

AN
AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE
of some
REMARKABLE AND INTERESTING PARTICULARS
IN THE
LIFE
OF
JOHN NEWTON.
COMMUNICATED
IN A SERIES OF LETTERS
TO THE
REV. MR. HAWEIS.
RECTOR OF ALDWINCKLE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

— *all* —
I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead
them in paths that they have not known; I will make dark-
ness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things
will I do unto them and not forsake them. *Isaiah xlii. 16.*
I am as a wonder unto many. *Psal. lxxi. 7.*



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PREFACE.

THE first of the following letters is so well adapted an introduction to the rest, that to trouble the reader with a long preface would be quite needless and impertinent. I will, therefore, detain him from entering upon the delightful and instructive relation which the following sheets present him with, little longer, than while I assure him that the narrative is quite genuine, and that the following letters were written to me at my request. Some verbal relation of the facts awakened my curiosity to see a more connected account of them, which the author very obligingly consented to, having, at that time, no intention of its being made public.—But the repeated solicitations of friends have at last prevailed ; and,

P R E F A C E.

indeed, the publication is the more needful, as several imperfect copies have been handed about, and there has been cause to think some surreptitious edition might steal through the press into the hands of the public.

I have, therefore, with consent of the author, now sent these letters abroad in their original form. They were written in haste, as letters of friendship, to gratify my curiosity ; but the style, as well as the narrative itself is so plain and easy, that corrections were thought needless. I can only add my best wishes, that the great truths they contain may prove as edifying, as the facts are striking and entertaining.

T. HAWEIS.

Aldwinckle, August, 1764.

LETTER I.

Reverend and dear Sir.

I MAKE no doubt but you have at times had pleasing reflections upon that promise made to the Israelites, Deut. viii. 2. They were then in the wilderness, surrounded with difficulties, which were greatly aggravated by their own distrust and perverseness : they had experienced a variety of dispensations, the design of which they could not as yet understand ; they frequently lost sight of God's gracious purposes in their favor, and were much discouraged by reason of the way. To compose and animate their minds, Moses here suggests to them, that there was a future happy time drawing near, when their journey and warfare should be finished ; that they should soon be put in possession of the promised land, and have rest from all their fears and troubles ; and then it would give them pleasure to look back upon what they now found so uneasy to bear—"Thou shalt
"remember all the way, by which the Lord
"thy God led thee through this wilderness."

But the importance and comfort of these words are still greater, if we consider them in a spiritual sense, as addressed to all who are passing through the wilderness of this world to a heavenly Canaan; who by faith in the promises and power of God are seeking an eternal rest in that kingdom which cannot be shaken. The hope of that glorious inheritance, inspires us with some degree of courage and zeal to press forward, to where Jesus has already entered as our forerunner; and when our eyes are fixed upon him, we are more than conquerors over all, that would withstand our progress. But we have not yet attained; we still feel the infirmities of a fallen nature through the remains of ignorance and unbelief, we often mistake the Lord's dealings with us, and are ready to complain, when, if we knew all, we should rather rejoice. But to us likewise there is a time coming, when our warfare shall be accomplished, our views enlarged, and our light increased: then with what transports of adoration and love shall we look back upon the way, by which the Lord led us! we shall then see and acknowledge, that mercy and goodness directed every step; we shall see, that what our ignorance once called adversities and evils, were in reality blessings, which we could not have done well without: that nothing befel us without a cause; that no trou-

ble came upon us sooner, or pressed us more heavily, or continued longer, than our case required : in a word, that our many afflictions were each in their place among the means employed by divine grace and wisdom, to bring us to the possession of that exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which the Lord has prepared for his people. And even in this imperfect state, though we are seldom able to judge right of our present circumstances, yet if we look upon the years of our past life, and compare the dispensations we have been brought through, with the frame of our minds under each successive period ; if we consider, how wonderfully one thing has been connected with another ; so that, what we now number among our greatest advantages, perhaps, took their first rise from incidents which we thought hardly worth our notice : and that we have sometimes escaped the greatest dangers, that threatened us, not by any wisdom or foresight of our own, but by the intervention of circumstances, which we neither desired or thought of — I say, when we compare and consider these things by the light afforded us in the holy scripture, we may collect indisputable proof, from the narrow circle of our own concerns, that the wise and good providence of God watches over his people from the earliest moment of their life, over-rules and guards them

through all their wanderings in a state of ignorance, leads them in a way that they know not, till at length his providence and grace concur in those events and impressions, which bring them to the knowledge of him and themselves.

I am persuaded that every believer will, upon due reflection, see enough in his own case to confirm this remark ; but not all in the same degree. The outward circumstance of many have been uniform, they have known but little variety in life ; and with respect to their inward change, it has been effected in a secret way, unnoticed by others, and almost unperceived by themselves.—The Lord has spoken to them, not in thunder and tempest, but with a still small voice he has drawn them gradually to himself ; so that, though they have a happy assurance of the thing, that they know and love him, and are passed from death unto life ; yet of the precise time and manner, they can give little account. Others he seems to select, in order to shew the exceeding riches of his grace, and the greatness of his mighty power : he suffers the natural rebellion and wickedness of their hearts to have full scope ; while sinners of less note are cut off with little warning, these are spared, though sinning with a high hand, and as it were studying their own destruction. At length, when all that knew

them are perhaps expecting to hear, that they are made signal instances of divine vengeance, the Lord (whose thoughts are high above ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth) is pleased to pluck them as brands out of the fire, and to make them monuments of his mercy, for the encouragement of others : they are, beyond expectation, convinced, and changed. A case of this sort indicates a divine power no less than the creation of the world : it is evidently the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in the eyes of all those, who are not blinded by prejudice and unbelief.

Such was the persecuting Saul : his heart was full of enmity against Jesus of Nazareth, and therefore he persecuted and made havoc of his disciples. He had been a terror to the church of Jerusalem, and was going to Damascus with the same views—He was yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against all that loved the Lord Jesus—He thought little of the mischief he had hitherto done—He was engaged for the suppression of the whole sect ; and hurrying from house to house, from place to place, he carried menaces in his look, and repeated threatenings with every breath. Such was his spirit and temper, when the Lord Jesus, whom he hated and opposed, checked him in the height of his rage, called this bitter persecutor to the honor of an apostle, and inspired him

with great zeal and earnestness, to preach that faith, which he so lately destroyed.

Nor are we without remarkable displays of the same sovereign efficacious grace in our own times—I may particularly mention the instance of the late colonel Gardner. If any real satisfaction could be found in a sinful course, he would have met with it; for he pursued the experiment with all possible advantages—He was habituated to evil; and many uncommon, almost miraculous deliverances, made no impression upon him. Yet *he* likewise was made willing in the day of God's power: and the bright example of his life, illustrated and diffused by the account of him, published since his death, has afforded an occasion of much praise to God, and much comfort to his people.

After the mention of such names, can you permit me, sir, to add *my own*? If I do, it must be with a very humbling distinction. These once eminent sinners proved eminent christians: much had been forgiven them, therefore they loved much. St. Paul could say, "The grace bestowed upon me was not in vain; for I labored more abundantly than they all." Colonel Gardner likewise was as a city set upon a hill, a burning and a shining light; the manner of his conversion was hardly more singular than the whole course of his conversation from that time to

his death. Here, alas, the parallel greatly fails ! it has not been thus with me—I must take deserved shame to myself, that I have made very unsuitable returns for what I have received. But if the question is only concerning the patience and long sufferings of God, the wonderful interposition of his providence in favor of an unworthy sinner, the power of his grace in softening the hardest heart, and the riches of his mercy in pardoning the most enormous and aggravated transgressions ; in these respects, I know no case more extraordinary than my own. And indeed more persons, to whom I have related my story, have thought it worthy of being preserved.

I never gave any succinct account in writing, of the Lord's dealing with me, till very lately ; for I was deterred, on the one hand by the great difficulty of writing properly where *self* is concerned ; on the other, by the ill use which persons of corrupt and perverse minds are often known to make of such instances. The Psalmist reminds us that a reserve in these things is proper, when he says, “ Come unto me, all you *that fear God*, “ and I will tell you what he hath done for “ my soul ;” and our Lord cautions us not to “ cast our pearls before swine.” The pearls of a christian are, perhaps, his choice experiences of the Lord's power and love in the

concerns of his soul ; and these should not be at all adventures made public, lest we give occasion to earthly and groveling souls, to profane what they cannot understand. These were the chief reasons of my backwardness ; but a few week since, I yielded to the judgment and request of a much respected friend, and sent him a relation at large, in a series of eight letters. The event has been, what I little expected ; I wrote to one person, but my letters have fallen into many hands : amongst others, I find they have reached your notice, and instead of blaming me for being too tedious and circumstantial, which was the fault, I feared, I had committed, you are pleased to desire a still more distinct detail. As you and others of my friends apprehend my compliance with this request may be attended with some good effect, may promote the pleasing work of praise to our adorable Redeemer, or confirm the faith of some or other of his people, I am willing to obey : I give up my own reasonings upon the inexpediency of so inconsiderable a person as myself, adventuring in so public a point of view. If God may be glorified on my behalf, and his children in any measure comforted or instructed, by what I have to declare of his goodness, I shall be satisfied : and am content to leave all other possible consequences of this

undertaking in his hands, who does all things well.

I must again have recourse to my memory, as I retained no copies of the letters you saw. So far as I can recollect of what I then wrote, I will relate, but shall not affect a needless variety of phrase and manner, merely because those have been already perused by many. I may, perhaps, in some places, when repeating the same facts, express myself in nearly the same words : yet I propose, according to your desire, to make this relation more explicit and particular than the former, especially towards the close, which I wound up hastily, lest my friend should be wearied. I hope you will likewise excuse me, if I do not strictly confine myself to narration, but now and then intersperse such reflections as may offer, while I am writing : and though you have signified your intentions of communicating what I send you to others, I must not, on this account, affect a conciseness and correctness, which is not my natural talent, lest the whole should appear dry and constrained. I shall therefore (if possible) think only of you, and write with that confidence and freedom, which your friendship and candor deserve. This sheet may stand as a preface; and I purpose, as far as I can, to intermit many other engagements, until I have completed the task you have assigned me. In the mean time, I

entreat the assistance of your prayers that in this, and all my poor attempts, I may have a single eye to his glory, who was pleased to call me out of horrid darkness into the marvelous light of his gospel. I am, with sincere respect,

dear sir,

Your obliged and affectionate servant.
January 12, 1763.

LETTER II.

Reverend Sir,

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

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

many prayers and tears to God ; and I doubt not but I reap the fruits of these prayers to this hour.

My mother observed my early progress with peculiar pleasure, and intended from the first to bring me up with a view to the ministry, if the Lord should so incline my heart. In my sixth year I began to learn Latin ; but before I had time to know much about it, the intended plan of my education was broke short. The Lord's designs were far beyond the views of an earthly parent : he was pleased to reserve me for an unusual proof of his patience, providence, and grace ; and therefore over-ruled the purpose of my friends, by depriving me of this excellent parent, when I was something under seven years old. I was born the 24th of July, 1725, and she died the 11th of that month, 1732.

My father was then at sea, (he was a commander in the Mediterranean trade at that time :) he came home the following year, and soon after married again. Thus I passed into different hands. I was well treated in all other respects ; but the loss of my mother's instructions was not repaired. I was now permitted to mingle with careless and profane children, and soon began to learn their ways. Soon after my father's marriage, I was sent to a boarding school in Essex ; where the imprudent severity of the master almost broke

my spirit and relish for books. With him I forgot the first principles and rules of arithmetic, which my mother had taught me years before. I staid there two years : in the last of the two, a new usher coming, who observed and suited my temper, I took to the Latin with great eagerness ; so that before I was ten years old, I reached and maintained the first post in the second class, which in that school read Tully and Virgil. I believe, I was pushed forward too fast, and therefore not being grounded, I soon lost all I had learnt, (for I left school in my tenth year) and when I long afterwards undertook the Latin language from books, I think, I had little if any advantage from what I had learnt before.

My father's second marriage was from a family in Essex ; and when I was eleven years old, he took me with him to sea. He was a man of remarkable good sense, and great knowledge of the world ; he took great care of my morals, but could not supply my mother's part. Having been educated himself in Spain, he always observed an air of distance and severity in his carriage, which over-awed and discouraged my spirit. I was always in fear when before him, and therefore he had less influence. From that time to the year 1742, I made several voyages, but with considerable intervals between, which were chiefly

spent in the country, excepting a few months in my fifteenth year, when I was placed upon a very advantageous prospect at Alicant in Spain; but my unsettled behavior and impatience of restraint rendered that design abortive.

In this period, my temper and conduct were exceedingly various. At school, or soon after, I had little concern about religion, and easily received very ill impressions. But I was often disturbed with convictions; I was fond of reading from a child; among other books, Burnet's Christian Oratory often came in my way; and though I understood but little of it, the course of life therein recommended appeared very desirable, and I was inclined to attempt it. I began to pray, to read the scriptures, and to keep a sort of diary; I was presently religious in my own eyes; but alas! this seeming goodness had no solid foundation, but passed away like a morning cloud, or the early dew. I was soon weary, gradually gave it up, and became worse than before: instead of prayer, I learned to curse and blaspheme, and was exceedingly wicked, when from under my parents' view. All this was before I was twelve years old. About that time I had a dangerous fall from a horse; I was thrown I believe within a few inches of a hedgerow nearly cut down; I got no hurt; but could not avoid taking notice of

a gracious providence in my deliverance ; for had I fell upon the stakes, I had inevitably been killed : my conscience suggested to me the dreadful consequences, if in such a state I had been summoned to appear before God. I presently broke off from my profane practices, and appeared quite altered ; but it was not long before I declined again. These struggles between sin and conscience were often repeated ; but the consequence was, that every relapse sunk me into still greater depths of wickedness. I was once roused by the loss of an intimate companion. We had agreed to go on board a man of war (I think it was on a Sunday ;) but I providentially came too late ; the boat was upset, and he and several others were drowned. I was invited to the funeral of my play-fellow, and was exceedingly affected, that by a delay of a few minutes (which had much displeased and angered me, till I saw the event) my life had been preserved. However this likewise was soon forgot. At another time the perusal of the Family Instructor put me upon a partial and transient reformation. In brief, though I cannot distinctly relate particulars, I think, I took up and laid aside a religious profession three or four different times before I was sixteen years of age : but all this while my heart was insincere. I often saw a necessity of religion as a means of escaping hell ; but I lov-

ed sin, and was unwilling to forsake it. Instances of this, I can remember, were frequent in the midst of all my forms; I was so strangely blind and stupid, that sometimes when I have been determined upon things, which I knew were sinful, and contrary to my duty, I could not go on quietly, till I had first dispatched my ordinary task of prayer, in which I have grudged every moment of my time; and when this was finished, and conscience was in some measure pacified, I could rush into folly with little remorse.

