thoughts. For some months such thoughts crowded into my mind as are not fit to be mentioned, and which could only proceed from the prince of darkness. The enemy then suggested that I had sinned against the Holy Ghost, -- that there was no mercy for me, -- and that these thoughts were not from him, but arose from my own heart. This affected me more than anything I had ever felt: to think that I should have such thoughts against that blessed God who had been so kind to me, and whom I desired to love and honor for ever, pierced me with inexpressible anguish.

In a short time I gave up all hope of mercy and deliverance, and sunk into utter despair. I imagined that I had blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, which threw me into such inexpressible misery, that I had no rest day or night, but in the morning I was ready to say, "Would God it were evening!" and in the evening, "Would God it were morning!" I fasted, prayed, and used every means of grace constantly, and resolved to serve God as long as I lived, if He did send me to hell when I died. I do not know that I gave way to one known sin, open or secret, when this distress came upon me, except that of unbelief. I conversed with the most experienced of the children of God I met with, but could find none who had drunk so deep of the wormwood and gall as I had done. However, they did all in their power to comfort me; they told me that God was with me, and would deliver me. I likewise read all the books I met with that were calculated to direct and help a soul in deep distress, but found few suited to my dreadful case. The books I received most benefit from were, Bolton's "Instructions for the right comforting of afflicted Consciences;" Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and his "Grace abounding to the chief of Sinners." At one time I was a little comforted with the following lines:

"I never shall rise
To my first paradise,

Or come my Redeemer to see;
But I feel a faint hope
That at last He will stoop,
And His pity shall bring Him to me."

One day when I was at work, musing on my unhappy state, those precious words of Scripture were applied to my soul with some degree of power: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." This afforded me some consolation: but it was only like the morning cloud and early dew; it soon vanished away. I often thought that both God and the whole creation were against me; and concluded, that I should have been happy had I been anything but a man; and was ready to say, "O that I had never been born!" But one Saturday evening, at a prayer-meeting, the Lord blessed me with the powerful drawings of His love, and with a dawning of hope that He would yet be gracious to me. I was as a man raised from the dead; for I had been a long time in darkness, and would, I thought, have given as many worlds, had it been in my power, as there are minutes in eternity, for the least dawning of hope. From this time till my great deliverance, I frequently found comfortable visits from on high.

My great distress continued about nine months; and the Lord was pleased to sanctify it to me. I was more abundantly sensible of the power of unbelief, and of my helplessness. I clearly saw I must be saved by grace, or not at all. I was stripped from all self-righteousness, and every other dependence, but a crucified Saviour, and was made willing to be saved in God's own way as a sinner; yea, as the most unworthy of all creatures. I thought I was willing to wait till my last breath, if I were but sure the Lord would then smile upon me, and show me His salvation. The Lord then graciously manifested Himself unto me, as my Lord and my God, in a powerful manner. He overturned my unbelief, and all my doubts and fears. He removed all my misery, and filled me with peace and joy through believing; so that I was as a giant refreshed with new wine; my cup ran over, and I was ready to proclaim my great Deliverer's praise upon the house-top. I could no more doubt of the favor of God than of my own existence. And such were the impressions then made upon my mind, that I was a stranger to doubt or tormenting fear for many years after.

Being appointed to meet a class, I endeavored to comfort and strengthen my brethren, and to promote the work of God both among the society and others. I found a willingness to do or suffer anything, so that I might glorify God, and be a means of saving sinners. After some time I gave a word of exhortation, first in Chester, then in North Wales, Cheshire, and Lancashire; and the Lord was pleased to make my labors acceptable to many, and useful to some, particularly at Park-gate and Neston, where I lived and followed my business near two years. But I had many trials; for the people agreed not to employ me, because I was a Methodist preacher. I was brought before the justices, at one of their monthly meetings: but this did not afford my persecutors cause for triumph; for I had words given to me which confounded them all.

Many things were done to prevent me from staying in Neston, but in vain. For, after trying other means, I leased some land there. Then they threatened to press me, which obliged me to get a licence. Afterwards, they threatened to punish me, if I preached in an unlicensed place, and I was obliged to get the house licensed. But this did me little service; for they sent for the man who lived in the house, and, partly by threatenings and partly by promises, prevailed upon him not to let me preach there any more. We then had another house to seek, and could not meet with one but at an

extravagant price, near two miles from the town. However, we went thither winter and summer; and some seed was sown that abides to this day; a few sinners were brought to the knowledge of the truth, and for many years they have had a convenient preaching-house to worship God in.

It was strongly impressed upon my mind that I was called to preach the gospel; and I found such desires to do it, that everything else seemed burdensome to me, as I judged I was out of my place. And though the persecution and opposition began to cease, and some of the principal gentlemen in the place employed me, so as to give me a fair prospect of doing well with regard to temporal things; yet as I thought I was called to be an instrument in the Lord's hands of saving souls, all worldly prospects were of little account to me. I prayed to God for direction, that I might not run before I was sent, and that His will, and not mine, might be done. This I wished above all things; but at the same time I saw that the saving of one soul would be of more consequence than anything else under the sun.

I had now several invitations to preach in different places; and as I was willing to go wherever I could, I sometimes took long journeys on foot, and bore my own expenses, which I did with pleasure. After laboring in this manner upwards of two years, I was advised by the preachers who were then in the circuit, to give up myself wholly to the work of God. I agreed so to do; and at the Conference held at London in July, 1759, I was appointed for Wiltshire circuit. After settling my temporal affairs, I set out for my circuit in the month of September following: so that if I am spared till September next, I shall have been twenty years employed in the Lord's vineyard; two of which I spent in Ireland; upwards of one in Scotland; and the rest in various parts of this kingdom.

But were I to give you an account of what happened in every place, respecting my labors, success, trials, persecutions, &c., my letter would swell into a small volume. Waving, therefore, these particulars, I shall only add a few words more.

I can say, to the glory of God, that I have not gone a warfare at my own charges. I mean, it was not in my own strength that I set out, or have continued laboring these many years; and I am sure it was not to enrich myself. Food and raiment were all I could expect, or ever desired, as a temporal reward. For though I have a numerous family, it has principally been supported these fourteen years out of the income of the little estate which Providence entrusted me with. And I have great reason to be thankful that I have been enabled to do the Lord's work, not of necessity, nor by constraint, but of a willing mind.

If I had desired it, I might long ago have had a settled place, and comfortable maintenance, both for myself and family; but firmly believing that I was ordained to preach the gospel, I willingly remained where I was called, being persuaded that I could not be more usefully employed than I then was. And I am now of opinion, that if it were right for me to choose any employment, I would rather be Methodist preacher than anything else.

Ever since I began to preach, I have been settled in my judgment, touching the extent of the atonement; believing that Christ tasted death for every man, and that there is a day of grace for all the posterity of Adam, and a door of salvation, at which if they knock, it shall be opened unto them. Indeed, wherever I have yet labored, there have been some visible proofs of success: and, I praise God, I still find as great a desire to promote the Redeemer's cause and interests among mankind as

ever; and, if my health and strength will permit, I am resolved, through God's assistance, to preach the everlasting gospel as long as I live.

I am, Rev. and dear Sir,
Your affectionate and obedient son in the gospel,
Robert Roberts

* * *

Dear Sir,

You have received the late Mr. Roberts's account of himself, which he wrote many years since. He has now finished his course, and is gone to his eternal reward. He completed the fortieth year of his labors in the Lord's vineyard, as an itinerant preacher, at the time he came to Macclesfield in September last. He was a man of great integrity and respectability. I had the satisfaction of knowing him near thirty years ago. He was then a zealous preacher, and highly esteemed in the churches. He was generally considered as a man of sound judgment, and of an unblamable conversation; and he was not only a very useful minister of the gospel of Christ, but was remarkably humane, and attentive to the domestic concerns of poor families, where he occasionally was, in advising, instructing, and sympathizing with them in their various troubles. By these means he became well acquainted with the common afflictions of many of his poor brethren, and knew how more effectually to be of service to them. He was an example to them in the simplicity of his manner of life, and the plainness of his diet, always choosing to give as little trouble as possible, wherever he came.

The complaint of which he died was a paralytic stroke. He was attacked with this affliction about twenty-three years since, which affected his speech very much for a time, and caused a more deliberate manner both of thought and expression ever after in his public labors. He had a return of the same complaint about a year ago. After he came to Macclesfield, and was exempted from his public labors, he was supposed to be better than he had been for some time before, and preached for us a few times.

We had often requested him to pay us a friendly visit; which he accordingly did on the 16th of December last, accompanied by his eldest daughter, when, immediately after sitting down in our house, he began to be affected, and could not articulate his words. The nature of his disorder being immediately perceived, his son was sent for, to whose house he was conveyed, where he had every attention that the skill and affection of his son could provide for him. As he continued about six days in this afflicted state, I repeatedly saw him before he breathed his last, where the Christian and affectionate father was attended by seven of his children in his last hours. I doubt not but he knew them all, and felt in a degree the pleasure that was natural to the affectionate parent and friend. From all that we could learn, he appeared to lie passive in the hands of God, until the Lord took him, which was about two o'clock in the morning of the Sunday following.