My last reform was the most remarkable both for degree and continuance. Of this period, at least some part of it, I may say in the apostle's words, "After the strictest sect of our religion, I lived a pharisee." I did every thing that might be expected from a person entirely ignorant of God's righteousness, and desirous to establish his own. I spent the greatest part of every day in reading the scriptures, meditation, and prayer; I fasted often; I even abstained from all animal food for three months; I would hardly answer a question for fear of speaking an idle word. I seemed to bemoan my former miscarriage very earnestly, sometimes with tears. In short I became an ascetic, and endeavored so far as my situation would permit, to renounce society that I might avoid temptation. I continued in this serious mood (I cannot

give it a higher title)for more than two years without any considerable breaking off. But it was a poor religion ; it left me in many respects under the power of sin, and so far as it prevailed, only tended to make me gloomy, stupid, unsociable, and useless.

Such was the frame of my mind when I became acquainted with lord Shaftesbury. I saw the 2d vol. of his *Characteristics*, in a petty shop at Middleburg in Holland. The title allured me to buy it, and the stile and manner gave me great pleasure in reading, especially the second piece, which his lordship with great propriety has entitled a *Rhapsody*. Nothing could be more suited to the romantic turn of my mind, than the address of this pompous declamation ; of the design and tendency I was not aware ; I thought the author a most religious person, and that I had only to follow him and be happy. Thus with fine words and fair speeches, my simple heart was beguiled. This book was always in my hand ; I read it till I could very nearly repeat the *Rhapsody* verbatim from beginning to end. No immediate effect followed, but it operated like a slow poison, and prepared the way for all that followed.

This letter brings my history down to December, 1742. I was then lately returned from a voyage, and my father not intending for the sea again, was thinking how to settle

me in the world ; but I had little life or spirit for business : I knew but little of men or things. I was fond of a visionary scheme or a contemplative life ? a medley of religion, philosophy and indolence, and was quite averse to the thoughts of an industrious application to business. At length a merchant in Liverpool, an intimate friend of my father, (to whom as the instrument of God's goodness I have since been chiefly indebted for all my earthly comforts) proposed to send me some years to Jamaica, and to charge himself with the care of my future fortune. I consented to this and every thing was prepared for my voyage. I was upon the point of setting out the following week. In the mean time, my father sent me on some business to a place a few miles beyond Maidstone in Kent, and this little journey which was to have only been for three or four days, occasioned a sudden and remarkable turn which roused me from the habitual indolence I had contracted, and gave rise to the series of uncommon dispensations of which you desire a particular account. So true it is, "that the way of man is not in himself ; it is not in man that walketh to direct his step."

I am affectionately

Your's in the best bonds.

January, 13 1763.

LETTER III.

Dear Sir,

A FEW days before my intended journey into Kent, I received an invitation to visit a family in that country—They were distant relations, but very intimate friends of my dear mother : she died in their house ; but a coolness took place upon my father's second marriage, and I had heard nothing of them for many years. As my road lay within half a mile of their house, I obtained my father's leave to call on them. I was however very indifferent about it, and sometimes thought of passing on : however I went ; I was known at first sight, before I could tell my name, and met with the kindest reception, as the child of a dear deceased friend. My friends had two daughters—the eldest (as I understood some years afterwards) had been often considered by her mother and mine, as a future wife for me from the time of her birth. I know indeed, that intimate friends often amuse themselves with such distant prospects for their children, and that they miscarry much oftener than succeed. I do not say that my mother predicted what was to happen, yet there was something remarkable in the manner of its taking place.

An intercourse between the two families had been long broken off ; I was going into a foreign country, and only called to pay a hasty visit ; and this I should not have thought of, but for a message just received at that crisis, (for I had not been invited at any time before.) Thus the circumstances were precarious in the highest degree, and the event was as extraordinary. Almost at the first sight of this girl (for she was then under fourteen) I was impressed with an affection for her, which never abated or lost its influence a single moment in my heart from that hour. In degree, it actually equalled all that the writers of romance have imagined ; in duration, it was unalterable. I soon lost all sense of religion, and became deaf to the remonstrances of conscience and prudence ; but my regard for her was always the same ; and I may perhaps venture to say, that none of the scenes of misery and wickedness, I afterward experienced, ever banished her a single hour, from my waking thoughts for the seven following years.

Give me leave, sir, to reflect a little upon this unexpected incident, and to consider its influence upon my future life, and how far it was subservient to the views of divine providence concerning me, which seem to have been two-fold : that by being given up, for awhile, to the consequences of my own wilfulness, and afterwards reclaimed by a high

hand, my case, so far as it should be known, might be both a warming and encouragement to others.

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

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

But then the ill effect it brought upon me counterbalanced these advantages. The interval, usually stiled the time of courtship, is indeed a pleasing part of life, where there is a mutual affection, the consent of friends, a reasonable prospect as to settlement, and the whole is conducted in a prudential manner, and in subordination to the will and fear of

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

as overpaid my sufferings ; yet I am sure, I would not go through the same series of trouble again, to possess all the treasures of both the Indies. I have enlarged more than I intended on this point, as perhaps these papers may be useful, to caution others against indulging an ungovernable passion, by my painful experience. How often may such headstrong votaries be said "To sow the wind, and to reap the whirlwind."

My heart being now fixed, and riveted to a particular object, I considered every thing I was concerned with in a new light. I concluded it would be absolutely impossible to live at such a distance as Jamaica, for a term of four or five years, and therefore determined, at all events, that I would not go. I could not bear either to acquaint my father with the true reason, or to invent a false one ; therefore, without taking any notice to him why I did so, I stayed three weeks, instead of three days, in Kent, till I thought (as it proved) the opportunity would be lost, and the ships sailed. I then returned to London. I had highly displeased my father, by this disobedience ; but he was more easily reconciled than I could have expected. In a little time, I sailed with a friend of his to Venice. In this voyage, I was exposed to the company, and ill example of the common sailors, among whom I ranked. Importunity, and opportu-

nity, presenting every day, I once more began to relax from the sobriety and order, which I had observed, in some degree, for more than two years—I was sometimes pierced with sharp convictions; but, though I made a few faint efforts to stop, I never recovered from this declension, as I had done from several before: I did not indeed, as yet, turn out profligate; but I was making large strides towards a total apostacy from God. The most remarkable check, and alarm, I received (and, for what I know, the last) was by a dream, which made a very strong, though not an abiding impression upon my mind.

The consideration, of whom I am writing to, renders it needless for me, either to enter upon a discussion of the nature of dreams in general, or to make an apology for recording my own. Those, who acknowledge scripture, will allow, that there have been monitory and supernatural dreams, evident communications from heaven, either directing or foretelling future events: and those, who are acquainted with the history and experience of the people of God, are well assured, that such intimations have not been totally withheld in any period down to the present times. Reason, far from contradicting this supposition, strongly pleads for it, where the process of reasoning is rightly understood, and care-

fully pursued. So that a late eminent writer,* who, I presume, is not generally charged with enthusiasm, undertakes to prove, that the phenomenon of dreaming is inexplicable, at least, if not absolutely impossible, without taking in the agency and intervention of spiritual beings, to us invisible. I would refer the incredulous to him. For my own part, I can say, without scruple, "The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." I am sure, I dreamed to the following effect, and I cannot doubt, from what I have seen since, that it had a direct and easy application to my own circumstances, to the dangers, in which I was about to plunge myself, and to the unmerited deliverance and mercy, which God would be pleased to offer me in the time of my distress.

Though I have wrote out a relation of this dream more than once for others, it has happened, that I never reserved a copy ; but the principal incidents are so deeply engraven in my memory, that, I believe, I am not liable to any considerable variations in repeating the account. The scene, presented to my imagination, was the harbor of Venice, where we had lately been. I thought it was night, and my watch upon the deck ; and that, as I was walking to and fro by myself, a person came

* Baxter, on the *vis inertiae*.

to me, (I do not remember from whence) and brought me a ring, with an express charge to keep it carefully ; assuring me, that, while I preserved that ring, I should be happy and successful : but, if I lost, or parted with it, I must expect nothing but trouble and misery. I accepted the present and the terms willingly, not in the least doubting my own care to preserve it, and highly satisfied to have my happiness in my own keeping. I was engaged in these thoughts, when a second person came to me, and observing the ring on my finger, took occasion to ask me some questions concerning it. I readily told him its virtues, and his answer expressed a surprise at my weakness, in expecting such effects from a ring. I think, he reasoned with me some time upon the impossibility of the thing, and at length urged me, in direct terms, to throw it away. At first I was shocked at the proposal, but his insinuations prevailed. I began to reason and doubt myself, and at last plucked it off my finger, and dropped it over the ship's side into the water, which it had no sooner touched, than I saw, the same instant, a terrible fire burst out from a range of the mountains, (a part of the Alps) which appeared at some distance behind the city of Venice. I saw the hills as distinct as if awake, and they were all in flames. I perceived too late my folly ; and my tempter, with an air of

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

liverer to receive my ring again, but he refused to return it, and spoke to this effect: "If you should be entrusted with this ring again, you would very soon bring yourself into the same distress; you are not able to keep it; but I will preserve it for you, and, whenever it is needful, will produce it in your behalf."—Upon this I awoke, in a state of mind not to be described: I could hardly eat, or sleep, or transact any necessary business, for two or three days; but the impression soon wore off, and in a little time I totally forgot it; and I think it hardly occurred to my mind again, till several years afterwards. It will appear, in the course of these papers, that a time came, when I found myself in circumstances very near resembling those suggested by this extraordinary dream, when I stood helpless and hopeless upon the brink of an awful eternity: and I doubt not but, had the eyes of my mind been then opened, I should have seen my grand enemy, who had seduced me, wilfully to renounce and cast away my religious profession, and to involve myself in the most complicated crimes; I say, I should probably see him pleased with my agonies, and waiting for a permission, to seize and bear away my soul to this place of torment. I should perhaps have seen likewise that Jesus, whom I had persecuted and defied, rebuking the adversa-

ry, challenging me for his own, as a brand plucked out of the fire, and saying, "Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom." However, though I saw not these things, I found the benefit; I obtained mercy. The Lord answered for me in the day of my distress; and, blessed be his name, he who restored the ring, (or what was signified by it) vouchsafes to keep it. O what an unspeakable comfort is this, that I am not in my own keeping. "The Lord is my shepherd:" I have been enabled to trust my all in his hands, and I know in whom I have believed. Satan still desires to have me, that he might sift me as wheat; but my Saviour has prayed for me, that my faith may not fail. Here is my security and power; a bulwark, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. But for this, many a time and often, (if possible) I should have ruined myself, since my first deliverance, nay, I should fall and stumble, and perish still, after all that the Lord has done for me, if his faithfulness was not engaged in my behalf, to be my sun and my shield, even unto death.—"Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

Nothing very remarkable occurred in the following part of that voyage. I returned home in December, 1743, and soon after repeated my visit to Kent, where I protracted my stay in the same imprudent manner I had

done before, which again disappointed my father's designs in my favor, and almost provoked him to disown me. Before any thing suitable offered again, I was impressed (owing entirely to my own thoughtless conduct, which was all of a piece) and put on board a tender; it was a critical juncture, when the French fleets were hovering upon our coast, so that my father was incapable to procure my release. In a few days I was sent on board the Harwich man of war, at the Nore. I entered here upon quite a new scene of life, and endured much hardship for about a month. My father was then willing, that I should remain in the navy, as a war was daily expected, and procured me a recommendation to the captain, who took me upon the quarter-deck as a midshipman. I had now an easy life, as to externals, and might have gained respect; but my mind was unsettled, and my behavior very indifferent. I here met with companions, who completed the ruin of my principles; and though I affected to talk of virtue, and was not so outwardly abandoned as afterwards, yet my delight and habitual practice was wickedness: my chief intimate was a person of exceeding good natural talents, and much observation: he was the greatest master of what is called the freethinking scheme, I remember to have met with, and knew how to insinuate his sentiments in the most plau-

sible way—And his zeal was equal to his address; he could hardly have labored more in the cause if he had expected to gain heaven by it. Allow me to add, while I think of it, that this man, whom I honored as my master, and whose practice I so eagerly adopted, perished in the same way as I expected to have done. I have been told, that he was overtaken, in a voyage from Lisbon, with a violent storm; the vessel and people escaped, but a great sea broke on board, and swept him into eternity.—Thus the Lord spares or punishes, according to his sovereign pleasure! But to return—I was fond of his company, and having myself a smattering of books, was eager enough to shew my reading.—He soon perceived my case, that I had not wholly broke through the restraints of conscience, and therefore did not shock me at first with too broad intimations of his design; he rather, as I thought, spoke favorably of religion; but when he had gained my confidence he began to speak plainer; and perceiving my ignorant attachment to the *Characteristics*, he joined issue with me upon that book, and convinced me that I had never understood it. In a word, he so plied me with objections and arguments, that my depraved heart was soon gained, and I entered into his plan with all my heart. Thus, like an unwary sailor, who quits his port just before a rising storm, I renounced the

hopes and comfort of the gospel, at the very time, when every other comfort was about to fail me.

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

At length we sailed from Spithead with a very large fleet. We put into Torbay with a change of wind; but, it returning fair again, we sailed the next day. Several of our fleet were lost in attempting to leave that place; but the following night the whole fleet was greatly endangered upon the coast of Cornwall by a storm from the southward. The darkness of the night and the number of the vessels, occasioned much confusion and damage. Our ship, though several times in immi-

ment danger of being run down by other vessels, escaped unhurt; but many suffered much, particularly the admiral. This occasioned our putting back to Plymouth.

While we lay at Plymouth, I heard that my father, who had interest in some of the ships lately lost, was come down to Torbay. He had a connection at that time with the African company. I thought if I could get to him he might easily introduce me into that service, which would be better than pursuing a long uncertain voyage to the East-Indies. It was a maxim with me in those unhappy days, *never to deliberate*: the thought hardly occurred to me, but I was resolved I would leave the ship at all events: I did so, and in the wrongest manner possible. I was sent one day in the boat, to take care that none of the people deserted; but I betrayed my trust and went off myself. I knew not what road to take and durst not ask, for fear of being suspected yet having some general idea of the country, I guessed right, and, when I had travelled some miles, I found, upon enquiry, that I was on the road of Dartmouth. All went smoothly that day, and part of the next; I walked apace, and expected to have been with my father in about two hours, when I was met by a small party of soldiers; I could not avoid or deceive them. They brought me back to Plymouth; I walked through the

streets, guarded like a felon—My heart was full of indignation, shame, and fear. I was confined two days in the guard-house, then sent on board my ship, kept awhile in irons, then publicly stripped and whipped, after which I was degraded from my office, and all my former companions forbidden to show me the least favor, or even to speak to me.—As midshipman, I had been intitled to some command which (being sufficiently haughty and vain) I had not been backward to exert—I was now in my turn brought down to a level with the lowest, and exposed to the insults of all.