We lamented the nature of his affliction, chiefly, because of his being deprived of speech; believing that the last testimony of his faith in Christ, his love to God, and the admonitions to his

children and friends, might have had a salutary and lasting influence upon their minds. But God, who is wise and good, knoweth what is best, and cannot err in what He doeth.

Jeremiah Brettell
Macclesfield, February, 1800

* * *

In the Minutes of the Conference for 1800, it is said concerning Mr. Roberts, "He was a faithful minister of Christ above forty years, having reached the period of life when human nature generally fails. His voice and memory were greatly weakened a considerable time before his death. But he was still mighty in the Scriptures, diligent in the work of the Lord, and benevolent in his temper. He was a pleasing fellow-laborer, against whose character no charge was ever brought. He lived holy, and died happy in God his Saviour."

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Part 8
THE LIFE OF MR. THOMAS PAYNE
Written by Himself

Letter to the Rev. Mr. Wesley

Waterford, March 16th, 1781

Rev. Sir,

1. At your request I undertake a work, of which, God knows, I am ashamed. For, when I look back on my past tempers, words, and actions, I am really amazed that I am yet alive: for surely I have deserved the lowest place in hell. I was created to be happy; but I chose the means of misery; and firmly believe myself the most unworthy of all that body of preachers with whom I am connected.

2. I was born at Nailsworth, near Stroud, in Gloucestershire, in the year 1741, of very pious and upright parents. They were by profession Particular Anabaptists; and they lived in the fear and love of God. My father labored to train up his children in the same, seconding his precepts by his example and prayers. He kept up family devotion twice a day, reading a chapter or psalm first. And twice a day, early and late, he spent a considerable time with God in secret. Thus he walked with God himself, and incited his children to follow him. He never spoiled the child by sparing the rod; but always remonstrated, and then corrected. And his well-timed corrections seldom failed to leave some good impressions upon us.

3. On his death-bed he gave me his dying charge, with a prayer, which I believe God sealed in heaven. As my mother was weeping, and wishing that God would spare him a little longer, he said, "Would you wish me so much evil, as to be any longer detained from the joys of heaven? Poor Tom," meaning me, "will lose a good friend tomorrow, about two o'clock." The next

day, about that time, he cried out, "Lord, how long are Thy chariot-wheels a-coming?" and, within a few moments after, sweetly fell asleep.

4. I heartily thank God for a pious education, which laid a foundation for a future reformation. From the earliest period of recollection, I found the strivings of God's Spirit. I formed many good resolutions, from time to time; but quickly broke through them all: although when I was ten years old I prayed much, and desired to be truly religious. I was left under the care of a currier and leather-dresser, who carried on the shoe-making business. But, being under little restraint, and continually exposed to bad company, I gave way to youthful follies, till I left my place, without asking leave; and till my friends sent me to London. Being now among religious people who belonged to Mr. Whitefield, my good desires revived, and produced a considerable amendment in the whole tenor of my actions.

5. But I did not at all know myself. And having an inclination to see the world, I enlisted, in the year 1759, in General Burgoyne's light regiment of dragoons. But, upon examination, I was found not quite tall enough, and so was discharged from them. Being ashamed to return to my friends, I enlisted in the service of the East India Company; and was soon sent out in the "Triton" store-ship, for the island of St. Helena, on the south of Africa. I saw the island in a dream just before I enlisted. We sailed from Gravesend, in December, 1759, under the convoy of the "Ripon" man-of-war, and in company with the "Onslow" East-Indiaman, who afterward parted from us in a gale of wind. A French frigate bore down upon us in the Bay of Biscay, doubtless taking us for merchantmen. When we were preparing to engage, I was troubled at first, knowing I was not fit to die; but I soon comforted myself with the unchangeable decree. After firing a few shots, the frigate bore away. The "Ripon" chased and took her. But we saw our convoy no more, till some time after she came to St. Helena.

6. We had now a week's calm. It then blew a hurricane for three weeks without intermission. All our masts were loosened, and several sets of sails torn in a thousand pieces. Both our chain and hand pumps were kept going for a month, without any intermission. During this time one poor man fell overboard, and cried out, "A boat, for God's sake!" and sunk. A second fell down from the mast on the quarterdeck, and dashed out his brains. A third, going up to furl the mainsail, must have shared the same fate, but that, as he was falling, he caught and hung by his hands and feet to the cluegarling of the sail. But he did not give God the glory. Afterwards, as we were sailing near the equator, on a calm sea, he was scraping the ship-side, standing on one of the half-parts, and, as usual, damning his own eyes and limbs. The captain hearing him said, "You should not curse and swear in that manner. The half-part may turn with you, and you may be drowned with an oath in your mouth." But he swore on. In less than five minutes the half-part did turn. He fell, and rose no more. The captain instantly put the ship about: but it was all in vain! This alarmed me a little: but then I thought, "It was decreed," and was easy again.

7. The day we arrived at St. Helena, I had another shock. Two men were swimming near our ship. A very large shark, which I verily believe had followed our ship four hundred miles, bit at one of them, and missed him. He cried out, "A shark?" but too late; for his comrade was immediately bit in two. Indeed, we had men killed continually. Some, getting drunk, rolled down precipices; others fell into the sea. And I verily think, half of the army, and half of the other

inhabitants of the island, did not live out half their days; which often gave me very serious thoughts of the uncertainty of human life.

8. My seriousness was increased by an extraordinary occurrence, which I simply relate just as it was. One night, as I was standing sentinel at Mr. M_____'s door, I heard a dreadful rattling, as if the house was all shaken to pieces, and tumbling down about my ears. Looking towards it, I saw an appearance, about the size of a six-weeks' calf, lying at the door. It rose, came towards me, and looked me in the face, passed by, returned again, and went to the door. The house shook as before, and it disappeared. A few days after, our head innkeeper, Mr. M_____, told the officer of the guard, that the same night Mrs. M_____ died, he, with eight persons more sitting up, observed the house shake exceedingly; that they were greatly surprised, and carefully searched every room, but to no purpose; that not long after, there was a second shaking, as violent as the former; that a while after, the house shook a third time; and just then Mrs. M_____e died.

9. I now really desired to serve God. But I had none to help me forward. I longed for some religious acquaintance; and every year, when the store-ship came from England, I diligently inquired whether any good men came in it. At length one arrived who had been educated at the Foundery-school in London. And he was once serious, but had turned again to folly. However, he was now desirous to return to God. I found, likewise, another young man, who had an earnest desire to save his soul: and we three agreed to serve God together. I now fasted and prayed, and, having a little larger income, endeavored to help my neighbors. But this quickly puffed me up with pride, till I was suffered to fall into outward sin. This humbled me indeed: I abhorred myself, and saw the necessity of a deeper work, in order to my being happy, either in this world or in the world to come.

10. My companions and I were greatly strengthened by an uncommon trial that befell us soon after. We frequently went out at night to pray by the side of a mountain. One night, as we were walking together, and talking of the things of God, I heard a noise, and saw something in the form of a large bear pursuing me closely. My hair stood on end, and, as we were walking arm in arm, I suddenly pulled both my companions round with me. They both saw him, and one of them fainted away. It then reared itself upon its hind-legs into the air. I said, "Satan, we are come hither to serve God; and we will do it, in spite of thee, and all the devils in hell." Instantly it sunk into the earth: we then prayed upon the very spot; and soon found ourselves strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

11. In about a week after, I spoke unadvisedly with my lips. It cut me to the heart. I went to a quarry at the foot of the mountain, fell prostrate on the earth, and cried out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the guilt and power of sin?" But I was a strong Calvinist, and that kept me from the blessing a long time, waiting for the irresistible call, and thinking it horrid presumption to venture upon Christ, till God compelled me by His almighty arm. Thus I waited, till I met with a German author, who convinced me of the absolute necessity of "striving to enter in at the strait gate;" of "taking the kingdom of heaven by violence;" of "laying hold of God's strength," in order to make peace with Him; of venturing my spirit, soul, and body, with all my sins, sorrows, cares, and all my wants, on the absolute mercy of God in Christ Jesus.

12. With a full purpose of doing this, I called my companions to the old spot to prayer. And while I was praying, and wrestling for Christian liberty,

"Panting for everlasting rest,
And struggling into God," --

I cried out, with an uncommon ecstasy of joy and astonishment, "O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise!" Being divinely assisted, I believed with my heart unto righteousness: on which, God shed abroad His love therein, and gave me the Spirit of adoption, crying, "Abba, Father;" which Spirit witnessed with my spirit that I was a child of God. I then could not refrain from declaring what God had done for my soul. I cried out to those about me, "Why cannot you praise God with me, and for me? I am so filled with the love of God, methinks, I am just ready to fly up to heaven, with my very body."

13. But I had a Calvinian library, which I often read. And hence I imbibed that miserable notion, that it was absolutely necessary every believer should come down from the mount. Hence I was persuaded that I must lose my first love; that I must doubt of my justification, which those wretched casuists lay down as one great mark of sincerity. For want of knowing better, I listened to these, till I lost the witness of the Spirit. I then fell into doubts concerning my justification; nay, and concerning the being of a God. I sunk deeper and deeper, till I got to my old German author again. I then found that I must strive, not only to gain, but to hold fast, the witness of the Spirit, and the hope of the gospel; yea, that I must dispute every inch of ground with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Thus convinced, I went with renewed repentance to the throne of grace, and I found the fountain open. At two several times, it pleased God to give me so strong a discovery of His love to my soul, that it was then impossible to admit the least shadow of a doubt.

14. I now thought I could never be moved; God had made my hill so strong. I hired a little dwelling. I got a large library of books. I gathered more and more of the soldiers to join with me in fasting, praying, reading, singing, and every other means whereby we might edify each other. I began to exhort, and many were convinced of sin; some were justified, some English backsliders were restored, who died happy in God. But soon after I was preferred to a higher rank, which was a means of my forsaking God. To please man, I did violence to my conscience, and grieved the Holy Spirit of God. But I found no peace herein. Conviction returned, and I was on the brink of despair. Many times in a day I threw myself on the bed, in unspeakable anguish of mind, seeing no door of hope, but taking it for granted I should breathe my last in horrible fear. For about a year I could not believe even the being of a God. I thought, if there was such a God as the Scripture speaks of, He would either have saved or damned me before now. I do not know that I slept one whole night, for thirteen months together; nor indeed one whole hour, without some dreadful dream presaging the wrath to come. To complete my distress, and make me perfectly miserable, the ungodly who denied, and the Pharisees who despised, all heart-religion, were continually laughing me to scorn; crying, "Ha! ha! so would we have it. Where is our reprover now?"

15. One man on the parade, to provoke me, called upon the devil to d__n his Maker. Immediately a horror fell upon him, and from that hour he had no rest, day or night, till he made an open confession to a magistrate, that seven years before he had murdered a soldier, whose apparition followed him wherever he was. Upon this confession, judicially repeated, he was

condemned to die. When under sentence he sent for me, and begged I would converse and pray with him, which (with the leave both of the governor and chaplain) I did till the day of his execution. He then declared, "This is the best day I ever saw. This is my wedding-day. I am married to Christ; I am going to heaven, to praise Him to all eternity."

16. I was now promoted again. I had five different offices, and a large revenue therefrom. But as business increased, religion wore off; till, to avoid running into more sin, I married. My wife's mother was one of the most pious women in the island. But my wife's religion consisted in going to church, and then running a continual round of pleasure, of eating and drinking, dressing, playing, dancing, singing. Indeed, we both swam down the stream together: for I was afraid to think; I did not dare to meet my own conscience; and endeavored to stifle my own convictions with business, and with frantic mirth. Yet sometimes I could not help thinking; and my convictions were then so keen, that I was many times under strong temptation to put an end to my own life. Perhaps I should have done it, but for a dream which I had a little before. I thought I saw myself standing on the summit of a frightful precipice; whence I was suddenly hurled down headlong through the air, expecting every moment to be dashed in pieces; when I was turned into a white dove, and flew up again.

17. About this time I saw; at a friend's house, two volumes extracted from Mr. Law's works, and a volume of your sermons. Hence my convictions returned stronger than ever. I sincerely and deeply lamented my grievous fall: my heart was broken in pieces, for my repeated and aggravated sins against so good a God; and I sincerely prayed, that He would send me any kind of affliction which would bring me back to Himself. I saw prosperity had ruined me; and cared not what I suffered, so I might once again love and serve God. And I referred it wholly to Him, to use whatever means He saw fit, in His adorable providence. At the same time I had a vehement desire to hear, once more, the genuine gospel of Christ.

18. One night I started in my sleep, and waked my wife, saying, "Peggy, I shall be obliged to leave you, and to go to England." She said, "It is only a foolish dream: go to sleep again." I endeavored so to do, but could not, this being so strongly impressed on my mind. Not long after, I disobliged some of my superiors by the just discharge of my duty. In consequence of this, I received orders to return to England; the man I saw in my dream pushing me off the precipice, being the very man who bore false witness against me, out of fear of the governor, who cursed, and drove away those that came to give evidence in my favor. I saw the hand of God herein, and acquiesced in His providence.

19. I came to England, and preferred a petition to the honorable East India Company. But they did not answer it; as, indeed, I had not with me the proper evidences to support it. I left my wife and child behind, and she was breeding with another. She did not desire to come with me; nor did I then desire that she should. I remained in London, waiting for the arrival of some of my evidences, till I had spent almost all my money, having only a few shillings left. I could not now tell what to do, as I had not one friend in London; till, hearing of you, sir, I found a desire to have some conversation with you. I went to the Foundery; but, instead of you, met with Mr. Jaco. I told him my situation and circumstances. He said, "I can do nothing for you." I asked, if he knew of any under-clerk's place, that I could get, till Providence cleared my way. He said, "No." I left him; but was not humbled enough yet for God to lift me up.

20. I said to myself, "I have been a soldier, and I will be so again." I could not murmur nor repine; having a deep sense of my backsliding from God, and being fully convinced that although His ways are often past finding out, yet He does all things well, and for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. I enlisted in the fifteenth regiment of foot, and was immediately made clerk of the regiment. I should have been further preferred; but I was too religious: I was not like other men. Indeed, I do not know that we had three men in the whole regiment who pretended to any religion at all. I had now again a few opportunities of calling sinners to repentance. I went home to Nailsworth upon a furlough, and began exhorting the people to turn to God. I did the same at Stroud, then at Cirencester, and afterwards at other places. Here my former sentiments were shaken, and I began to halt between two opinions. At length the gracious providence of God brought me to Leeds, in Yorkshire. Here I found such a large body of affectionate people as I never saw before, and some of them desired me to preach; but my officers threatened me that, if I did, I should be tried by a court martial; and I still doubted my call to preach: so I determined to take this method, never to preach unless invited to it, and then to observe whether there was any fruit.

Soon after, one of our soldiers told Mrs. Walsh, that they had a preacher in their regiment. She sent for me, and desired me to give an exhortation. I did so; and, contrary to my expectation, my officers were so far from punishing me, that they gave me all the liberty I could desire. And it pleased God to employ me as an instrument of awakening and converting several souls. I preached many times in the streets of Leeds. Mr. Mitchell then sent for me, and asked me, "For whom do you preach?" I said, "For Christ, in order to convert sinners to Him." He invited me to preach in your preaching-house; which I did many times. And I frequently went into the circuit for him, and for Mr. Robert Roberts, who were glad to have sinners converted to God, whatever instruments He was pleased to make use of. And it was here that, by reading and considering yours, Mr. Fletcher's, and Mr. Sellon's works, I was entirely delivered from the whole hypothesis of absolute predestination. And so, I am firmly persuaded, will every sensible man be, who has a real desire to know the whole truth of God, and then gives them a fair reading, with frequent and fervent prayer.

22. It was now that the thought of my wife and children lay upon my mind. And I saw no way, either for me to escape from the army, or them from St. Helena. But nothing is too hard for God. He first made a way for me. My colonel demanding thirty guineas for my discharge, it was soon raised and paid. Being now once more a free man, I desired to join with the people called Methodists. I saw (to begin with smaller things) that wherever they came, they promoted, (1) Cleanliness, industry, frugality, and economy: (2) Loyalty, conscientious subjection to the king, and all that are in authority: and, (3) Real, vital religion, which was well nigh banished from the earth.

23. I was received upon trial at the Leeds Conference, in the year 1772. Thence I was sent to London, where the sensible Methodists were so kind as to bear with my weaknesses; and they were not a few. I bless God that I was stationed here for my improvement. And even here, it pleased God that my labor was not in vain. You was [sic, He used the wrong word. -- DVM] then pleased to send me to Ireland, to take off my rough military edge, and to break me thoroughly to the work, on the rough mountains of the north. The damp, dirty, smoky cabins of Ulster were a good trial for me for the present. But what makes double amends for all these inconveniences to any

preacher who loves the work of God, is, that our people here are in general the most zealous, lively, affectionate Christians we have in the kingdom.

24. When I had been a little above a year in Ireland, my wife, who was before unwilling to leave home, as well as afraid of a sea-voyage, and of venturing into the northern climate, wrote me word that her father and mother were dead, and that she was willing to leave St. Helena, and not afraid either of a sea-voyage or of a cold climate. I informed you of this; and you was [sic] pleased to make application to the East India Company, who generously ordered my family to be brought to England, with every needful accommodation, at their own charge. By the blessing of God, they arrived safe. You was [sic] pleased to send my little boy to Kingswood School, and my little girl to Publow; and to send me word, not to take any thought or care about them. After a while you sent over my wife to me. This has proved an unspeakable blessing to her. She has been convinced of sin, converted to God, and I trust made pure in heart.