And as my present situation was uncomfortable, my future prospects were still worse; the evils I suffered were likely to grow heavier every day. While my catastrophe was recent, the officers and my quondam brethren were something disposed to screen me from ill usage; but during the little time I remained with them afterwards, I found them cool very fast in their endeavors to protect me. Indeed they could not avoid it, without running a great risk of sharing with me: for the captain though in general a humane man, who behaved very well to the ship's company, was almost implacable in his resentment, when he had been greatly offended, and took several occasions to shew himself so to me; and the voyage was expected to be (as it prov-

ed) for five years. Yet I think nothing I either felt or feared distressed me so much, as to see myself thus forcibly torn away from the object of my affections, under a great improbability of seeing her again, and a much greater, of returning in such a manner as would give me hopes of seeing her mine. Thus I was as miserable on all hands as could well be imagined. My breast was filled with the most excruciating passions, eager desire, bitter rage, and black despair.—Every hour exposed me to some new insult and hardship, with no hope of relief or mitigation, no friend to take my part, or to listen to my complaint. Whether I looked inward or outward, I could perceive nothing but darkness and misery. I think no case, except that of conscience wounded by the wrath of God, could be more dreadful than mine : I cannot express with what wishfulness and regret, I cast my last looks upon the English shore ; I kept my eyes fixed upon it, till the ship's distance encreasing, it sensibly disappeared ; and when I could see it no longer, I was tempted to throw myself into the sea, which (according to the wicked system I had adopted) would put a period to all my sorrows at once. But the secret hand of God restrained me. Help me to praise him, dear Sir, for his wonderful goodness to the most unworthy of all his creatures.

I am your most obliged servant.

January 15, 1763.

LETTER IV.

Dear Sir,

THOUGH I desired your instructions as to the manner and extent of these memoirs, I began to write before I received them, and had almost finished the preceding sheet when your favor of the 11th came to hand. I shall find another occasion to acknowledge my sense of your kind expressions of friendship, which I pray the Lord, I may never give you cause to repent or withdraw : at present I shall confine myself to what more particularly relates to the task assigned me. I shall obey you, Sir, in taking notice of the little incidents you recall to my memory, and of others of the like nature, which, without your direction, I should have thought too trivial, and too much my own to deserve mentioning. When I began the eight letters, I intended to say no more of myself than might be necessary to illustrate the wonders of divine providence and grace in the leading turns of my life ; but I account your judgment a sufficient warrant for enlarging my plan.

Amongst other things, you desired a more explicit account of the state and progress of

my courtship, as it is usually phrased. This was the point, in which I thought it especially became me to be very brief ; but I submit to you : and this seems a proper place to resume it, by telling how it stood at the time of my leaving England. When my inclinations first discovered themselves, both parties were so young, that no one but myself considered it in a serious view. It served for tea-table talk among our friends, and nothing farther was expected from it. But afterwards, when my passion seemed to have abiding effects, so that in an interval of two years it was not at all abated, and especially as it occasioned me to act without any regard to prudence or interest, or my father's designs, and as there was a coolness between him and the family, her parents began to consider it as a matter of consequence ; and when I took my last leave of them, her mother, at the same time she expressed the most tender affection for me, as if I had been her own child, told me, that though she had no objections to make, upon a supposition that, at a mature age, there should be a probability of our engaging upon a prudent prospect, yet as things then stood, she thought herself obliged to interfere ; and therefore desired I would no more think of returning to their house (unless her daughter was from home) till such time as I could either prevail with myself entirely to give up my pretensions, or could assure her,

that I had my father's express consent to go on. Much depended on Mrs. N*****'s part in this affair ; it was something difficult ; but though she was young, gay, and quite unpractised in such matters, she was directed to a happy medium. A positive encouragement or an absolute refusal, would have been attended with equal, though different, disadvantages. But without much studying about it, I found her always upon her guard : she had penetration to see her absolute power over me, and prudence to make a proper use of it ; she would neither understand my hints, nor give room to come to a direct explanation. She has said since, that from the first discovery of my regard, and long before the thought was agreeable to her, she had often an unaccountable impression upon her mind, that sooner or later she should be mine. Upon these terms we parted.

I now return to my voyage. During our passage to Madeira, I was a prey to the most gloomy thoughts. Though I had well deserved all I had met with, and the captain might have been justified if he had carried his resentment still farther ; yet my pride at that time suggested that I had been grossly injured, and this so far wrought upon my wicked heart that I actually formed designs against his life, and this was one reason that made me willing to prolong my own. I was sometimes divid-

ed between the two, not thinking it practicable to effect both. The Lord had now to appearance given me up to prejudicial hardness ; I was capable of any thing. I had not the least fear of God before my eyes, nor (so far as I remember) the least sensibility of conscience. I was possessed of so strong a spirit of delusion that I believed my own lie, and was firmly persuaded, that after death I should cease to be.—Yet the Lord preserved me !—Some intervals of sober reflection would at times take place : when I have chosen death rather than life, a ray of hope would come in (though there was little probability for such a hope) that I should yet see better days, that I might again return to England, and have my wishes crowned, if I did not wilfully throw myself away. In a word, my love to Mrs. N***** was the only restraint I had left ; though I neither feared God, nor regarded men, I could not bear, that *she* should think meanly of me, when I was dead. As in the outward concerns of life the weakest means are often employed by divine providence to produce great effects, beyond their common influence, (as when a disease, for instance, has been removed by a fright,) so I found it then ; this single thought, which had not restrained me from a thousand smaller evils, proved my only and effectual barrier against the greatest and most fatal temptations.

How long I could have supported this conflict, or what, humanely speaking, would have been the consequences of my continuing in that situation, I cannot say : but the Lord, whom I little thought of, knew my danger, and was providing for my deliverance.

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

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

The ship I went on board was bound to Sierra Leon, and the adjacent parts of what is called the Windward coasts of Africa. The commander, I found, was acquainted

with my father ; he received me very kindly, and made fair professions of assistance ; and I believe he would have been my friend : but, without making the least advantage of former mistakes and troubles, I pursued the same course ; nay, if possible, I acted much worse. On board the Harwich, though my principles were totally corrupted, yet, as upon my first going there I was in some degree staid and serious, the remembrance of this made me ashamed of breaking out in that notorious manner, I could otherwise have indulged. But now entering amongst strangers, I could appear without disguise ; and I well remember, that while I was passing from the one ship to the other, this was one reason why I rejoiced in the exchange, and one reflection I made upon the occasion, viz. " That I now might be as abandoned as I pleased, without any control ;" and, from this time, I was exceedingly vile, indeed little, if any thing, short of that animated description of an almost irrecoverable state, which we have in 2 Peter, ii. 14. I not only sinned with a high hand myself, but made it my study to tempt and seduce others upon every occasion ; nay, I eagerly sought occasion, sometimes to my own hazard and hurt. One natural consequence of this carriage was, a loss of the favor of my new captain ; not that he was at all religious, or disliked my wickedness, any further than it

affected his interest ; but I became careless and disobedient : I did not please him, because I did not intend it ; and as he was a man of an odd temper likewise, we the more easily disagreed. Besides, I had a little of that unlucky wit, which can do little more than multiply troubles and enemies to its possessor ; and, upon some imagined affront, I made a song, in which I ridiculed his ship, his designs, and his person, and soon taught it to the whole ship's company. Such was the ungrateful return I made, for his offers of friendship and protection. I had mentioned no names, but the allusion was plain, and he was no stranger either to the intention or the author.—I shall say no more of this part of my story ; let it be buried in eternal silence. But let me not be silent from the praise of that grace, which could pardon, that blood, which could expiate such sins as mine : yea, “ the Ethiopian “ may change his skin, and the leopard his “ spots,” since I, who was the willing slave of every evil, possessed with a legion of unclean spirits, have been spared, saved, and changed, to stand as a monument of his almighty power for ever.

Thus I went on for about six months, by which time the ship was preparing to leave the coast. A few days before she sailed, the captain died. I was not upon much better terms with his mate, who now succeeded to

the command, and had, upon some occasion, treated me ill : I made no doubt, but if I went with him to the West-Indies, he would put me on board a man of war; and this, from what I had known already, was more dreadful to me than death. To avoid it, I determined to remain in Africa, and amused myself with many golden dreams, that here I should find an opportunity of improving my fortune.

There are still upon that part of the coast, a few white men settled, (and there were many more at the time I was first there,) whose business it was to purchase slaves, &c. in the rivers and country adjacent, and sell them to the ships at an advanced price. One of these, who at first landed in my indigent circumstances, had acquired considerable wealth ; he had lately been in England, and was returning in the vessel I was in, of which he owned a quarter part. His example impressed me with hope of the same success ; and, upon conditions of entering into his service, I obtained my discharge. I had not the precaution to make any terms, but trusted to his generosity. I received no compensation for my time on board the ship, but a bill upon the owners in England, which was never paid, for they failed before my return. The day the vessel sailed, I landed upon the island of

Benanoes, with little more than the clothes upon my back, as if I had escaped shipwreck.

I am,

Dear sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

Dear Sir,

THERE seems an important instruction, and of frequent use, in these words of our dear Lord, "Mine hour is not yet come." The two following years, of which I am now to give some account, will seem as an absolute blank in a very short life: but as the Lord's hour of grace was not yet come, and I was to have still deeper experience of the dreadful state of the heart of man, when left to itself; I have seen frequent cause since to admire the mercy of the Lord, in banishing me to those distant parts, and almost excluding me from human society, at a time when I was big with mischief, and, like one infected with a pestilence, was capable of spreading a taint wherever I went. Had my affairs taken a different turn, had I succeeded in my designs, and remained in England, my sad story would probably have been worse.

Worse in myself, indeed, I could have hardly been; but my wickedness would have had greater scope; I might have been very hurtful to others, and multiplied irreparable evils. But the Lord wisely placed me where I could do little harm. The few I had to converse with were too much like myself, and I was soon brought into such abject circumstances, that I was too low to have any influence. I was rather shunned and despised, than imitated; there being few, even of the negroes themselves, (during the first year of my residence among them,) but thought themselves too good to speak to me. I was as yet an "outcast lying in my blood," (Ezek. xvi.) and, to all appearance, exposed to perish.—But the Lord beheld me with mercy—he did not strike me to hell, as I justly deserved; "he passed by me when I was in my blood, "and bid me live." But the appointed time for the manifestation of his love, to cover all my iniquities with the robe of his righteousness, and to admit me to the privileges of his children, was not till long afterwards; yet even now he bid me *live*. And I can only ascribe it to his secret upholding power, that what I suffered in a part of this interval, did not bereave me either of my life or senses; yet, as by these sufferings the force of my evil examples and inclinations was lessened, I have reason to account them amongst my mercies.

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

leagues farther, the same way, lie the Plantanes, three small islands, two miles distant from the continent at the point, which form one side of the Sherbro. This river is more properly a *spund*, running within a long island, and receiving the confluence of several large rivers, "*river unknown to song*," but far more deeply engraven in my remembrance, than the Po or Tyber. The southernmost of these has a very peculiar course; almost parallel to the coast; so that in tracing it a great many leagues upwards, it will seldom lead one above three miles, and sometimes not more than half a mile from the sea shore. Indeed I know not but that all these rivers may have communication with each other, and with the sea in many places, which I have not remarked. If you cast your eyes upon a large map of Africa, while you are reading this you will have a general idea of the country I was in; for though the maps are very incorrect, most of the places I have mentioned are inserted, and in the same order as I have named them.

My new master had formerly resided near Cape Mount, but he now settled at the Plantane, upon the largest of the three islands. It is a low sandy island, about two miles in circumference, and almost covered with palm-trees. We immediately began to build a house, and to enter upon trade. I had now

some desire to retrieve my loss time, and to exert diligence in what was before me ; and he was a man with whom I might have lived tolerably well, if he had not been soon influenced against me : but he was much under the direction of a black woman, who lived with him as a wife. She was a person of some consequence in her own country, and he owed his first rise to her interest. This woman (I know not for what reason) was strangely prejudiced against me from the first ; and what made it still worse for me, was a severe fit of illness, which attacked me very soon, before I had opportunity to show what I could or would do in his service. I was sick when he sailed in a shalop to Rio Nuna, and he left me in her hands. At first I was taken some care of ; but, as I did not recover soon, she grew weary, and entirely neglected me. I had sometimes not a little difficulty to procure a draught of cold water, when burning with a fever. My bed was a mat, spread upon a board or chest, and a log of wood my pillow. When my fever left me, and my appetite returned, I would gladly have eaten, but there was no one gave unto me. She lived in plenty herself, but hardly allowed me sufficient to sustain my life, except now and then, when in the highest good humor, she would send me victuals in her own plate after she had dined ; and this, so greatly

was my pride humbled, I received with thanks and eagerness, as the most needy begger does an alms. Once, I well remember, I was called to receive this bounty from her own hand, but being exceedingly weak and feeble, I dropped the plate. Those who live in plenty can hardly conceive how this loss touched me ; but she had the cruelty to laugh at my disappointment ; and though the table was covered with dishes, for she lived much in the European manner, she refused to give me any more ; my distress has been at times so great, as to compel me to go, by night, and pull up roots in the plantation, though at the risk of being punished as a thief, which I have eaten raw on the spot, for fear of discovery. The roots I speak of are very wholesome food, when boiled or roasted, but as unfit to be eaten raw in any quantity as a potatoe. The consequence of this diet, which after the first experiment, I always expected, and seldom missed, was the same as if I had taken *tartar emetic* ; so that I have often returned as empty as I went ; yet necessity urged me to repeat the trial several times. I have sometimes been relieved by strangers : nay, even by the slaves in the chain, who have secretly brought me victuals, (for they durst not be seen to do it) from their own slender pittance. Next to pressing want, nothing sits harder upon the mind than *scorn* and *contempt* ; and