25. As to myself, I have been many times so unfaithful to the grace and gifts wherewith God has entrusted me, that I abhor myself in dust and ashes, as an unprofitable servant. Yet this I can say from the ground of my heart, I am not at all careful where or how long I live in this world, so I may answer the end of my being; so I may have the testimony of my conscience, that I do all to the glory of God. For I know, that to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. I fear God, and uniformly endeavor to work righteousness. I believe that God is both able and willing to cleanse me from all unrighteousness: and I lie before Him as clay in the hands of the potter, to be just what He would have me to be; as holy and as happy as my nature and state can bear. I am not afraid of being too holy; but I believe it is my privilege to be all-holy, in the very complexion of my soul, in all my tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. I am convinced that grace is stronger than sin, and that Christ is stronger than the devil; and that gospel liberty implies a deliverance from the guilt, power, and nature of sin, into peace, life, love, and holiness. I can say farther, that though I do not yet fully enjoy these inestimable blessings, yet God is pleased to own my weak labors, so that more and more sinners are converted to God every time I go my circuit.

26. And now what shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits that He has done unto me? I can only praise Him as long as I live, and be telling of all His wondrous works. Praise the Lord, then, O my soul! and let all within me praise His holy name!

Dear Sir, blot out or keep in just what you please of this narrative; and in so doing you will oblige

Your son in the Gospel,
Thomas Payne

* * *

A short Account of the Death of Mr. Thomas Payne, who departed this Life January 6th,
1783

From a principle of affection to our deceased brother, I think it my duty to add something to the account already given in the year 1781. And I am more particularly inclined to this, as it contains a little account of the Lord's gracious dealings with His servant, in his sickness and death.

In the beginning of his illness, he had deep impressions on his mind, that this affliction was unto death: the thought of which, he often said, was a reviving cordial to him.

As his bodily weakness increased, his desire after full sanctification increased; for which his soul was deeply engaged in constant, mighty prayer.

About two months before his death, the enemy was permitted to assault him many ways; but one temptation in particular was very severe for the time it lasted, which was to doubt the being of a God. But he was soon delivered from it. After which he had much communion with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

About a fortnight before he died, he was led to such a discovery of himself as he never had before: even all the sins he had ever committed were presented to him, attended with such a deep sense of his weakness and blindness as made him exceedingly tremble. Above all, what gave him the greatest pain was, that he had done the work of the Lord, in many instances, so much in his own warm spirit, and not in the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

This was attended with such a sight of the majesty and holiness of God, and the excellency of His glory, as excited a vehement cry in his heart for the coming of Jesus, to make him fully meet for the enjoyment of Himself. And our Lord soon heard him: his faith beheld the great Atonement, on which he received a whole Saviour, who applied the all-cleansing blood. He was now filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and experienced that complete salvation he had so long preached to others.

From this time his conversation was truly in heaven: his exhortations and persuasions to all that came near him, to devote themselves entirely to God, were delivered in such a powerful manner as made deep impressions on every heart.

The day before his death, when Mr. Rankin called to see him, his soul was truly comfortable. And after some conversation concerning the goodness of God to him, he said, "You are going to preach: tell the people, tell the societies, I die a witness of the truth I have preached to others. And I now solemnly declare, I believe the doctrine taught by the Methodists; and that the discipline they enforce is, above all others, the best calculated to bring sinners to God, and to keep them close to Him." During the night, he frequently spoke of the love and power of God to his soul; waiting patiently for the coming of his Lord.

About an hour before he departed, Mrs. Payne, seeing him in agony, said, "My dear, you appear as if your heart was breaking." He replied, "Let it break! Let it break! But it is hard work to die!" After this he was very calm, and appeared to possess great serenity of mind. But now the hour of release came, when he turned his eyes towards Mrs. Thomas, and with a piercing yet pleasing look said, "Lord, have mercy! Jesus, save to the uttermost! to the very uttermost!" And soon after, while we were commending his soul to God, he fell asleep in Jesus.

Thus departed this Christian hero, this valiant soldier of Christ; who counted not his life dear to him, so he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received from the Lord.

Charles Boone
March 13th, 1783

* * *

The following letter will serve further to show what manner of spirit Mr. Payne was of, and the success which attended his ministry:

"Ballicumber, July 27th, 1779

"Rev. Sir,

"Last Wednesday I went to Balliboy, and was received by the family of the D____'s, who are the leading men of the whole country. I preached to near five hundred persons, many of whom are convinced of sin, while the prejudices of hundreds more are removed.

"The next day I went from Balliboy to Pallace, where I preached once before in the old church. I preached now at four different houses of the most creditable people in the country, and all in the compass of two miles. I was received hospitably, and each of these houses is now open to receive the next preachers that come.

"Mr. M., worth three thousand a year, heard me, and invited me to his house, where I dined last Sunday. He inquired into the nature of our doctrine and discipline. On telling him all I knew, he seemed quite satisfied, and gave me a general invitation to his house, and also told me that we ought to be encouraged.

"I came yesterday to this town, where there are seven convinced of sin, and one converted. I preached here last night; and for the first time Mr. A., the owner of the whole town, came to hear me. When preaching was over, he invited me home, and gave me a general invitation to his town and house; he also telling me that we ought to be encouraged.

"On the whole, I have this year, in a particular manner, opposed the trifling and worldly-mindedness of the rich Methodists, and thereby lost the favor of many of them; but I have gained the friendship of other rich men, and have planted the gospel in many new places. I have been a visible means in the hands of God of convincing above a hundred sinners, and of converting near twenty. As to myself, I am more than ever alive to God, and zealous in His cause. I fear nothing but my own heart. I am anxious for nothing but to live to the glory of God.

"To this end an interest in your prayers will greatly oblige, Rev. Sir,

"Your friend and fellow-laborer,
"Thomas Payne."

Upon this letter Mr. Wesley remarks, "Mr. Payne, who had been in the army for many years, was a plain, honest, zealous man; fearing neither men nor devils. And as he bore down all opposers while he lived, so in death he triumphed over his last enemy, being more than conqueror through Him who had loved him."

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Part 9
THE LIFE OF MR. RICHARD RODDA
Written by Himself

Letter to the Rev. John Wesley

Rev. and Dear Sir,

I was born in the year of our Lord 1743, in the parish of Sancreed, in the county of Cornwall. My parents had no great share of this world's goods; yet were esteemed by all who knew them for their honesty and industry. My mother feared God; but, being a stranger to His method of justifying sinners, she went about to establish her own righteousness.

When the Methodists came into Cornwall preaching repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, she was whole, and needed not the Physician. And as evil reports were soon spread abroad concerning the Methodists, she and my father readily believed all that was said against them. Accordingly, they kept their distance, and considered them as enemies both to Church and State. However, my sister, who was the eldest of ten children, ventured to hear; and God fastened His word in her conscience, as a nail in a sure place. On this she sunk down at the feet of Jesus and implored mercy, who in a short time turned her sorrow into joy. As this change was visible, it induced my mother to hear for herself. It was not long before God stripped her of her self-righteousness. His arrows drank up her spirits, and His hand pressed her sore. For three weeks she cried unto the Lord, as out of the deep; at the end of which, being on the brink of despair, He set her soul at liberty in a moment, and enabled her to say, "Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me!" From this time she was diligent in the means of grace, and did what she could to bring up her children in the fear of God.

One of the first things I remember was, my old grandmother praying to God with lifted hands and eyes, as she passed into the other world.

When I was about four years old, as I was lying on the ground, and looking up to heaven, I thought I saw the form of a large tree. While I gazed on it, something inwardly said, "That is the tree of life." This was before I could read, or even knew a letter.

When I was six years of age, the Spirit of God frequently strove with me; and sometimes I was so distressed, I knew not what to do. Yet I learned my book very well; and could repeat to my parents at night great part of what I had read by day.

About the year 1750 the gospel was preached in my father's house. I loved to hear it, and strove to get as near the preacher as I could. Soon after this my mother fell into a deep consumption. She was brought so low that she could not walk across the room. After many things had been tried in vain, she was perfectly restored by making a hole in the ground, and breathing into it for a quarter of an hour every morning.

When I was seven years old, I felt the drawings of the Father, and the operation of His blessed Spirit on my heart. The preachers that came to our house often spoke to me concerning my soul; and their instructions were not in vain: they often distilled on my heart as dew on the tender herbs. But after this I lived in a family which had not so much as the form of godliness. And as they encouraged me in every vice, my good desires and serious impressions so far vanished, that I could laugh, and tell lies, without fear or remorse.

One day, as I was riding on full gallop in company with several others, my horse threw me over his head, and then quite leaped over me; and though another horse coming close behind did the same, yet I received no hurt! Surely the tender mercy of God preserved me, or I had gone quick into the pit! Soon after this, the kind providence of God brought me back to my father's house, and I was sent to work in the tin-mines. From this time God began to work effectually on my heart.

In the year 1756 the Lord showed me that my inward parts were very wickedness. I saw that my heart was a sink of pollution, and that my past life condemned me. When I heard a certain preacher in St. Just's, I thought, as soon as he began, he could not have much to say; but before he had done, I thought he kept his eye continually on me, while everything he said seemed to point at me. I could hardly bear it, and had some thoughts of moving to another part of the house, where he might not see me. But I soon found it was God who was applying His word to my heart.

From this time strong convictions followed me: and though I was often drawn away with sinful companions, yet my conscience terrified me, and drove me to the feet of Christ to implore forgiveness. My mother greatly helped me by her prayers and admonitions; as did also my two elder brothers, who about this time found peace with God.

I now applied to Mr. Jaco for admission into the society. He gave me leave to meet, but only as a probationer: I suppose, because he thought me too young to be admitted. Nevertheless, I constantly met in class; and some time after, when you, sir, called over the society at Newlyn, I was received into the Connection.

I was near two years seeking rest for my soul. Sometimes I thought, God would never show me His mercy; at others, I hoped He would. Sometimes I was armed by terrors: at others, I was drawn by love. God is witness how often I have watered my pillow with tears, and risen at midnight to pour out my soul before Him! One time in particular, I was in such trouble that I thought God was frowning over me, and that hell moved from beneath to meet me. Once a very wicked boy being in company with me, as I walked the road, I was constrained to fall on my knees, and cry aloud for mercy; for every step I took, I feared I should drop into everlasting burnings.

About the beginning of June, 1758, while I was praying in my father's house, and earnestly entreating God to write forgiveness on my heart, the following words darted into my soul: "Son, be

of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." In that instant my burden was removed, and my soul was filled with peace and joy. But I soon doubted whether this was what many termed "justification;" and as I had always a fear of deceiving myself, the enemy soon reasoned me out of my happiness, and my soul seemed as far from the blessing as ever.

On the 11th of that month, while Benjamin Trembath was praying by me, God gave me a clear sense of His forgiving love. There was not the least doubt remaining of my acceptance through the Beloved. For many days and weeks I was enabled to rejoice in God my Saviour. Every duty was profitable, as it conveyed to me fresh tokens of the Divine favor. My understanding was opened to behold the power, wisdom, and goodness of God; in creating, upholding, and governing the world. I saw that the whole earth was full of His majesty and glory. But what most astonished me was, the wondrous greatness of redeeming love. To behold the Ancient of days become an infant! the Filler of immensity, contracted to a span! the Lord of heaven and earth, taking upon Him the form of a servant, and, after fulfilling all righteousness, bowing His blessed head on the cross, to save His avowed enemies! these considerations filled me with love and gratitude, which I expressed in the following lines:--

Praise God, my soul, whose wondrous love
Hath drawn thy thought's to things above,
Where Jesus ever reigns:
Let every sinful, wand'ring thought
Be into full subjection brought,
Till freed from sin's remains.

When pure, and perfected in love,
O, may I never, never rove
From Christ, my living Head;
But steadfast and unshaken stand,
Obedient to my Lord's command,
While by His Spirit led.

Among the little, happy flock,
Who sit beneath their guardian Rock,
Will I take up my rest:
My Shepherd's voice my soul shall hear,
And, freed from doubts and slavish fear,
Shall lean upon His breast.

His loving arms, extended wide,
Shall press me to His wounded side,
Nor let me thence depart;
But fill my soul with joy and peace,
And all the fruits of righteousness
Shall flourish in my heart.

The heavenly spice's of His grace

Do sweetly now perfume the place
Where Satan had his seat:
Jesus hath spoil'd the power's of hell,
And lo! I now for ever dwell
Triumphant at His feet!

Here will I lie, nor ever move,
Till Christ my Lord shall say, "My love,
Come up, and dwell with Me:"
Then I on wings of love shall rise,
And reign with Him above the skies,
To all eternity.

Many times that text ran in my mind, "I shall never be moved; the Lord of His goodness hath made my hill so strong." I thought my enemies were all dead, and that my warfare was accomplished. How little did I know at that time of the Christian conflict, or the deep import of these words, "Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but to suffer for His sake!"

Through unwatchfulness I fell into levity, (a besetting evil,) and Satan strove to tear away my shield; but though God suffered him not to do it, yet my joy was greatly damped. My unwatchfulness cost me many an aching heart; and I found I had most need to watch when in company with professors; where, not suspecting harm, I was often overtaken before I was aware.

About the year 1759, when I was forty fathoms under ground, by a miracle I was saved from being drowned in three fathoms of water. O the tender mercy of God in preserving me! Surely the angel of His presence saved me; through whose help I continue unto this day!

Not long after, I was seized with a fever, and brought very near the gates of death. My soul longed to take her flight, and struggled, like a bird in a cage, to obtain its liberty.

One day my friends thought I was dead, and one of my brothers informed my mother that I was passed into the other world. And I thought myself that my soul had actually left the body, and was mounting upwards, like a bird in the air. I saw with the eyes of my mind such glory as cannot be expressed. I saw the eternal Sun of Righteousness shining more glorious than the sun in his meridian luster. Indeed, I had such views of God and glory, as I never had before or since. My mother, on hearing that I was dead, ran to the bed, and raised me up in her arms. After some time I again began to breathe; but the impression it left will never be obliterated. It was much against my wish that I was again restored to life; for it was the longing desire of my soul to depart, and to be with Christ, of which I had full assurance.

The first time I went abroad, after my recovery, I was impressed [taken against his will] to serve in His majesty's navy. I pleaded my youth and my present weakness. While I was speaking, an honest Quaker came by, and addressed himself to the mayor as follows:--

Quaker. -- What art thou going to do with that lad?

Mayor. -- Send him to serve his majesty.

Q. -- There are others more fit for the service, yea, a hundred in this town: send them; send idle, disorderly persons, not honest men's sons who live by their diligence and frugality.

M. -- The king must have men: if we cannot get seamen, we must take others.

Q. -- Look upon that lad: thou mayest read innocence in his countenance.

M. -- He will look much better after he has been six months at sea; and in time he will be a captain.

Q. -- Let him go home: there are men enough to be got besides him.

After a few more words, the mayor told me to make haste home.

I admire the kindness of the Most High in this. Many of my neighbors were sent from their native land, and carried to the Havannah; but God put it into the mind of that good old Friend to speak for me, and thereby to procure me my liberty.

About this time the Lord opened the mouth of one of my brothers to speak in public. The first time I heard him, he spoke from the words of good old Simeon: "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." That night the farmer's house where he had preached took fire, and was burned; but the family were saved, so as by fire.

When I was about twenty years of age, some Christian friends desired me to go to prayer; for as yet I had not prayed much in public. This was a cross to me; but when my mother urged me, I broke through. I have no doubt but the gracious Spirit helped my infirmities, and enabled me to ask those things that were agreeable to the will of God. I was encouraged to go on; and as we had family prayer for many years, I often assisted in the performance of that duty. Soon after I was desired to pray again in public, and after much importunity I consented.

The doctrine of Christian perfection was now preached among us, and numbers professed they had attained the blessing. I had not the least doubt of the testimony of several, as their whole behavior agreed with their profession. I believed the doctrine, and my soul longed to experience it. I prayed that every thought and desire might center in God. While my eldest brother and I were pouring out our souls to God for this blessing, the Lord poured out His Spirit upon us; every heart present appeared like melting wax before the fire; and in that hour, God gave my mother a testimony that He had cleansed her from all unrighteousness; which I trust she retains to this day.

My soul was now on full stretch after the blessing. I not only believed it attainable, but that I should attain it: therefore I constantly expected that Christ would come to cleanse and keep my heart. Accordingly, one Saturday night, I came to the class, and resolved not to depart till mine eyes had seen this great salvation. After I had entered the room, my heart seemed as hard as a stone; but I was not discouraged. All my prayer was, "Lord, create in me a clean heart, and renew

in me a right spirit." The mighty power of God descended upon me; my heart was emptied of every evil, and Jesus took up all the room. I could no longer refrain from telling what God had done for my soul. My heart was filled with love and joy, and my lips praised Him.

For three weeks I enjoyed constant fellowship with God; there was not a cloud on my mind; I walked in the light, and often scarce felt the ground on which I trod. I never expected to feel a wandering thought more. But at the end of three weeks I felt my thoughts wander, and then inferred I had lost the blessing; and had hard work to retain what I had received even in justification.

Not long after this, I was greatly harassed with blasphemous thoughts; but my soul abhorred them. The devil, likewise, tempted me to destroy myself. One day, when I had a razor in my hand, he told me that was a fit instrument for the purpose: he likewise added, if I did, I should be happy for ever. But something within answered, "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." My struggle was so great, I thought the blood would have started through my nose, eyes, and ears. At length I threw the razor on the ground, and fell on my knees. God soon heard me, and rebuked the destroyer.