of this likewise I had an abundant measure. When I was very slowly recovering, this woman would sometimes pay me a visit, not to pity or relieve, but to insult me. She would call me worthless and indolent, and compel me to walk, which, when I could hardly do, she would set her attendants to mimic my motion, to clap their hands, laugh, throw limes at me ; or, if they chose to throw stones (as I think was the case once or twice) they were not rebuked : but, in general, though all who depended on her favor must join in her treatment, yet, when she was out of sight, I was rather pitied than scorned by the meanest of her slaves. At length my master returned from his voyage ; I complained of ill usage, but he could not believe me ; and, as I did it in her hearing, I fared no better for it. But, in his second voyage, he took me with him. We did pretty well for a while, till a brother trader he met with in the river persuaded him, that I was unfaithful, and stole his goods in the night, or when he was on shore. This was almost the only vice I could not be justly charged with : the only remains of a good education, I could boast of, was what is commonly called *honesty* ; and as far as he had entrusted me, I had been always true ; and though my great distress might, in some measure, have excused it, I never once thought of defrauding him in the smallest mat-

ter. However, the charge was believed, and I condemned without evidence. From that time *he* likewise used me very hardly; whenever he left the vessel, I was locked upon deck, with a pint of rice for my day's allowance; and if he staid longer, I had no relief till his return. Indeed, I believe, I should have been nearly starved, but for an opportunity of catching fish sometimes. When fowls were killed for his own use, I seldom was allowed any part but the entrails, to bait my hooks with; and, at what we call *slack water*, that is, about the changing of the tides, when the current was still, I used generally to fish, (for at other times it was not practicable) and I very often succeeded. If I saw a fish upon my hook, my joy was little less than any other person may have found, in the accomplishment of the scheme he had most at heart. Such a fish, hastily broiled, or rather half burnt, without sauce, salt, or bread, has afforded me a delicious meal. If I caught none, I might, if I could, sleep away my hunger till the next return of *slack water*, and then try again. Nor did I suffer less from the inclemency of the weather, and the want of clothes. The rainy season was now advancing; my whole suit was a shirt, a pair of trowsers, a cotton handkerchief instead of a cap, and a cotton cloth about two yards long, to supply the want of upper garments; and

thus accoutred, I have been exposed for 20, 30, perhaps near 40 hours together, in incessant rains, accompanied with strong gales of wind, without the least shelter, when my master was on shore. I feel to this day some faint returns of the violent pains, I then contracted. The excessive cold and wet, I endured in that voyage, and so soon after I had recovered from a long sickness, quite broke my constitution and my spirits; the latter were soon restored, but the effects of the former still remain with me, as a needful memento of the service and the wages of sin.

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

One thing, though strange, is most true. Though destitute of food and cloathing, depressed to a degree beyond common wretch-

edness, I could sometimes collect my mind to mathematical studies. I had bought Barrow's Euclid at Plymouth ; it was the only volume I brought on shore ; it was always with me, and I used to take it to remote corners of the island by the sea-side, and draw my diagrams with a long stick upon the sand. Thus I often beguiled my sorrows, and almost forgot my feeling—and thus, without any other assistance, I made myself, in a good measure, master of the first books of Euclid.

I am

Yours, as before.

January 17, 1763.

LETTER VI.

Dear Sir,

THERE is much piety and spirit in the grateful acknowledgement of Jacob, “with my staff I passed this Jordan, and now “am become two bands.” They are words which ought to affect me with a peculiar emotion. I remember that some of those mournful days, to which my last letter refers, I was busied in planting some *lime* or *lemon-trees*. The plants I put in the ground were no longer than a young goosberry bush ; my

master and his mistress passing by the place, stopped a while to look at me ; at last, " Who knows," says he, " who knows but by the time these trees grow and bear, you may go home to England, obtain the command of a ship, and return to reap the fruit of your labors ; we see strange things sometimes happen." This, as he intended it, was a cutting sarcasm. I believe he thought full as probable that I should live to be king of Poland ; yet it proved a prediction, and they (one of them at least) lived to see me return from England, in the capacity he mentioned, and pluck some of the first limes from those very trees. How can I proceed in my relation, till I raise a monument to the divine goodness, by comparing the circumstances in which the Lord has since placed me, with what I was at that time ! Had you seen me, Sir, then go so pensive and solitary in the dead of night to wash my one shirt upon the rocks, and afterwards put on wet, that it might dry upon my back while I slept ; had you seen me so poor a figure, that when a ship's boat came to the island, shame often constrained me to hide myself in the woods from the sight of strangers ; especially had you known that my conduct, principles, and heart were still darker than my outward condition—how little would you have imagined,

that one, who so fully answered to the* *sugetoicai misountes* of the apostle, was reserved to be so peculiar an instance of the providential care, and exuberant goodness of God. There was, at that time, but one earnest desire in my heart, which was not contrary and shocking, both to religion and reason; that *one* desire, though my vile licentious life rendered me peculiarly unworthy of success, and though a thousand difficulties seemed to render it impossible, the Lord was pleased to gratify. But this favor, though great, and greatly prized, was a small thing compared to the blessings of his grace: he spared me, to give me, "the knowledge of Himself, in "the person of Jesus Christ;" in love to my soul, he delivered me from the pit of corruption, and cast all my aggravated sins behind his back. He brought my feet into the paths of peace.—This is indeed the chief article, but it is not the whole. When he made me acceptable to Himself in the Beloved, he gave me favor in the sight of others. He raised me new friends, protected and guided me through a long series of dangers, and crowned every day with repeated mercies. To him I owe it, that I am still alive, and that I am not still living in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and the want of all things: into that state I brought myself, but it was He delivered me. He has given me

* Hatelul and hating one another.

an easy situation in life, some experimental knowledge of his gospel, a large acquaintance amongst his people, a friendship and correspondence with several of his most honored servants.—But it is as difficult to enumerate my present advantages, as it is fully to describe the evils and miseries of the preceding contrast.

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

Some time within the year, as I have said, I obtained my master's consent to live with another trader, who dwelt upon the same island. Without his consent I could not be taken, but it was then brought about. This was an alteration much to my advantage; I was soon decently clothed, lived in plenty,

was considered as a companion, and trusted with the care of all his domestic effects, which were to the amount of some thousand pounds. This man had several factories, and white servants in different places, particularly one in Kittam, the river I spoke of, which runs so near along the sea coast. I was soon appointed to go there, where I had a share in the management of business, jointly with another of his servants : we lived as we pleased, business flourished, and our employer was satisfied. Here I began to be wretch enough to think myself *happy*. There is a significant phrase frequently used in those parts, that such a white man is grown *black*. It does not intend an alternation of complexion, but of disposition. I have known several who, settling in Africa after the age of 30 or 40, have, at that time of life, been gradually assimilated to the tempers, customs, and ceremonies of the natives, so far as to prefer that country to England ; they have become dupes to all the charms, necromancies, amulets, and divinations of the blinded negroes, and put more trust in such things than the wiser sort among the natives. A part of this spirit of infatuation was growing upon me (in time perhaps, I might have yielded to the whole ;) I entered into closer engagements with the inhabitants and should have lived and died a wretch amongst them if the Lord had

not watched over me for food. Not that I had lost those ideas which chiefly engaged my heart to England, but despair of seeing them accomplished, made me willing to remain where I was. I thought I could more easily bear the disappointment in this situation than nearer home. But so soon as I had fixed my connections and plans with these views the Lord providentially interposed to break them to pieces, and save me from the ruin in spite of myself.

In the mean time, the ship that had orders to bring me home, arrived at Sierra Leon; the Captain made enquiry for me there and at the Bonnanas; but understanding that I was at a great distance in the country, he thought no more about me. Without doubt the hand of God directed my being placed at Kittam just at the time; for, as the ship came no nearer than the Bonnanas, and staid but a few days, if I had been at the Plantanes, I could not perhaps have heard of her till she had been sailed. The same must have certainly been the event, had I been sent to any other factory, of which my new master had several upon different rivers. But though the place I was at, was a long way up the river, much more than a hundred miles distant from the Plantanes, yet, by the peculiar situation which I have already noticed, I was still within a mile of the sea-coast. To make the

interposition more remarkable, I was, at that very juncture, going in quest of trade to a place at some distance directly from the sea, and should have set out a day or two before, but that we waited for a few articles from the next ship that offered to complete the assortment of goods, I was to take with me. We used sometimes to walk to the beach, in expectation of seeing a vessel pass by ; but this was very precarious as at that time the place was not at all resorted to by ships for trade. Many passed in the night, others kept at a considerable distance from the shore. In a word, I did not know that any one had stopped while I was there, though some had before, upon a signal made from the shore. In February, 1747, I know not the exact day, my fellow-servant walking down to the beach in the forenoon, saw a vessel sailing past, and made a smoke in token of trade. She was already a little beyond the place, and, as the wind was fair, the captain was in some demur, whether to stop or not : however had my companion been half an hour later, she would have been gone beyond recall ; but he soon saw her come to an anchor, and went on board in a canoe ; and this proved the very ship I have spoken of. One of the first questions he was asked was concerning me ; and when the captain understood that I was so near, he came on shore to deliver his mes-

sage. Had an invitation from home reached me when I was sick, and starving at the Plantanes, I should have received it as life from the dead ; but now for the reasons already given, I heard it at first with indifference. The captain, unwilling to lose me told a story altogether of his own framing ; he gave me a very plausible account, how he had missed a large packet of letters and papers, which he should have brought with him ; but this he said, he was sure of, having had it from my father's own mouth, as well as from his employer, that a person lately dead, had left me 400*l.* per annum, adding further, that if I was any ways embarrassed in my circumstances, he had express orders to redeem me, though it should cost him one half of his cargo. Every particular of this was false ; nor could I myself believe, what he said about the estate ; but as I had some expectations from an aged relation, I thought a part of it might be true. But I was not long in suspense ; for though my father's care and desire to see me had too little weight with me, and would have been insufficient to make me quit my retreat, yet the remembrance of Mrs. ———, the hopes of seeing her, and the possibility, that accepting this offer might once more put me in a way of gaining her hand, prevailed over all other considerations. The captain further promised, and in this he

kept his word, that I should lodge in his cabin, dine at his table, and be his constant companion, without expecting any service from me. And thus I was suddenly freed from captivity of about fifteen months. I had neither a thought or a desire of this change one hour before it took place. I embarked with him, and in a few hours lost sight of Kittam.

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

Now I am in some measure enlightened, I can easily perceive, that it is in the adjustment and concurrence of these seemingly fortuitous circumstances, that the ruling power and wisdom of God is most evidently displayed in human affairs. How many such casual events may we remark in the history of Joseph, which had each a necessary influence in his ensuing promotion ! If he had not dreamed, or if he had not told his dream ;—if the Midianites had passed by a day sooner, or a day later ; if they had sold him to any per-

son but Potiphar ; if his mistress had been a better woman ; if Pharaoh's officers had not displeased their Lord ; or if any, or all these things, had fell out in any other manner or time than they did, all that followed had been prevented ; the promises and purposes of God concerning Israel, their bondage, deliverance, polity, and settlement, must have failed ; and, as all these things tended to, and centered in, Christ ; the promised Savior, the desire of all nations, would not have appeared ; mankind had been still in their sins, without hope, and the councils of God's eternal love, in favor of sinners, defeated. Thus we may see a connection between Joseph's first dream, and the death of our Lord Christ, with all its glorious consequences. So strong, though secret, is the concatenation between the greatest and the smallest events. What a comfortable thought is this to a believer, to know, that amidst all the various interfering designs of men, the Lord has one constant design, which he cannot, will not miss, namely, his own glory in the complete salvation of his people ; and that he is wise, and strong, and faithful, to make even those things, which seem contrary to his design, subservient to promote it. You have allowed me to comment upon my

own text, yet the length of this observation may need some apology. Believe me to be, with great respect,

Dear sir,

Your affectionate and obliged servant.

January 18, 1763.

LETTER VII.

Dear Sir,—

THE ship I was now on board, as a passenger, was on a trading voyage for gold, ivory, dyers-wood, and bees-wax. It requires much longer time to collect a cargo of this sort, than of slaves. The captain began his trade at Gambia, had been already four or five months in Africa, and continued there a year, or thereabouts, after I was with him; in which time we ranged the whole coast, as far as Cape Lopez, which lies about a degree south of the equinoctial, and more than a thousand miles farther from England, than the place where I embarked. I have little to offer worthy your notice, in the course of this tedious voyage. I had no business to employ my thoughts, but sometimes amused myself with *mathematics*: excepting this, my whole life, when awake, was a

course of most horrid impiety and profaneness. I know not, that I have ever since met so daring a blasphemer : not content with common oaths and imprecations, I daily invented new ones ; so that I was often seriously reprov'd by the captain, who was himself a very passionate man, and not at all circumspect in his expressions. From the relation I at times made him of my past adventures, and what he saw of my conduct, and especially towards the close of the voyage, when we met with many disasters, he would often tell me, that, to his great grief, he had a Jonah on board ; that a curse attended me wherever I went ; and that all the troubles he met with in the voyage, were owing to his having taken me into the vessel. I shall omit any further particulars, and after mentioning an instance or two of the Lord's mercy to me, while I was thus defying his power and patience, I shall proceed to something more worthy of your perusal.

Although I lived long in the excess of almost every other extravagance, I never was fond of drinking ; and my father has often been heard to say, that while I avoided drunkenness, he should still entertain hopes of my recovery. But sometimes I would promote a drinking-bout, for a frolic sake, as I term'd it ; for though I did not love the liquor, I was sold to do iniquity, and delighted in mischief. The last abominable frolic of this

sort I engaged in, was in the river Gabon ; the proposal and expence were my own. Four or five of us one evening sat down upon deck, to see who could hold out the longest in drinking geneva and rum alternately • a large sea-shell supplied the place of a glass. I was very unfit for a challenge of this sort ; for my head was always incapable of bearing much strong drink. However, I began, and proposed the first toast, which, I well remember, with some imprecation against the person who should *start* first.—This proved to be myself—My brains were soon fired—I arose and danced about the deck like a madman ; and while I was thus diverting my companions, my hat went over-board. By the light of the moon I saw the ship's boat, and eagerly threw myself over the side to get into her, that I might recover my hat. My sight, in that circumstance, deceived me ; for the boat was not within my reach, as I thought, bnt perhaps twenty feet from the ship's side. I was, however, half over-board, and should, in one moment more, have plunged myself into the water, when somebody caught hold of my clothes behind, and pulled me back. This was an amazing escape ; for I could not swim, if I had been sober ; the tide ran very strong ; my companions were too much intoxicated to save me : and the rest of the ship's company were

asleep. So near I was, to appearance, of perishing in that dreadful condition, and sinking into eternity under the weight of my own curse.

Another time, at Cape Lopez, some of us had been in the woods, and shot a buffalo, or wild cow : we brought a part of it on board, and carefully marked the place, as I thought, where we left the remainder. In the evening we returned to fetch it, but we set out too late. I undertook to be their guide, but night coming on before we could reach the place, we lost our way. Sometimes we were in swamps up to the middle in water ; and when we recovered dry land, we could not tell whether we were walking towards the ship, or wandering farther from her—Every step increased our uncertainty.—The night grew darker, and we were entangled in inextricable woods, where perhaps the foot of man had never trod before. That part of the country is intirely abandoned to wild beasts, with which it prodigiously abounds. We were indeed in a terrible case, having neither light, food, nor arms, and expecting a tyger to rush from behind every tree. The stars were clouded, and we had no compass to form a judgment which way we were going. Had things continued thus, we had probably perished: but it pleased God, no beast came near us ; and, after some hours perplexity, the moon arose, and pointed out the eastern

quarter. It appeared then, as we had expected, that instead of drawing nearer to the sea-side, we had been penetrating into the country ; but, by the guidance of the moon, we at length came to the water-side, a considerable distance from the ship. We got safe on board, without any other inconvenience than what we suffered from fear and fatigue.

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

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

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

of the inference, as it related to myself, and therefore shut the book presently. My conscience witnessed against me once more, and I concluded that, true or false, I must abide the consequences of my own choice. I put an abrupt end to these reflections, by joining in with some vain conversation or other that came in my way.

But now *the Lord's time was come* and the conviction I was so unwilling to receive, was deeply impressed upon me by an awful dispensation. I went to bed that night in my usual security and indifference, but was awaked from sound sleep by the force of a violent sea which broke on board us. So much of it came down below as filled the cabin I lay in with water. This alarm was followed by a cry, from the deck, that the ship was going down, or sinking. As soon as I could recover myself, I essayed to go upon deck, but was met upon the ladder by the captain, who desired me to bring a knife with me. While I returned for the knife, another person went up in my room, who was instantly washed overboard. We had no leisure to lament him, nor did we expect to survive him long; for we soon found the ship was filling with water very fast. The sea had torn away the upper timbers, on one side, and made a mere wreck in a few minutes. I shall not affect to describe this disaster in the marine

dialect, which would be understood by few ; and therefore I can give you but a very inadequate idea of it. Taken in all circumstances, it was astonishing, and almost miraculous, that any of us survived to relate the story. We had immediate recourse to the pumps, but the water increased against our efforts : some of us were set to *bailing* in another part of the vessel, that is, to lade it out with buckets and pails. We had but eleven or twelve people to sustain this service ; and notwithstanding all we could do, she was full, or very near it, and then with a common cargo, she must have sunk of course : but we had a great quantity of bees-wax and wood on board, which were specifically lighter than the water ; and as it pleased God, that we received this shock in the very crisis of the gale, towards morning we were enabled to employ some means for our safety, which succeeded beyond hope. In about an hour's time, the day began to break, and the wind abated. We expended most of our clothes and bedding to stop the leaks, (though the weather was exceeding cold, especially to us, who had so lately left a hot climate,) over these we nailed pieces of boards, and at last perceived the water abate. At the beginning of this hurry, I was little affected ; I pumped hard, and endeavored to animate myself and my companions : I told one of

them, that in a few days this distress would serve us to talk over a glass of wine : but he being a less hardened sinner than myself, replied with tears, " No, it is too late now." About nine o'clock, being almost spent with cold and labor, I went to speak with the captain, who was busied elsewhere, and just as I was returning from him, I said, almost without any meaning, " If this will not do, " the Lord have mercy upon us." This (though spoken with little reflection) was the first desire I had breathed for mercy for the space of many years. I was instantly struck with my own words, and as Jehu said once, *What hast thou to do with peace?* so it directly occurred, *What mercy can there be for me?* I was obliged to return to the pump, and there I continued till noon, almost every passing wave breaking over my head ; but we made ourselves fast with ropes, that we might not be washed away. Indeed I expected that every time the vessel descended in the sea, she would rise no more ; and though I dreaded death *now*, and my heart foreboded the worst, if the scriptures, which I had long since opposed, were indeed true ; yet I was still but half convinced, and remained for a space of time in a sullen frame, a mixture of despair and impatience. I thought if the christian religion was true, I could not be

forgiven; and was therefore expecting, and almost, at times, wishing to know the worst of it.

I am, Sir,

Yours.

January 19, 1763.

LETTER VIII.

Dear Sir,

THE 10th (that is in the present stile the 21st) of March, is a day much to be remembered by me, and I have never suffered it to pass wholly unnoticed since the year 1748. On that day the Lord sent from on high and delivered me out of the deep waters. —I continued at the pump from three in the morning till near noon, and then I could do no more. I went and lay down upon my bed, uncertain and indifferent, whether I should rise again. In an hour's time I was called, and not being able to pump, I went to the helm, and steered the ship till midnight, excepting a small interval for refreshment. I had here leisure and convenient opportunity

for reflection : I began to think of my former religious professions the extraordinary turns in my life ; the calls, warnings, and deliverances, I had met with, the licentious course of my conversation, particularly my unparalleled effrontery in making the gospel history (which I could not now be sure was false, though I was not yet assured it was true) the constant subject of profane ridicule, I thought, allowing the scripture premises, there never was nor could be such a sinner as myself, and then comparing the advantages I had broken through, I concluded, at first, that my sins were too great to be forgiven. The scripture likewise seemed to say the same ; for I had formerly been well acquainted with the Bible, and many passages, upon the occasion, returned to my memory, particularly those awful passages, Prov. i. 4—31. Heb. vi. 4. 6. and 2. Pet. ii. 20. which seemed so exactly to suit my case and character, as to bring with them a presumptive proof of a divine original. Thus, as I have said, I waited with fear and impatience to receive my inevitable doom. Yet, though I had thoughts of this kind, they were exceeding faint and disproportionate ; it was not till long after (perhaps several years) I had gained some clear views of the infinite righteousness and grace of Christ Jesus my Lord, that I had a deep and strong apprehension of my state by

nature and practice, and perhaps, till then, I could not have borne the sight. So wonderfully does the Lord proportion the discoveries of sin and grace; for he knows our frame, and that; if he was to put forth the greatness of his power, a poor sinner would be instantly overwhelmed, and crushed as a moth. But to return, when I saw, beyond all probability, there was still hope of respite, and heard, about six in the evening, that the ship was freed from water—there arose a gleam of hope. I thought I saw the hand of God displayed in our favor; I began to pray—I could not utter the prayer of faith; I could not draw near to a reconciled God; and call him father. My prayer was like the cry of the ravens, which yet the Lord does not disdain to hear. I now began to think of that Jesus, whom I had so often derided; I recollected the particulars of his life, and of his death; a death for sins not his *own*, but, as I remembered, for the sake of those, who in their distress, should put their trust in him. And now I chiefly wanted evidence.—The comfortless principles of infidelity were deeply riveted, and I rather wished than believed these things were real facts. You will please to observe, sir, that I collect the strain of the reasonings and exercises of my mind in one view; but I do not say that all this passed at one time. The great question now was,

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

I was very desirous to persuade myself into this opinion. I confess I was ; and so would they be, if the Lord should shew them, as he was pleased to shew me, at that time, the absolute necessity of some expedient to interpose between a righteous God, and sinful soul : upon the gospel scheme, I saw, at least, a peradventure of hope ; but on every side I was surrounded with black unfathomable despair.

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

Thus we proceeded with an alternate prevalence of hopes and fears.—My leisure time was chiefly employed in reading and meditating on the scripture, and praying to the Lord for mercy and instruction.

Things continued thus for four or five days, or perhaps longer, till we were awakened one morning, by the joyful shouts of the watch upon deck, proclaiming the sight of land. We were all soon raised at the sound. The dawning was uncommonly beautiful, and the light (just strong enough to discover distant objects) presented us with a gladdening prospect: it seemed a mountainous coast, about twenty miles from us, terminating in a cape or point; and, a little further, two or three small islands, or hummocks, as just rising out of the water; the appearance and position seemed exactly answerable to our hopes, resembling the northwest extremity of Ireland, which we were steering for. We sincerely congratulated each other, making no doubt, but that if the wind continued, we should be in safety and plenty the next day. The small remainder of our brandy (which was reduced to little more than a pint) was, by the captain's orders, distributed amongst us; he added at the same time, "We shall soon have brandy enough."—We likewise eat up the residue of our bread for joy of this welcome sight, and were in the condition of

men suddenly reprieved from death. While we were thus alert, the mate with a graver tone than the rest, sunk our spirits, by saying, that "he wished that it might prove land at last." If one of the common sailors had at first said so, I know not but the rest would have beat him for raising such an unreasonable doubt. It brought on, however, warm debates and disputes, whether it was land or no; but the case was soon unanswerably decided, for the day was advancing fast, and, in a little time one of our fancied islands began to grow red, from the approach of the sun, which arose just under it. In a word we had been prodigal of our bread and brandy too hastily; our land was literally *in nubibus*, nothing but clouds, and, in half an hour more, the whole appearance was dissipated—Seamen have often known deceptions of this sort, but in our extremity we were very loath to be undeceived. However, we comforted ourselves, that though we could not see the land, yet we should soon, the wind hitherto continuing fair; but alas, we were deprived of this hope likewise!—That very day our fair wind subsided into a calm, and the next morning the gales sprung up from the south-east, directly against us, and continued so for more than a fortnight afterwards. The ship was so wrecked, that we were obliged to keep the wind always on the broken side, unless the

weather was quite moderate : thus were we driven, by the wind fixing in that quarter, still further from our port, to the northward of all Ireland, as far as the Lewis or western islands of Scotland, but a long way to the westward. In a word, our station was such as deprived us of any hope of being relieved by other vessels : it may indeed be questioned, whether our ship was not the very first that had been in that part of the ocean, at that season of the year.

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

thrown overboard (and not otherwise) they should be preserved from death. He did not intend to make the experiment, but the continual repetition of this in my ears, gave me much uneasiness, especially as my conscience seconded his words, I thought it very probable, that all that had befallen us was on my account. I was, at last found out by the powerful hand of God, and condemned in my own breast. However, proceeding in the method I have described, I began to conceive hopes greater than all my fears; especially when, at the time we were ready to give up all for lost, and despair was taken place in every countenance, I saw the wind come about to the very point we wished it, so as best to suit that broken part of the ship which must be kept out of the water, and to blow so gentle as our few remaining sails could bear; and thus it continued without any observable alternation or increase, though at an unsettled time of the year, till we once more were called up to see the land, and were convinced that it was land indeed. We saw the island Tory, and the next day anchored in Lough Swilly, in Ireland: this was the 8th of April, just four weeks after the damage we sustained from the sea. When we came into this port, our very last victuals were boiling in the pot, and before we had been there two hours, the wind, which seem-

ed to have been providentially restrained till we were in a place of safety, began to blow with great violence, so that if we had continued at sea that night in our shattered enfeebled condition, we must, in all human appearance, have gone to the bottom. About this time I began to know that there is a God that hears and answers prayer. How many times has he appeared for me since this great deliverance.—Yet, alas, how distrustful and ungrateful is my heart unto this hour.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged

January 19, 1763, humble servant.

LETTER IX.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE brought my history down, to the time of my arrival in Ireland, 1748; but, before I proceed, I would look back a little, to give you some further account of the state of my mind, and how far I was helped against inward difficulties, which beset me at the time I had many outward hardships to struggle with. The straits of hunger, cold, weariness, and the fears of sinking and starving, I shared in common with others; but,

besides these, I felt a heart-bitterness, which was properly my own; no one on board but myself being impressed with any sense of the hand of God, in our danger and deliverance, at least not awakened to any concern for their souls. No temporal dispensations can reach the heart, unless the Lord himself applies them. My companions in danger were either quite unaffected, or soon forgot it all; but it was not so with me; not that I was any wiser or better than they, but because the Lord was pleased to vouchsafe me peculiar mercy, otherwise I was the most unlikely person in the ship to receive an impression, having been often before quite stupid and hardened in the very face of great dangers, and always, till this time, had hardened my neck still more and more after every reproof. —I can see no reason, why the Lord singled me out for mercy but this, “that so it seemed good to him;” unless it was to shew, by one astonishing instance, that with him, “nothing is impossible.”

There were no persons on board, to whom I could open myself with freedom concerning the state of my soul, none from whom I could ask advice. As to books, I had a *New Testament*, *Stanhope*, already mentioned, and a volume of Bishop *Beveridge's* sermons, one of which, upon our Lord's passion affected me much. In perusing the *New Testament*,

I was struck with several passages, particularly that of the fig-tree, Luke xiii. The case of St. Paul, 1 Tim. i. but particularly the Prodigal, Luke xv. a case, I thought, that had never been so nearly exemplified, as by myself; and then the goodness of the father in receiving, nay, in running to meet such a son, and this intended only to illustrate the Lord's goodness to returning sinners; this gained upon me. I continued much in prayer; I saw that the Lord had interposed *so far* to save me, and I hoped he would do more. The outward circumstances helped in this place, to make me still more serious and earnest in crying to him, who alone could relieve me; and sometimes I thought I could be content to die even for want of food, so I might but die a believer. Thus far I was answered, that before we arrived in Ireland I had a satisfactory evidence in my own mind of the truth of the gospel, as considered in itself, and its exact suitableness to answer all my needs. I saw that, by the way they were pointed out. God might declare not in his mercy only, but his justice also, in the pardon of sin, on the account of the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ. My judgment, at that time, embraced the sublime doctrine of "God manifest in the flesh, reconciling the world to himself." I had no idea of those systems, which allow the Saviour no higher honor than that of an

upper servant, or, at the most, a *demigod*. I stood in need of an almighty Saviour, and such a one I found described in the *New Testament*. Thus far the Lord had wrought a marvellous thing; I was no longer an infidel; I heartily renounced my former profaneness; I had taken up some right notions, was seriously disposed, and sincerely touched with a sense of the undeserved mercy I had received, in being brought safe through so many dangers. I was sorry for my past mispent life, and proposed an immediate reformation; I was quite free from the habit of swearing which seemed to have been deeply rooted in me, as a second nature. Thus, to all appearance, I was a new man.