All the time I had these sore conflicts, God secretly called on me to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come; but in this I was disobedient. The language of my heart was, "Send by whom Thou wilt, but send not me." It was about this part of my life the hand of the Lord was more visible in preserving me than in any other. I shall mention two or three instances.

One day I was standing in a tin-pit, about eight yards from the top, and four from the bottom; the men above were drawing up a piece of timber, the end of which pulled a stone out of the brink of the pit. The men above cried out, on which I leaned my head a little forward, and the stone fell between my shoulders. In that instant I fell backwards, and dropped down four yards below me. And as I fell among some small stones, my back and neck were hurt; but, blessed be God, I had no bones broken, nor any other damage but what I recovered in two or three days. Those who saw me fall expected my brains were dashed out. But the kind hand of God lengthened the thread of life. O, how great is His goodness!

Some time after, I had another proof of God's mercy and goodness. I was one day standing on what we call in Cornwall "a borough of attle," which filled an old tin-pit, and stood a considerable height from the surface of the earth. While I was standing on its top, it sunk in an instant under my feet; and I literally went down quick into the pit. The attle immediately followed me, and covered my head; but I went down till I came where a miner was working, who was greatly surprised to see me. If I had been retarded in my passage, I must have been inevitably suffocated. Glory be to God, I received no damage!

But the greatest deliverance happened soon after this. One day, as I was working in the bottom of a pit, about ten yards deep, I laid aside my tool, and fell on my knees, and found uncommon enlargement in prayer. In less than two minutes the ground fell in. A very large stone fell before me, which rose higher than my head. Two others fell, one on my right side, and the other on my left; these, likewise, rose above my head. A fourth fell like a cover, and rested on the top of the others, about four inches above my head. Some scores of small ones fell behind on my

legs and feet; while others fell on the cover that was over me. Here I was shut up as in a prison. When my father came to the brink of the pit, and found me buried, he fell a-weeping. But when he found I was alive, he told me the whole pit would fill to the top. I desired him to go out of the reach of danger. I was a little surprised at first but it was soon gone. As the stones were large and hollow, I had sufficient room to breathe. When he perceived that no more stones fell, he got help, and by degrees removed some of the large stones; and, after cutting my shoes from my feet, I was got out without receiving the least injury. I cannot help admiring the providence of God in the following particulars

1. I was praying at the time this happened.
2. I was kneeling. Had I been standing, I should have been crushed to pieces; had I been sitting, my legs would have been broken with the large stone which fell before me.
3. They fell in an instant. Had I heard them coming, probably I should have risen from my knees; and then the stone which fell like a cover would have dashed out my brains.
4. Three large stones fell, one before me, and one on each side; and only small ones behind on my legs. Had a large one fallen there, my legs would have been broken into shivers.
5. The three large ones that fell were a few inches higher than my head, and were instantly covered with another large one. Had they been a few inches lower, the last would certainly have killed me in a moment. Surely this preservation was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in my eyes!

One Lord's day we expected a traveling preacher. The people were gathered together from various parts, when word was brought that he could not come. On hearing this, I was desired to stand up, and speak to the people. The conflict in my breast was very strong; and if my friends had observed my countenance, they could not help seeing it. But I refused to open my mouth. Presently a horrid gloom overwhelmed me. I knew not where to go, or what to do. I feared God would send me down quick into the pit. I came home greatly distressed; and while walking in the fields, filled with confusion and horror, I feebly said, "Lord, if it be Thy will that such a worm should speak Thy word, chasten my body, but save my soul." I was instantly seized in every part. My head was sick, and my heart faint. My feet and legs were so enfeebled, they could scarce support my body; I fell on the ground, and laid my mouth in the dust, while the hand of the Almighty pressed me sore. After a time, I faintly said, "Lord, if Thou wilt restore me, my mouth shall show forth Thy praise; I will this night begin in the family." In an instant the distress was removed, both from my body and mind, and I was filled with peace and love.

When I returned to the house, the enemy told me to put off speaking a day or two longer. But I attended to the counsel of the wise man: "When thou vowest a vow unto the Lord, take care and perform it." Accordingly, I exhorted that night, for the first time, which was in my father's house. Soon after I was desired to exhort in the society; and then, by their advice, I did it in public.

The first time I attempted to preach, I was exceedingly anxious about dividing the word in a proper manner. And as I was a mile from the preaching house, I walked a by-road, that no one

might disturb my thoughts, or turn off my mind from the subject. As I went along, I began to preach to myself; and I continued so to do until I came near the preaching-house. But how was I disappointed, when I took the same words before the congregation! Alas! all my fine skeleton vanished from my sight, and I was filled with shame and confusion.

I believe this would have cured me of taking another text, if my Christian friends had not pressed me to a second trial; and as I did not lean to my own understanding, God was pleased out of the mouth of the weak to ordain strength.

Other societies now invited me to preach to them. When I went, God was with me of a truth; several were convinced of sin, and some found peace.

In the parish of Morva, three or four have fallen to the ground under a sermon, and groaned to God for mercy. Many who had backslidden returned unto God, who healed their backslidings, and loved them freely. The traveling preachers, who had forsaken them, again visited them; and some who were then restored are now in Abraham's bosom.

Mr. Rankin, who was the assistant, at the Quarterly-Meeting desired me to inform the company why I desired to preach. I rose trembling, and with many tears said, "When you came first into the Round, I gave you an account of my conversion, and my call to this work. Since that, I have spoken at several places, and here are some present who have heard me. They are at liberty to speak what they think." On this, two or three grave men arose, and represented me in a very favorable light. Mr. Rankin admitted they were proper judges, and told me I should preach and exhort on Sundays, so as to return the same night. From this time I frequently, on the Sabbath, traveled many miles on foot, preached three times, and returned home about ten at night. Many times in my going out, and returning home, I have prostrated myself on the ground, and lifted up my heart to God for His blessing on my endeavors, and often found Him benignly near. Glory be to His name for ever!

One of my brothers, who was laboring in the vineyard, often refreshed my soul by his letters: but when he wrote of settling, it filled me with grief; for I thought, after setting his hand to the plough, he ought never to look back. But some difference that happened between him and a troublesome man, in the town of Pembroke, caused him to decline the itinerant life. He came to Cornwall, and in a little time we both sailed for Wales. Here I tarried four or five weeks, and preached in various parts; and I hope all I said was not in vain.

I returned, and continued working at my business a full year; and then with my youngest brother I went to Wales again. On the 10th of July, 1768, I was married to E____ S____. My mind was very serious at that time, from which my mother-in-law concluded I was in a decline; but having obtained help from God, I continue to this day. I returned to Cornwall with my wife, about the beginning of August. We received the traveling preachers near twelve months. Business again called me into Wales: here, sir, I met with you. And as you wanted a preacher for Glamorganshire circuit, I freely offered my service, which you accepted. I then bought a horse, &c., out of my own money, and made all the haste I could into my Round.

Here I found great favor in the eyes of the people, and was in more danger from their smiles than their frowns. The preacher that was with me was also exceedingly kind; so that my time glided on smoothly. In April I returned to Cornwall, and brought my wife back with me into Wales.

When Mr. Dempster left me in the circuit, while he went to the Conference, I preached at two new places, lying between Pembroke Ferry and Haverfordwest. At the last of these places a little society was formed; and I hope a few of them continue to this day.

The next year I spent partly in Pembrokeshire, and partly in Brecknockshire and Radnorshire. In this round I attempted to enlarge our borders. In the strength of the Lord, I went to Bishop's Castle, a town wicket to a proverb. I had nobody with me; but the Lord was with me of a truth. I put my horse up at an inn, and wrote a lesson for the crier. I gave him this and the money at the same time: after reading the notice, he began to make some scruples. I told him he had taken my money, and therefore I insisted that he would do his duty. Accordingly, he published me to preach under the town-hall, the most public and convenient place in the town. At the time appointed, hundreds flocked to hear. I stood on the steps, and preached from Amos v. 6. I bless God, He did not let me want matter, manner, or liberty! Some threw their hats in my face; but that did not hinder me from proceeding. The tears trickled down many faces; and after I had done, five or six came round me, and begged I would come again. I believe the power of the Highest reached many hearts; and had my successors followed the blow, the kingdom of Satan might have been shaken in that wicket town.

The next day I rode thirty or forty miles to Tenbury, in Worcestershire. The first time I came to this place, Mr. G____ was there, intending to preach in the house of Miss H____, who had removed thither with an intent to keep a boarding-school. Before he began he informed the congregation, that if any of them misbehaved he should take the liberty to stop his preaching, and put them out of doors. In a short time, some of them began to make a great noise: accordingly, he came down to fulfill his promise, laid hold on one of them, and was putting him out, when twenty more surrounded him; and if the good women of the house had not interposed, I know not what the consequence would have been. However, we soon got all the mob out of doors, and then ended our meeting in peace.