But though I cannot doubt that this change, so far as it prevailed, was wrought by the spirit and power of God, yet still I was greatly deficient in many respects. I was in some degree affected with a sense of my more enormous sins, but was little aware of the innate evils of my heart. I had no apprehension of the spirituality and extent of the law of God: the hidden life of a christian, as it consists in communion with God by Jesus Christ, and a continual dependence on Him, for hourly supplies of wisdom, strength, and comfort, was a mystery of which as yet I had no knowledge. I acknowledged the Lord's

mercy in pardoning what was past, but depended chiefly upon my own resolution to do better for the time to come. I had no christian friend or faithful minister to advise me, that my strength was no more than my righteousness; and though I soon began to enquire for serious books, yet, not having spiritual discernment I frequently made a wrong choice, and I was not brought in the way of evangelical preaching or conversation (except the few times when I heard but understood not) for six years after this period. Those things the Lord was pleased to discover to me gradually. I learnt them here a little, and there a little, by my own painful experience at a distance from the common means and ordinances, and in the midst of the same course of evil company, and bad examples, as I had been conversant with for some time. From this period I could no more make a mock at sin, or jest with holy things; I no more questioned the truth of scripture, or lost a sense of the rebukes of conscience. Therefore I consider this as the beginning of my return to God, or rather of his return to me; but I cannot consider myself to have been a believer (in the full sense of the word) till a considerable time afterwards.

I have told you that in the time of our distress, we had fresh water in abundance; this was a considerable relief to us, especially as

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

While the ship was refitting at Lough Swilly, I repaired to Londonderry. I lodged at an exceeding good house, where I was treated with much kindness, and soon recruited my health and strength. I was now a serious professor went twice a day to the prayers at church, and determined to receive the sacrament the next opportunity. A few days before I signified my intention to the minister, as the rubric directs : but I found this practice was grown obsolete. At length the day came : I arose very early—was very particular and earnest in my private devotion, and, with the greatest solemnity engaged myself to be the Lord's forever, and only his. This was not a formal, but a sincere surrender, under a warm sense of mercies recently receiv

ed; and yet, for want of a better knowledge of myself, and the subtilty of Satan's temptations I was seduced to forget the vows of God that were upon me. Upon the whole, though my views of the gospel-salvation were very indistinct, I experienced a peace and satisfaction in the ordinance that day, to which I had been hitherto a perfect stranger.

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

During our stay in Ireland I wrote home. The vessel I was in had not been heard of for eighteen months, and was given up for lost long before. My father had no more expectation of hearing that I was alive, but he received my letter a few days before he left London. He was just going Governor of For York in Hudson's Bay, from whence he never returned. He sailed before I landed in England, or he had purposed to take

me with him ; but, God designing otherwise, one hindrance or other delayed us in Ireland, till it was too late. I received two or three affectionate letters from him, but I never had the pleasure of seeing him more, I had hopes, that in three years more I should have had an opportunity of asking his forgiveness for the uneasiness my disobedience had given him ; but the ship that was to have brought him home, came without him. According to the best accounts we received, he was seized with the cramp, when bathing, and drowned a little before her arrival in the Bay.—Excuse this digression.

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

I arrived at ——— the latter end of May 1748, the same day that my father sailed from the Nore, but found the Lord had provided me another father in the gentleman whose ship had brought me home. He received me with great tenderness, and the strongest expressions of friendship and assistance ; yet not more than he has since made

good : for to him, as the instrument of God's goodness, I owe my all. Yet it would not have been in the power, even of this friend, to have served me effectually, if the Lord had not met with me on my way home, as I have related. Till then I was like the man possessed with the *legion*. No arguments, no persuasion, no views of interest, no remembrance of the past, or regard to the future, could have constrained me within the bounds of common prudence. But now I was in some measure restored to my senses.

My friend immediately offered me the command of a ship ; but, upon mature consideration, I declined it for the present. I had been hitherto always unsettled and careless, and therefore thought I had better make another voyage first, and learn to obey, and acquire a further insight and experience in business before I ventured to undertake such a charge. The mate of the vessel I came home in, was preferred to the command of a new ship, and I engaged to go in the station of mate with him. I made a short visit to London, &c. which did not fully answer my views. I had but one opportunity of seeing Mrs. *****, of which I availed myself very little, for I was always exceeding awkward in pleading my own cause, *viva voce*.—But after my return to L——, I put the question in such a manner, by let-

ter, that she could not avoid (unless I had greatly mistaken her) coming to some sort of an explanation. Her answer (though penned with abundance of caution) satisfied me, as I collected from it, that she was free from any other engagement, and not unwilling to wait the event of the voyage I had undertaken. I should be ashamed to trouble you with these little details, if you had not yourself desired me.

I am

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

January 20, 1763.

LETTER X.

Dear Sir,

MY connections with sea affairs have often led me to think, that the varieties observable in christian experience may be properly illustrated from the circumstances of a voyage. Imagine to yourself a number of vessels, at different times, and at different places, bound to the same port; there are some things in which all these would agree—the compass steered by, the port in view, the general rules of navigation, both as to the

management of the vessel, and determining their astronomical observation, would be the same in all. In other respects they would differ: perhaps no two of them would meet with the same distributions of winds and weather. Some we see set out with a prosperous gale, and, when they almost think their passage secured, they are checked by adverse blasts; and, after enduring much hardship and danger, and frequent expectations of shipwreck, they just escape, and reach the desired haven. Others meet the greatest difficulties at first; they put forth in a storm, and are often beaten back; at length, their voyage proves favorable, and they enter the port with a *plerophoria*, a rich and abundant entrance. Some are hard beset with cruizers and enemies, and obliged to fight their way through. Others meet with little remarkable in their passage. Is it not thus in the spiritual life? All true believers walk by the same rule, and mind the same things; the word of God is their compass, Jesus is both their polar-star, and their sun of righteousness; their hearts and faces are all set Sion-ward. Thus far they are as one body, animated by one spirit; yet their experience, formed upon these common principles, is far from uniform. The Lord in his first call, and his following dispensations has a regard to the situation, temper, talents of each,

and to the particular services or trials he has appointed them for. Though all are exercised at times, yet some pass through the voyage of life much more smoothly than others. But he, "who walks upon the wing of the wind," and measures the waters in the hollow of "his hand," will not suffer any, of whom he has once taken charge, to perish in the storms though, for a season, perhaps, many of them are ready to give up all hopes.

We must not, therefore make the experience of others, in all respects, a rule to ourselves, nor our own a rule to others; yet these are common mistakes, and productive of many more. As to myself, every part of my case has been extraordinary—I have hardly met a single instance resembling it. Few very few, have been recovered from such a dreadful state; and the few, that have been thus favored, have generally passed through the most severe convictions, and, after the Lord has given them peace, their future lives have been usually more zealous, bright, and exemplary than common. Now, as, on the one hand my convictions were very moderate, and far below what might have been expected, from the dreadful review I had to make; so on the other, my first beginnings, in a religious course, were as faint as can be well imagined. I never knew that season alluded to, Jer. ii. 2 Rev. ii. 4. usually called the

time of the first love. Who would not expect to hear, that after such a wonderful un-hoped-for deliverance, as I had received, and after my eyes were, in some measure, enlightened to see things aright, I should immediately cleave to the Lord and his ways, with full purpose of heart ; and consult no more with flesh and blood ? But alas ! it was far otherwise with me ; I had learned to pray, I set some value upon the word of God, and was no longer a libertine, but my soul still cleaved to the dust. Soon after my departure from L ———, I began to intermit, and grow slack in waiting upon the Lord ; I grew vain and trifling in my conversation ; and, though my heart smote me often, yet my armor was gone, and I declined fast ; and by the time we arrived at Guinea, I seemed to have forgot all the Lord's mercies, and my own engagements, and was (profaneness excepted) almost as bad as before. The enemy prepared a train of temptations, and I became his easy prey, and, for about a month, he lulled me asleep in a course of evil, of which, a few months before, I could not have supposed myself any longer capable. How much propriety is there in the Apostle's advice, " Take heed lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." O who can be sufficiently upon their guard ! Sin first deceives, and then it hardens : I

was now fast bound in chains; I had little desire, and no power at all to recover myself. I could not but at times reflect how it was with me; but, if I attempted to struggle with it, it was in vain. I was just like *Samson*, when he said, "I will go forth and shake myself as at other times," but the Lord was departed, and he found himself helpless in the hands of his enemies. By the remembrance of this interval, the Lord has often instructed me since, what a poor creature I am in myself, incapable of standing a single hour, without continual fresh supplies of strength and grace from the fountain-head.

At length the Lord, whose mercies are infinite, interposed in my behalf. My business, in this voyage, while upon the coast, was to sail from place to place in the long-boat to purchase slaves. The ship was at Sierra Leon, and I then at the Plantanes, the scene of my former captivity, where every thing I saw might seem to remind me of my ingratitude. I was in easy circumstances, courted by those who formerly despised me: the *lime-trees* I had planted were growing tall, and promised fruit the following year, against which time I had expectations of returning with a ship of my own. But none of these things affected me, till, as I have said, the Lord again interposed to save me. He

visited me with a violent fever, which broke the fatal chain, and once more brought me to myself. But O what a prospect ! I thought myself now summoned away : My past dangers and deliverances, my earnest prayers in the time of trouble, my solemn vows before the Lord at his table, and my ungrateful returns for all his goodness were all present to my mind at once. Then I began to wish that the Lord had suffered me to sink into the ocean, when I first besought his mercy. For a little while, I concluded the door of hope to be quite shut ; but this continued not long. Weak and almost delirious I rose from my bed, and crept to a retired part of the island ; and here I found a renewed liberty to pray. I durst make no more resolves, but cast myself before the Lord, to do with me as he should please. I do not remember, that any particular text, or remarkable discovery, was presented to my mind ; but in general I was enabled to hope and believe in a crucified Saviour. The burden was removed from my conscience, and not only my peace, but my health was restored ; I cannot say instantaneously, but I recovered from that hour, and so fast, that when I returned to the ship, two days afterwards, I was perfectly well before I got on board. And from that time, I trust, I have been delivered from the power and dominion of sin ; though, as

to the effects and conflicts of sin dwelling in me, I still "groan, being burthened." I now began again to wait upon the Lord, and though I have often grieved his spirit, and foolishly wandered from him since, (when alas, shall I be more wise) yet his powerful grace has hitherto preserved me from such black declensions, as this I have last recorded; and I humbly trust in his mercy and promises, that he will be my guide and guard to the end.

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

slept, I made some progress before I returned, and not only understood the sense and meaning of many Odes, and some of the Epistles, but began to relish the beauties of the composition, and acquired the spice of what Mr. Law calls *classical enthusiasm*. And, indeed, by this means I had Horace more *ad ungum* than some who are masters of the Latin tongue; for my helps were so few, that I generally had the passage fixed in my memory, before I could fully understand its meaning.

My business in the long-boat, during eight months we were upon the coast, exposed me to innumerable dangers and perils, from burning suns and chilling dews, winds, rains, and thunder-storms, in the open boat; and on shore, from long journeys through the woods, and the temper of the natives, who are, in many places, cruel, treacherous, and watching opportunities for mischief. Several boats in the same time, were cut off, several white men poisoned, and, in my own boat I buried six or seven people with fevers.—When going on shore, or returning from it, in their little canoes, I have been more than once or twice overset, by the violence of the surf, or beach of the sea, and brought to land half dead, for I could not swim. An account of such escapes, as I still remember, would swell to several sheets, and many more

I have perhaps forgot ; I shall only select one instance, as a specimen of the wonderful Providence, which watched over me for good, and which, I doubt not, you will think worthy of notice.

When our trade was finished, and we were near sailing to the West-Indies, the only remaining service I had to perform in the boat, was to assist in bringing the wood and water from the shore. We were then at Rio Sectors. I used to go into the river in the afternoon, with the sea-breeze, procure my loading in the evening, and return on board in the morning with the land wind. Several of these little voyages I had made, but the boat was grown old, and almost unfit for use. This service, likewise, was almost completed. One day, having dined on board, I was preparing to return to the river as formerly : I had taken leave of the captain, received his orders, was already in the boat, and just going to put off, as we term it, that is, to let go our ropes, and sail from the ship. In that instant, the captain came up from the cabin, and called me on board again.—I went, expecting further orders ; but, he said, he had *took it in his head* (as he phrased it that I should remain that day in the ship) and accordingly ordered another man to go in my room, I was surprised at this, as the boat had never been sent without me before,

and asked him the reason ; he could give me no reason, but, as above, that so he would have it. Accordingly the boat went without me, but returned no more. She sunk that night in the river, and the person who had supplied my place, was drowned. I was much struck when we received news of the event the next morning.—The captain himself, though quite a stranger to religion, so far as to deny a particular Providence, could not help being affected ; but he declared that he had no other reason for countermanding me at that time, but that it came suddenly into his head to detain me.—I wonder I omitted this in my eight letters, as I have always thought it one of the most extraordinary circumstances of my life.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged servant.

January 21, 1763.

LETTER XI.

Dear Sir,

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

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

pearance. Yet as my compliance with custom and company, was chiefly owing to want of light, rather than to an obstinate attachment, and the Lord was pleased to preserve me, from what I knew was sinful, I had for the most part peace of conscience, and my strongest desires were towards the things of God. As yet I knew not the force of that precept, "abstain from all appearance of evil," but very often ventured upon the brink of temptation; but the Lord was gracious to my weakness, and would not suffer the enemy to prevail against me. I did not break with the world at once (as might in my case have been expected) but I was gradually led to see the inconvenience and folly of one thing after another, and, when I saw it the Lord strengthened me to give it up. But it was some years, before I was set quite at liberty from occasional compliances in many things, in which, at this time, I durst by no means, allow myself.

We finished our voyage, and arrived in I. ———. When the ship's affairs were settled, I went to London, and from thence (as you may suppose) I soon repaired to Kent. More than seven years were now elapsed, since my first visit.—No views of the kind could seem more chimerical, or could subsist under greater discouragements than mine had done; yet, through the over-ruling

goodness of God, while I seemed abandoned to myself, and blindly following my own headstrong passions, I was guided by a hand that I knew not, to the accomplishment of my wishes. Every obstacle was now removed. I had renounced my former follies, my interest, was established, and friends on all sides consenting; the point was now entirely between ourselves, and after what had past, was easily concluded. Accordingly our hands were joined on the first of February, 1750.

The satisfaction that I have found in this union, you will suppose has been greatly heightened by reflection on the former disagreeable contrasts, I had passed through, and the views I have had of the singular mercy and Providence of the Lord in bringing it to pass. If you please to look back to the beginning of my sixth letter, (page 58) I doubt not but you will allow that few persons have known more, either of the misery or happiness, of which human life (as considered in itself) is capable. How easily at a time of life when I was so little capable of judging, (but a few months more than 17) might my affections have been fixed where they could have met with no return, or where success would have been the heaviest disappointment. The long delay I met with was likewise a mercy; for had I succeeded a year or two

sooner, before the Lord was pleased to change my heart we must have been mutually unhappy, even as to the present life. "Surely "mercy and goodness have followed me all "my days."

But, alas! I soon began to feel that my heart was still hard and ungrateful to the God of my life. This crowning mercy, which raised me to all I could ask or wish for in a temporal view, and which ought to have been an animating motive to obedience and praise had a contrary effect.—I rested in the gift and forgot the giver. My poor narrow heart was satisfied—A cold and careless frame as to spiritual things, took place and gained ground daily. Happy for me the season was advancing, and in June I received orders to repair to L——. This roused me from my dream; I need not tell you, that I found the pains of absence and separation fully proportioned to my preceding pleasure. It was hard, very hard, to part, especially as conscience interfered, and suggested to me how little I deserved, that we should be spared to meet again—But the Lord supported me—I was a poor faint idolatrous creature, but I had now some acquaintance with the way of access to a throne of grace, by the blood of Jesus, and peace was soon restored to my conscience. Yet, through all the following voyage, my irregular and excessive af-

fections were as thorns in my eyes, and often made my other blessings tasteless and insipid. But He who doth all things well, over-ruled this likewise for good. It became an occasion for quickening me in prayer, both for her and myself; it increased my indifference for company and amusement; it habituated me to a kind of voluntary self-denial, which I was afterwards taught to improve to a better purpose.

While I remained in England, we corresponded every post; and all the while I used the sea afterwards, I constantly kept up the practice of writing two or three times a week (if weather and business permitted) though no conveyance homeward offered for six or eight months together. My packets were usually heavy, and as not one of them at any time miscarried, I have to the amount of near two hundred sheets of paper now lying in my bureau of that correspondence. I mention this little relief contrived to soften the intervals of absence, because it had a good effect beyond my first intention. It habituated me to think and write upon a great variety of subjects, and I acquired, insensibly, a greater readiness of expressing myself, than I should have otherwise attained. As I gained more ground in religious knowledge, my letters became more serious, and, at times, I still find an advantage in looking them over, especial-

ly as they remind me of many providential incidents, and the state of my mind at different periods in these voyages, which would otherwise have escaped my memory.

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

Having now much leisure, I prosecuted the study of Latin with good success. I remembered a dictionary this voyage, and procured two or three other books; but still it was my hap to choose the hardest,—I added Juvenal to Horace, and for prose authors I pitched upon Livy, Cæsar and Sallust. You will easily conceive, Sir, that I had hard work to begin (where I should have left off) with Horace and Livy. I was not aware of the difference of style; I had heard Livy highly commended, and was resolved to un-

derstand him. I began with the first page : and laid down a rule, which I seldom departed from, not to proceed to a second period till I understood the first, and so on. I was often at a stand, but seldom discouraged ; here and there I found a few lines quite obstinate, and was forced to break in upon my rule, and give them up, especially as my edition had only the text, without any notes to assist me. But there were not many such ; for, before the close of that voyage, I could (with a few exceptions) read Livy from end to end, almost as ready as any English author. And I found, in surmounting this difficulty, I had surmounted all in one. Other prose authors, when they came in my way cost me little trouble. In short, in the space of two or three voyages, I became tolerably acquainted with the best classics ; (I put all I have to say upon this subject together) I read Terence, Virgil, and several pieces of Cicero, and the modern classics, Buchanan, Erasmus, and Casimir ; at length I conceived a design of becoming a Ciceronian myself, and thought it would be a fine thing indeed to write pure and elegant Latin.—I made some essays towards it, but by this time, the Lord was pleased to draw me nearer to himself, and to give me a fuller view of the “ pearl of great price,” the inestimable treasure hid in the field of the holy scripture ; and for the sake of this I

was made willing to part with all my new acquired riches. I began to think that life was too short, especially my life, to admit of leisure for such elaborate trifling. Neither poet or historian could tell me a word of *Jesus*, and I therefore applied myself to those who could. The classics were at first restrained to one morning in the week, and at length quite laid aside. I have not looked into Livy these five years, and, I suppose, I could not now well understand him. Some passages in Horace and Virgil I still admire, but they seldom come in my way. I prefer Buchanan's psalms to a whole shelf of Elzevirs—But thus much I have gained, and more than this I am not solitious about, so much of the Latin as enables me to read any useful or curious book, that is published in that language. About the same time, and for the same reason that I quarrelled with Livy, I laid aside the mathematics.—I found they not only cost me much time, but engrossed my thoughts too far; my head was literally full of schemes. I was weary of cold contemplative truths, which can neither warm nor amend the heart, but rather tend to aggrandize *self*. I found no traces of this wisdom in the life of *Jesus*, or the writings of Paul. I do not regret that I have had some opportunities of knowing the first principles of these things, but I see much cause to praise the Lord that he inclined me

to stop in time, and whilst I was spending "my labors for that which is not bread," was pleased to set before me "wine and milk without money and without price."

My first voyage was fourteen months. through various scenes of danger and difficulty, but nothing very remarkable; and, as I intend to be more particular with regard to the second, I shall only say that I was preserved from every harm; and having seen many fall on my right hand and on my left, I was brought home in peace, and restored to where my thoughts had been often directed, November 2, 1751.

I am,

Sir,

Your's.

January 22, 1763.

LETTER XII.

Dear Sir,

I ALMOST wish I could recall my last sheet, and retract my promise. I fear I have engaged too far, and shall prove a mere egotist. What have I more that can deserve

your notice? However, it is some satisfaction, that I am now writing to yourself only; and, I believe, you will have candor to excuse, what nothing but a sense of your kindness could extort from me.

Soon after the period where my last closes, that is, in the interval between my first and second voyage after my marriage, I began to keep a sort of diary, a practice which I have since found of great use. I had in this interval repeated proofs of the ingratitude and evil of my heart. A life of ease, in the midst of my friends, and the full satisfaction of my wishes, was not favorable to the progress of grace, and afforded cause of daily humiliation. Yet, upon the whole, I gained ground. I became acquainted with books, which gave me a further view of christian doctrine and experience, particularly, Scougal's Life of God in the Soul of man, Harvey's Meditations, and The Life of Colonel Gardener. As to preaching I heard none, but of the common sort, and had hardly an idea of any better; neither had I the advantage of christian acquaintance. I was likewise greatly hindered by a cowardly reserved spirit; I was afraid of being thought precise, and, though I could not live without prayer, I durst not propose it, even to my wife, till she herself first put me upon it; so far was I from those expressions of zeal and love, which seem so

suitable to the case of one who has had much forgiven. In a few months the returning season called me abroad again, and I sailed from L——— in a new ship, July 1752.

A seafaring life is necessarily excluded from the benefit of public ordinances and christian communion; but, as I have observed, my loss upon these heads was at this time but small. In other respects I know not any calling that seems more favorable, or affords greater advantages to an awakened mind, for promoting the life of God in the soul, especially to a person who has the command of a ship, and thereby has it in his power to restrain gross irregularities in others, and to dispose of his own time; and still more so in African voyages, as these ships carry a double proportion of men and officers to most others, which made my department very easy; and, excepting the hurry of trade, &c. upon the coast, which is rather occasional than constant, afforded me abundance of leisure. To be at sea in these circumstances, withdrawn out of the reach of innumerable temptations, with opportunity and a turn of mind disposed to observe the wonders of God in the great deep, with the two noble objects of sight, the expanded heavens, and the expanded ocean continually in view, and where evident interpositions of Divine Providence, in answer to prayer, occur almost every day; these are

helps to quicken and confirm the life of faith, which, in a good measure, supply to a religious sailor the want of those advantages, which can be only enjoyed upon the shore. And, indeed, though my knowledge of spiritual things (as knowledge is usually estimated) was, at this time, very small, yet I sometimes look back with regret upon these scenes. I never knew sweeter or more frequent hours of divine communion than in my two last voyages to Guinea, when I was either almost secluded from society on ship-board, or when on shore amongst the natives. I have wandered through the woods, reflecting on the singular goodness of the Lord to me, in a place where, perhaps, there was not a person that knew Him, for some thousand miles round me. Many a time, upon these occasions, I have restored the beautiful lines of Propertius to the right owner; lines full of blasphemy and madness; when addressed to a creature, but full of comfort and propriety in the mouth of a believer.

*Sic ego desertis possim bene vivere sylvis
Quo nulla humano sit via trita pede:
Tu mihi curarum requies, in nocta vel atra
Lumen, & in solis tu mihi truba locis.*

PARAPHRASED.

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

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

I was at a place called Mana, near Cape Mount, where I had transacted very large concerns, and had, at the time I am speaking of some debts and accounts to settle, which required my attendance on shore, and I intended to go the next morning. When I arose, I left the ship, according to my purpose; but when I came near the shore, the surf, or breach of the sea ran so high, that I was almost afraid to attempt landing. Indeed I had often ventured at a worse time, but I felt an inward hindrance and backwardness, which I could not account for: the surf furnished a pretext for indulging it, and after waiting and hesitating for about half an hour, I returned to the ship without doing any business, which, I think, I never did but that morning, in all the time I used that trade. But I soon perceived the reason of all this. It seems, the day before I intended to land, a scandalous and groundless charge had been laid against me (by whose instigation I could never learn) which greatly threatened my honor and interest, both in Africa and England, and would, perhaps, humanly speaking, have affected my life, if I had landed, according to my intention. I shall, perhaps, inclose a letter, which will give a full account of this strange adventure, and therefore shall say no more of it here, any farther than to tell you, that an attempt, aimed to destroy either my life

or character, and which might, very probably, in its consequences, have ruined my voyage, passed off without the least inconvenience. The person most concerned owed me about an hundred pounds, which he sent me in a huff, and otherwise, perhaps would not have paid me at all. I was very uneasy for a few hours, but was soon afterwards comforted. I heard no more of my accusation, till the next voyage, and then it was publicly acknowledged to have been a malicious calumny, without the least shadow of a ground.

Such were the vicissitudes and difficulties through which the Lord preserved me. Now and then both faith and patience were sharply exercised, but suitable strength was given; and as those things did not occur every day, the study of the Latin, of which I gave a general account in my last, was renewed, and carried on from time to time, when business would permit. I was mostly very regular in the management of my time; I allotted about eight hours for sleep and meals, eight hours for exercise and devotion, and eight hours to my books: and thus, by diversifying my engagements, the whole day was agreeably filled up, and I seldom found a day too long, or an hour to spare. My studies kept me employed, and so far it was well; otherwise, they were hardly worth the time they cost, as they led me to an admiration of false mo-

dels and false maxims ; an almost unavoidable consequence, I suppose, of an admiration of classic authors. Abating what I have attained of the language, I think I might have read Cassandra or Cleopatra to as good purpose as I read Livy, whom I now account an equal romancer, though in a different way.

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

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

In August 1753, I returned to L———. My stay was very short at home, that voyage, only six weeks; in that space nothing very memorable occurred I shall therefore begin my next with an account of my third and last voyage. And thus I give both you and myself hopes of a speedy period to those memoirs, which begin to be tedious and minute, even to myself; only I am animated by the thought that I write at your request, and have therefore an opportunity of shewing myself

Your obliged servant.

January 31, 1763.

LETTER XIII.

Dear Sir,

MY third voyage was shorter, and less perplexed than either of the former. Before I sailed, I met with a young man who had formerly been a midshipman, and my intimate companion on board the *Harwich*. He was, at the time I first knew him, a sober youth, but I found too much success in my unhappy attempts to infect him with libertine principles. When we met at L——, our acquaintance renewed upon the ground of our former intimacy. He had good sense, and had read many books. Our conversation frequently turned upon religion, and I was very desirous to repair the mischief I had done him. I gave him a plain account of the manner and reason of my change, and used every argument to persuade him to relinquish his infidel schemes: and when I sometimes pressed him so close that he had no other reply to make, he would remind me that I was the very first person who had given him an idea of his liberty. This occasioned me many mournful reflections. He was then going to *Guinea* himself, but before his ship was ready, his merchant became a bankrupt, which disconcerted his voyage. As he had no far-

ther expectations for that year, I offered to take him with me as a companion, that he might gain a knowledge of the coast ; and the gentleman who employed me promised to provide for him upon his return. My view in this was not so much to serve him in his business as to have an opportunity of debating the point with him at leisure ; and I hoped, in the course of my voyage, my arguments, example and prayers, might have some good effect on him. My intention in this step was better than my judgment, and I had frequent reason to repent it. He was exceeding profane, and grew worse and worse : I saw in him a most lively picture of what I had once been, but it was very inconvenient to have it always before my eyes. Besides, he was not only deaf to my remonstrances himself but labored all he could to counteract my influence upon others. His spirit and passion was likewise exceeding high, so that it required all my prudence and authority to hold him in any degree of restraint. He was as a sharp thorn in my side for some time : but at length I had an opportunity, upon the coast of buying a small vessel, which I supplied with a cargo from my own, and gave him the command and sent him away to trade on the ship's account. When we parted, I repeated and enforced my best advice. I believe his friendship and regard was as

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

I left the coast in about four months, and sailed for St. Christophers. Hitherto I had enjoyed a perfect state of health, equally in every climate for several years; but upon this passage, I was visited with a fever, which gave me a very near prospect of eternity: I have obtained liberty to inclose you three or four letters, which will more clearly illustrate the state and measure of my experience, at different times, than any thing I can say at present. One of them you will find was wrote at this period, when I could hardly hold a

pen, and had some reason to believe I should write no more. I had not that *leraphria*,* which is so desirable at a time when flesh and heart fail ; but my hopes were greater than my fears, and I felt a silent composure of spirit, which enabled me to wait the event without much anxiety. My trust, though weak in degree, was alone fixed upon the blood and righteousness of Jesus, and those words, “ he is able to save to the uttermost, gave me great relief.—I was for a while troubled with a very singular thought ; whether it was a temptation, or that the fever disordered my faculties I cannot say ; but I seemed not so much afraid of wrath and punishment, as of being lost and overlooked amidst the myriads that are continually entering the unseen world. What is my soul, thought I, amongst such an innumerable multitude of beings——and this troubled me greatly. Perhaps the Lord will take no notice of me. I was perplexed thus for some time, but at last a text of scripture, very apposite to the case occurred to my mind, and put an end to the doubt, “ The Lord knoweth them that are his.” In about ten days, beyond the hopes of those about me, I began to amend, and, by the time of our arrival in the West-Indies, I was perfectly recovered.—I hope this visitation was made useful to me.