The second time I came, the people cried out, I was come to preach against the Church. I know not when I have attempted to preach in greater confusion. They brought gunpowder with them, and almost filled the place with the smoke of it. It happened, a very rough man, who had come out of the country, came that night to hear preaching. He sat near me, and had a large bludgeon in his hand. As soon as he heard the explosion of the gunpowder, he rose from his seat, and with his mouth full of oaths said he would knock the brains of the persons out who had made the disturbance. I begged of him, if he was my friend, to lay aside that weapon: after some time he seemed more pacified.

Before I came the second time, a great part of the church fell down; but as it happened on a week-day, no person was hurt. I think it was the Sunday after, that the minister, whose name was David, stood on a part of the ruins, and took for his text, "Lord, remember David, and all his troubles." (Psalm cxxxii. 1.) He spoke of the tender care and sparing mercy of God, in not

permitting the church to fall when the people were in it. The tenderness of his own heart appeared by the tears flowing plentifully down his cheeks. But while he wept, the hardened congregation laughed! The reason some assigned for their behavior was, "The p[arson] had made too free with the bottle."

When I came the third time, I was resolved to preach abroad; and, that all the town might have notice, I sent for the crier, who was unwilling to publish it, until I gave him a double fee. About half an hour before the time, a mob assembled before the house where I was: they saw me through the window, and cried out, "There he is." I went to the window, threw up the sash, and said, "I am here, and will be with you soon." When the time came, I went out in the strength of the Lord. Some of them pelted me with dirt and broken tiles; but they neither hurt me nor hindered me. Before I ended my sermon, some of the mob got a piece of wood dressed like a man. They put an old wig on its head, and danced it up and down before me; but I looked up to God, and was preserved from levity. The mob, from this time, became more civilized: but I have not heard, whether there was any Methodist preaching in the town since I left it.

The next day I rode to the city of Hereford. The house we used to preach in being very small, and in an obscure part of the city, I resolved to preach out of doors here also. To that end I walked through the city to find the most convenient place; and when the hour came, I stood with my back against St. Nicholas' church. While I sung a hymn, numbers flocked together, among whom were several gentlemen, and two or three clergymen. I was soon accosted by a baker, who said I was come to preach against the Church. He was very passionate; but the Lord endued me with patience. I went on, and he soon went away.

After this, some made an attempt to throw a pail of milk on me; but others prevented them. However, before I had done, a wicked man, whose nickname was Bacon, gathered dirt out of the kennel, and threw it in my face and eyes. It so besmeared me, that I could proceed no farther. I then walked to the house of a justice of the peace: a man of unblemished character. He came to the door, and desired me to walk in, and said he was sorry for the ill-usage I had received; and added, "This is a very wicked place," &c. I said, "You see, sir, I have been ill-used; and therefore I hope you will do me justice." He said, "Why did you not apply to the mayor?" I answered, I had no objection against applying to him; but I inquired for the nearest justice. He said, "The city is divided into wards, and each magistrate has his ward." I answered, "I presume, as his majesty's commissioner of the peace, you are empowered to restore and keep the peace throughout the city." He said, "That is true. I am no enemy to religious people of whatever denomination."

I said, "The Methodists are a people in being near forty years: they are loyal subjects; they are inoffensive, and desire to live peaceably with all men." He then asked, "By what law do you expect satisfaction?" I answered, "By a law made in the first year of the reign of William and Mary, called the Toleration Act." He asked, "Have you taken the oaths?" I said, "Yes;" and showed him my certificate. He read it, and said, "If you insist on it, I will send the man that disturbed you to jail; but if I do, as he has a wife and several children, these must come on the town. Therefore, if you will show him lenity this time, I will take care of him in future." I answered, "I shall submit to your judgment in the affair. I insist on no damage for what is past: I only desire that in future I may preach the gospel in peace." He said he was glad to find I was of a pacific disposition; that he would have the man before him the next morning, and threaten him; and

that if ever he disturbed me again, he would send him to jail forthwith. I then returned him thanks, and departed; and believe he kept his word; seeing that man never hindered me after.

I spent the next year in Cornwall with great satisfaction, and the Lord visited many with His great salvation. On Easter-day, in the morning, I preached at Mevagizze. The power of God was present, both to wound and to heal. The cries and prayers of some, and the praise of others, constrained me, two or three times, to break off preaching, and join with them in prayer and praise. Though I am no advocate for noisy assemblies, yet I think there are times when people cannot help roaring for the disquietude of their souls; and others, when they cannot refrain from praising God aloud for all the great things He hath done for them.

From thence I went to St. Mawes, and preached at noon. The word of God was like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces! From thence I rode to Tregony, and preached in the street. Here likewise the gracious Spirit wrought upon many hearts. At the close of the year we had just a hundred more in the society in that circuit, than was in it when we came; many of whom had found peace with God.

The next year I traveled in the west of Cornwall. Here we saw but little fruit; but my soul was often like a watered garden. One Sabbath-day I went, with several others, from Plymouth-Dock to St. Germain's. An old Quaker gave me leave to speak before his door. The congregation was large, and in general very attentive. I believe the Lord spoke to many hearts. After preaching, the Quaker took us to his house, and gave me a little refreshment. After I received it, I sat some time in meditation, as my soul was in a happy frame; afterwards I fell on my knees, and poured out my soul in prayer. All who were present fell on their knees also. The power of God descended, so that scarcely any refrained from sighs, groans, and tears. From this I inferred, that Friends can feel as well as others, when the Lord touches the heart.

The year after I went to Wales; but alas! the Antinomians had sown their tares so thick, that there was little or no room for the wheat to spring up.

The two following years I spent in the east of Cornwall, with much satisfaction. Before I came, a good work was begun at Plymouth-Dock, when Mr. Thomas Olivers was there. Before he came, the Antinomians seemed to carry all before them. Mr. Olivers preached several controversial sermons, in which he laid the axe at the root of Calvinism and Antinomianism. His arguments were powerful, and well supported by the word of God. Many now began to awake out of sleep; and these glorious beginnings were a means of adding near a hundred to that society. Before he came, they were a little more than thirty; and when I carried the account to our yearly Conference, they were a hundred and thirty.

While in this Round, I again visited St. Germain's; but met with a very rough reception. The mob gathered round the door, pelted me with rotten eggs; and after we shut the door, they cursed and swore, and broke the bottom part of it in pieces. God enabled me to possess my soul in patience; my mind was stayed on Him, and I was kept in perfect peace.

I likewise preached at Millbrook. Here also they pelted me with eggs; one of which would have taken me full in the mouth, but a young man that stood before me instantly put up his hand and

caught it. Blessed be the Lord, He was on my side; and I had no fear what men or devils could do unto me.

When I came to Bodmin, the people told me two or three young men had several times disturbed the congregation. I told them, if they disturbed me, I would endeavor to make them quiet. In the evening one of them came, and began to make a noise. I desired him to be quiet; but he would not. I stopped in preaching, came from the pulpit, and put him out of the room. I had no sooner resumed my discourse, than he came in, and behaved more disorderly than before. I told the people I could not proceed, and desired they would take notice of it. Next day we got a warrant, and brought the offender before the mayor, who talked to him in a manner becoming his office. He told him he might as well go to church and make a noise there; that the law was on our side, &c. The young man trembled and cried, and offered to kneel and ask pardon; but I suffered him not. He paid the expense of the warrant and constable, and we had quietness all the time I was in that circuit.

Since that I have met with many heavy trials from a quarter I least expected; but think it most prudent to pass them over in silence. God knows them all, and the Judge of all the earth will do right.

On the 29th of last June I preached on Wood-Green, at the end of Witney, in Oxfordshire. While I was preaching, something uncommon impelled me to say, "My dear friends, take notice of what I am going to say. Before this day month, [before one month from today -- DVM] you will hear and see something very uncommon:" but I knew not why I said so. On Wednesday, the 2d of July, it began to thunder and lighten in a very dreadful manner. The people cried out that I had prophesied the world was to be at an end in a month; and they thought it was now fulfilling: two persons were struck dead by the lightning. Numbers had their sins set in order before them, saw the necessity of a Saviour, and some groaned after Him.

On the 10th the Lord thundered from heaven, and sent forth His lightnings, a second time. On the 11th it was more dreadful than it had been before. Now, indeed, the most stubborn heart trembled, and bowed before the Lord. The numbers that flocked both to the church and meeting were incredible and there was such an awakening among them, as the oldest man living could not remember. In consequence thereof, the next time I came there I added fifty new members to our society.

Thus, sir, I have given you a short account of the mercy of God to my soul and body; and also of that little which I have done and suffered for His name's sake. Before I conclude, it may not be amiss to give some account of my sentiments. And,

1. I believe God made the first man holy, harmless, and undefiled; but being in honor, he continued not; he yielded to the tempter, and this stripped him of the moral image of God. I believe, also, that all sinned and fell in him.

2. I believe all mankind were in Adam when God gave him the promise of a Saviour; and that consequently the promise was not only to him, but to his children.

3. I believe, with the Church of England, that Christ made, on the cross, a perfect and sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, and oblation for all the sins of the whole world, whether original or actual. And that by virtue of this, all men may be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth: that God rejects none but such as do despite to the Spirit of grace.

4. I believe, that, in order to be saved from the guilt and power of sin, men must repent, and believe in Christ.

5. I believe repentance to consist in a consciousness of sin, a godly sorrow for it, and a turning from it to God. I also believe faith to be the gift of God, but the act of man. God gives the power, and man uses it.

6. I believe, that in order to final salvation, our faith must be productive of good works; that without universal, personal holiness, no man shall see the Lord. This is so fully asserted in the word of God, that I am persuaded, all the craft of men, and all the rage of devils, cannot overthrow it.

7. I believe the crown of all spiritual blessings is the gift of eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

These, sir, are the doctrines I believe and teach; and at present I have no desire to change. I have had several offers from the world; but I love it not. I have had the offer of two or three Dissenting congregations. They have my thanks for their intended kindness. But it is my desire to live and die a Methodist preacher. The height of my ambition is, to labor among my fathers and brethren, until we lie down together in the dust, and mount up into our Master's joy.

I am, Rev. and dear Sir,
Your son in the gospel,
Richard Rodda

* * *

The following account of Mr. Rodda's death was given in the Methodist Magazine for December, 1815:

Died on Monday morning, October 30th, in London, Mr. Richard Rodda, aged seventy-two years. Many particulars highly interesting concerning this able and faithful minister of Christ occur in the account of him contained in the Arminian Magazine for 1784. He feared God from his youth, and was made at an early period of his life a happy witness of the blessed effects which the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit produce. He filled the office of an itinerant preacher among the Methodists, from the year 1770 till 1802; during which period he was highly respectable for piety, zeal, talents, and usefulness. When unable, through age and infirmities, to undergo the labors of an itinerant minister, he settled in the metropolis, where, to the utmost of his power, he labored in the word and doctrine. On the Tuesday before his death he met his class; and on the Friday following attended the weekly meeting of the preachers at the City-Road chapel. He had long been

afflicted with a severe asthmatic complaint; but no apprehension was entertained of his speedy removal from earth to heaven, till he was on the verge of eternity.

Mr. Rance, the surgeon who attended Mr. Rodda, favored us with the following account of the origin, progress, and fatal effects of his complaint:--

"The origin of his disease I should consider to have arisen from repeated exposure to damp and cold, probably from sleeping in damp beds. During the cold and damp season the fits of his disease were frequent; so that during the whole of the winter, for a few years past, he was confined to the house. On the return of the dry and warm weather he was able occasionally to engage in the work of the ministry. His constitution was naturally robust; and from his strength of body and muscular fibers, had he not labored under a local affection of the chest, he might, humanly speaking, have lived many years.

"On Thursday, October 26th, and the following day, he felt some return of his difficulty of breathing. This he attributed to the cold and humid state of the atmosphere; and on Saturday evening the paroxysm increased in violence. On Sunday morning, finding that his difficulty of breathing had considerably increased, he sent a message to me, requesting my immediate attendance. I found him in a state of suffocation, occasioned by a violent fit of asthma. As symptoms indicative of inflammatory action were present, I took a portion of blood from him, and administered some medicine, from which he at first found some slight relief. But in a short time the fit resumed its violence, and the breathing became quick and more laborious. I now considered that all human efforts and medical skill would prove unavailing; and in this respect my expectations were painfully realized: for his respiration became quicker and shorter until two o'clock on Monday morning, when he expired.

"From my knowledge of Mr. Rodda, I considered him a man of uprightness and independence of character, possessing great natural fortitude of mind, enjoying strong confidence in God, and always manifesting the greatest patience under affliction."

Mr. Buckley, being sent for by Mrs. Rodda, about half-past nine o'clock on Sabbath-day morning, October 29th, found Mr. Rodda heavily afflicted with very great oppression upon his chest, and extreme difficulty of breathing. He was praying most fervently for a sanctified use of his affliction for resignation to the will of his Father, and particularly for a renewed baptism of the Holy Spirit. His language was, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly Fill me with Thy precious love. Perfect the great work of holiness, and receive me to Thyself." On seeing Mr. Buckley, he said, "O, I am glad to see you. I suffer much; but God is with me. It is now about fifty-eight years since the Lord set my soul at glorious liberty; and I have found Him to be a gracious God all the way; faithful to His promise. Not one word hath failed. Glory be to His name! Come, pray; but do not pray for my restoration, or for life. For why should I live when my work is done? Let me enter into the joy of my Lord." During prayer he was very fervent in spirit; he appeared abundantly refreshed; death was swallowed up in victory; and his soul was on the wing for immortality. On taking an affectionate leave of his friend, he commended him to God; and again he expressed his unshaken confidence, that he should, through the blood of his gracious Redeemer, enjoy, and for ever enjoy, the purchased and heavenly inheritance; and said, "All is well. The Lord bless you."

From Mr. James Mackie, of Banner-street, we received the following account of our late departed friend and brother:--

"On Sunday afternoon, when I entered the room, he said, 'Do not pray for my stay. I long to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better. Lord Jesus, give me patience.' In expressing his love for the Lord Jesus, he said, 'I could go to Smithfield, and die for His dear cause. I know I could.' Some little time after, he prayed most fervently for the spread of the gospel; that the Lord would own the labors of His ministers; and especially that the young preachers might declare the word with zeal and faithfulness; that they might be kept humble; and that their doctrine might be pure. He frequently prayed, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'"

Thus died another of our old, pious, and faithful preachers, after having long borne the burden and heat of the day. His life of piety, zeal, and usefulness was crowned with a triumphant end.

* * *

The following character of Mr. Rodda was given by the Wesleyan Conference of 1816:--

Richard Rodda; a man of sound judgment, of strict morals, of considerable talents, and abundant in the work of the ministry. He sought the Lord when about thirteen years of age, followed Him fully, and was rendered a blessing to many souls; not only in his public labors as a preacher of the gospel, but by his judicious counsels, his Christian sympathy, and tender concern for those societies he was called to watch over. Thirty-three years he endured the toils of an itinerant life; and when he could no longer bear them, he labored in London, in proportion to his strength, from 1802, till his death, October 30th, 1815. His prayer in his last illness, that the struggle might be short, was graciously answered; and, what was of infinitely greater value, he had great peace and joy in the God of his salvation.

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ENDNOTES

1 The famous Sir Walter Raleigh a man of known courage and honor, being very injuriously treated by a hot headed rash youth, who next proceeded to challenge him and on his refusal spit upon him, and that in public, the knight, taking out his handkerchief with great calmness made him this reply: "Young man, if I could as easily wipe your blood from my conscience as I can this injury from my face, I would this moment take away your life." The consequence was, that the youth, struck with the sudden and strong sense of his misbehavior, fell upon his knees, and begged forgiveness.

2. This is literally true.

3 Strictly true.

4 This is a real fact.

5 This is a real fact.

6 This is a well-known fact.

7 This is another undoubted fact.

8 This is strictly, literally true.

9 This is a real fact.

10 This is another fact.

11 Another fact.

12 It will be readily allowed, by most wise and good men, that the Lord, at certain seasons, works upon the minds of men in an extraordinary manner; and that when this is the case, they are frequently affected to a high degree, and in an unusual way: and those who are acquainted with the state of the human mind, considered as alienated from God, and with the awakening influences of the Holy Spirit, will not be at all surprised to see persons, when suddenly and powerfully convinced of their lost and guilty condition, to be quite overcome with fear and sorrow, so as to cry out in the bitterness of their souls, on account of the danger to which they now see themselves exposed. To such as these the ministers of Christ, as well as the truly pious among private Christians, will readily administer all the spiritual assistance in their power. But as Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and too often, by this means, prevails upon weak but well-meaning people to do his work for him; these, on such occasions, will make more haste than good speed, and will heal (though they do not intend it) the hurt of the daughter of God's people slightly, crying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. When very zealous people see a person in real or apparent distress, they immediately go to him, and begin to exhort him to believe, perhaps without explaining what is to be the object of his faith. And if they can by any means prevail upon him to say that he believes, or finds comfort, they take it for granted the man is converted, and immediately sing praises to God on his account. But those who are better instructed know that it is a much greater thing to be truly converted to God than this comes to; that it is very possible, and very common, for particular persons, under Divine impressions, to be graciously visited by the Lord, and to be sweetly drawn with the cords of Divine love, and to experience a degree of peace, before they be either thoroughly convinced of sin, or converted therefrom. The blessed God is perfectly acquainted with the deceitfulness and treachery of the human heart, and knows how apt we are to abuse the blessings He so kindly bestows, especially if we attain them with little or no trouble. For it will generally hold good, that what is easily got is easily lost. In order that we may highly esteem and properly improve His grace, when we have received it, He makes us deeply to feel our want, and to know the worth of it before He bestows the heavenly treasure upon us. Our departed friend knew this well, and acted accordingly.

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