* Full assurance.

Thus far, that is, for about the space of six years, the Lord was pleased to lead me in a secret way. I had learnt something of the evil of my heart ; I had read the Bible over and over, with several good books, and had a general view of the *gospel-truth*. But my conceptions were, in many respects, confused ; not having, in all this time, met with one acquaintance who could assist my enquiries. But, upon my arrival at St. Christopher's, this voyage, I found a captain of a ship from London, whose conversation was greatly helpful to me. He was, and is, a member of Mr. B———r's church, a man of experience in the things of God, and of a lively communicative turn. We discovered each other by some casual expressions in a mixed company, and soon became, so far as business would permit, inseparable. For near a month, we spent every evening on board each other's ship alternately, and often prolonged our visits till towards day-break. I was all ears ; and what was better, he not only informed my understanding, but his discourse inflamed my heart. He encouraged me to open my mouth in social prayer ; he taught me the advantage of christian converse ; he put me upon an attempt to make my profession more public, and to venture to speak for God. From him, or rather from the Lord, by his means, I received an increase of knowledge :

my conceptions became clearer and more evangelical, and I was delivered from a fear which had long troubled me, the fear of relapsing into my former apostacy. But now I began to understand the security of the covenant of grace, and to expect to be preserved, not by my own power and holiness, but by the mighty power and promise of God, through faith, in an unchangeable Saviour. He likewise gave me a general view of the state of religion, with the errors and controversies of the times (things to which I had been intirely a stranger,) and finally, directed me where to apply in London for further instruction: with these new acquired advantages, I left him, and my passage homewards gave me leisure to digest what I had received; I had much comfort and freedom during those seven weeks, and my sun was seldom clouded, I arrived safe in L——, August 1754.

My stay at home was intended to be but short, and by the beginning of November, I was again ready for the sea; but the Lord saw fit to over-rule my design. During the time I was engaged in the slave trade, I never had the least scruple as to its lawfulness; I was, upon the whole, satisfied with it, as the appointment Providence had marked out for me; yet it was, in many respects, far from eligible. It is indeed, accounted a genteel employment, and is usually very profita-

ble, though to me it did not prove so, the Lord seeing that a large increase of wealth would not be good for me. However, I considered myself as a sort of a Gaoler or Turnkey; and I was sometimes shocked with an employment that was perpetually conversant with chains, bolts and shackles. In this view I had often petitioned, in my prayers, that the Lord (in his own time) would be pleased to fix me in a more humane calling, and, if it might be, place me where I might have more frequent converse with his people and ordinances; and be freed from those long separations from home, which very often were hard to bear: my prayers were now answered, though in a way I little expected. I now experienced another sudden unforeseen change of life: I was within two days of sailing, and to all appearance, in good health as usual; but in the afternoon as I was sitting with Mrs. *****, by ourselves, drinking tea, and talking over past events, I was in a moment seized with a fit, which deprived me of sense and motion, and left me no other sign of life than that of breathing. I suppose it was of the apoplectic kind——it lasted about an hour, and when I recovered, it left a pain and dizziness in my head, which continued with such symptoms, as induced the physicians to judge it would not be safe or prudent for me to proceed on the voy-

age. Accordingly, by the advice of my friend, to whom the ship belonged, I resigned the command the day before she sailed: and thus I was unexpectedly called from that service, and freed from a share of the future consequences of that voyage, which proved extremely calamitous. The person who went in my room, most of the officers, and many of the crew, died, and the vessel was brought home with great difficulty.

As I now was disengaged from business, I left L——, and spent the following year at London and in Kent. But I entered upon a new trial.—You will easily conceive that Mrs. **** was not an unconcerned spectator, when I lay extended, and as she thought, expiring upon the ground. In effect, the blow that struck me reached her in the same instant. She did not indeed immediately feel it till her apprehensions on my account began to subside, but as I grew better, she became worse; her surprize threw her into a disorder, which no physicians could define, or medicines remove. Without any of the ordinary symptoms of a consumption, she decayed almost visibly, till she became so weak that she could hardly bear any one to walk across the room she was in. I was placed for about eleven months in what Dr. Young calls the

“ —dreadful post of observation,

“ Darker every hour.

It was not till after my settlement in my present station that the Lord was pleased to restore her by his own hand, when all hopes from ordinary means were at an end. But before this took place I have some other particulars to mention, which must be the subject of the following sheet, which I hope will be the last on this subject from

Your affectionate servant.

February 1, 1763.

LETTER XIV.

Dear Sir,

BY the directions I had received from my friend at St. Kitt's, I soon found out a religious acquaintance in London. I first applied to Mr. B——, and chiefly attended upon his ministry, when in town. From him I received many helps, both in public and private; for he was pleased to favor me with his friendship from the first. His kindness, and the intimacy between us, has continued and increased to this day; and of all my many friends, I am most deeply indebted to him. The late Mr. H——d was my second acquaintance; a man of a choice spirit, and an abundant zeal for the Lord's

service. I enjoyed his correspondence till near the time of his death. Soon after, upon Mr. W———d's return from America, my two good friends introduced me to him ; and though I had little personal acquaintance with him till afterwards, his ministry was exceeding useful to me. I had likewise access to some religious societies, and became known to many excellent christians in private life. Thus when at London, I lived at the fountain-head, as it were, for spiritual advantages. When I was in Kent it was very different, yet I found some serious persons there ; but the fine variegated woodland country afforded me advantages of another kind. Most of my time, at least some hours every day, I passed in retirement, when the weather was fair ; sometimes in the thickest woods, sometimes on the highest hills, where almost every step varied the prospect. It has been my custom, for many years, to perform my devotional exercise *sub dio*, when I have opportunity, and I always find these rural scenes have some tendency, both to refresh and to compose my spirits. A beautiful diversified prospect gladdens my heart. When I am withdrawn from the noise and petty works of men, I consider myself as in the greater temple, which the Lord has built for his own honor.

The country between Rochester and Maid-

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

knew, indeed, my good friend in L—— had endeavored to procure another post for me, but found it pre-engaged. I found afterwards, that the place I had missed would have been very unsuitable for me, and that this, which I had no thought of, was the very thing I could have wished for, affording me much leisure and the liberty of living in my own way. Several circumstances unnoticed by others, concurred to shew me that the good hand of the Lord was as remarkably concerned in this event as in any other leading turn of my life.

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

And now, I think, I have answered, if not exceeded, your desire. Since October 1755, we have been comfortably settled here, and all my circumstances, have been as remarkably smooth and uniform as they were various in former years. My trials have been light and few—not but that I still find in the experience of every day the necessity of a life of faith. My principal trial is—the body of sin and death, which makes me often to sigh out the Apostle's complaint, “O wretched man !” but with him likewise I can say, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord.” I live in a barren land, where the knowledge and power of the gospel is very low ; yet here are a few of the Lord's people ; and this wilderness has been an useful school to me, where I have studied more leisurely the truths I gathered up in London. I brought down with me a considerable stock of notional truth, but I have since found, that there is no effectual teacher but God ; that we can receive no farther than he is pleased to communicate ; and that no knowledge is truly useful to me, but what is made my own by experience. Many things, I thought I had learned, would not stand in an hour of temptation, till I had in this way learned them over again. Since the year 1757, I have had an increasing acquaintance in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where the

gospel flourishes greatly. This has been a good school to me: I have conversed at large among all parties without joining any; and in my attempts to hit the golden mean, I have sometimes been drawn too near the different extremes; yet the Lord has enabled me to profit by my mistakes. In brief, I am still a learner, and the Lord still condescends to teach me. I begin at length to see that I have attained but very little; but I trust in him to carry on his own work in my soul, and by all the dispensations of his grace and providence to increase the knowledge of him and of myself.

When I was fixed in a house, and found my business would afford me much leisure time, I considered in what manner I should improve it. And now having reason to close with the apostle's determination, "to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him, crucified," I devoted my life to the prosecution of spiritual knowledge, and resolved to pursue nothing but in subservience to this main design. This resolution divorced me (as I have already hinted) from the classics and mathematics. My first attempt was to learn so much Greek, as would enable me to understand the New Testament and Septuagint; and when I had made some progress this way, I entered upon the Hebrew the following year; and two years afterwards, having surmised

some advantages from the *Syriac* version. I began with that language. You must not think that I have attained, or ever aimed at critical skill in any of these; I had no business with them, but as in reference to something else. I never read one classic author in the *Greek*; I thought it too late in life to take such a round in this language, as I had done in the *Latin*. I only wanted the signification of scriptural words and phrases, and for this I thought I might avail myself of *Scapula*, the *Synopsis*, and others, who had sustained the drugery before me. In the *Hebrew* I can read the historical books and psalms with tolerable ease; but in the prophetical and difficult parts, I am frequently obliged to have recourse to Lexicons, &c. However, I know so much, as to be able, with such helps as are at hand, to judge for myself the meaning of any passage I have occasion to consult. Beyond this I do not think of proceeding, if I can find better employment; for I would rather be some way useful to others, than die with reputation of an eminent linguist.

Together with these studies, I have kept up a course of reading of the best writers in divinity; that have come to my hand, in the *Latin* and *English* tongue, and some *French* (for I picked up the *French* at times, while I used the sea.) But within these two or

three years I have accustomed myself chiefly to writing; and have not found time to read many books besides, the scripture.

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

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

I believe it was a distant hope of this, that determined me to study the original scriptures; but it remained an imperfect desire in my own breast, till it was recommended to

me by some christian friends. I started at the thought, when first seriously proposed to me; but afterwards set apart some weeks to consider the case, to consult my friends, and to intreat the Lord's directions—The judgment of my friends, and many things that occurred, tended to engage me. My first thought was to join the dissenters, from a presumption that I could not honestly make the required subscriptions: but Mr. C——, in a conversation upon these points, moderated my scruples; and, preferring the established church in some other respects, I accepted a little from him, some months afterwards, and solicited ordination from the late Archbishop of York: I need not tell you I met a refusal, nor what steps I took afterwards to succeed elsewhere. At present I desist from any applications. My desire to serve the Lord is not weakened; but I am not so hasty to push myself forwards as I was formerly. It is sufficient that he knows how to dispose of me, and that he both can and will do what is best. To him I commend myself: I trust that his will, and my true interest, are inseparable. To his name be glory for ever. And thus I conclude my story, and presume you will acknowledge I have been particular enough. I have room for no more, but to repeat that

I am, Sir Your's.

February 2, 1763.

A P P E N D I X.



A RELATION OF SOME PARTICULARS, RESPECTING THE CAUSE, PROGRESS, AND CLOSE OF THE LAST ILLNEES, OF MY LATE DEAR WIFE.

AMONG my readers, there will doubtless be some of a gentle sympathising spirit, with whom I am not personally acquainted; and perhaps their feelings may so far interest them in my concerns, as to make them not unwilling to read a brief account of my late great trial. I shall allot a few pages to this purpose, by way of close to my book and to my history.

My dear wife had naturally a good constitution, and was favored with good spirits, to the last. But the violent shock she sustained, in the year 1754, when I was suddenly attacked with a fit, (I know not of what kind) which left me no sign of life, for about an hour, but breathing, made as sudden a change in her habit, and subjected her, from that time, to a variety of chronic complaints.

She was several times confined, for five or six months, to her chamber, and often brought so low that her recovery was deemed hopeless. I believe, she spent ten years, out of the forty that she was spared to me, (if all the days of her sufferings were added together,) in illness, and pain, but she had likewise long intervals of health. The fit I have mentioned (the only one I ever had) was the mean, the Lord was pleased to appoint, in answer to my prayer, to free me from the irksome, sea-faring life, in which I was, till then, engaged, and to appoint me a settlement on shore.

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

In the month of October, 1788, she applied, unknown to me, to a friend of mine, an eminent surgeon. Her design was, if he approved it to submit to an operation, and so to adjust time and circumstances with him, that it might be performed in my absence, and

before I could know it. But the surgeon told her, that the malady was too far advanced, and the tumor (the size of which he compared to the half of a melon) was too large, to warrant the hope of being extracted, without the most imminent danger of life, and that he durst not attempt it. He could give her but little advice, more than to keep herself as quiet, and her mind as easily, as possible, and little more encouragement, than by saying, that the pains to which she was exposed, were generally rendered tolerable by the use of laudanum ; to which, however, she had a dislike, little short of an antipathy.

I cannot easily describe the composure, and resignation, with which she gave me this recital, the next day, of her interview with the surgeon ; nor of the sensations of my mind, while I heard it. My conscience told me, that I had well deserved to be wounded, where I was most sensible ; and that it was my duty, to submit with silence to the will of the Lord. But I strongly felt that unless he was pleased to give me this submission, I was more likely to toss like a wild bull in a net, in defiance of my better judgment.

Soon after, the Lord was pleased to visit our dear adopted daughter, with a dreadful fever, which, at first, greatly affected her nerves, and afterwards became putrid. She

was brought very near to the grave indeed ; for we once or twice, thought her actually dead. But he, who in the midst of judgment remembers mercy, restored her, and still preserves her, to be the chief temporal comfort of my old age, and to afford me the greatest alleviation of the loss I was soon to experience, that the case could admit.

The attention, and anxiety, occasioned by this heavy dispensation, which lasted during the whole of a very severe winter, were by no means suited to promote that tranquillity of mind, which my good friend wished my dear wife would endeavor to preserve. She was often much fatigued, and much alarmed. Next to each other, this dear child had the nearest place, both in her heart and mine. The effects were soon apparent : as the spring of 89 advanced her malady rapidly increased ; her pains were almost incessant, and often intense, and she could seldom lie one hour in bed, in the same position. Oh ! my heart, what didst thou then suffer.

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

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

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

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

It was not long after, that she began to have a distaste for food, which continued, and encreased; so that perhaps her death was, at last, rather owing to weakness, from want of nourishment, than to her primary disorder. Her dislike was, first to butcher's meat, of which she could bear neither the sight, nor the smell. Poultry, and fish, in their turns, became equally distasteful. She retained some relish for small birds, a while after she had given up the rest; but it was a season, when they were difficult to be obtained. I hope I shall always feel my obligations, to the kind

friends, who spared no pains, to procure some for her, when they were not to be had in the markets. At that time I set more value upon a dozen of larks, than upon the finest ox in Smithfield. But her appetite failed to these also, when they became more plentiful.

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

For about a twelvemonth of her confinement, her spirits were good, her patience was exemplary, and there was a cheerfulness in her looks, and her language that was wonderful. Often the liveliness of her remarks, has forced a smile from us, when the tears were in

our eyes. Whatever little contrivances she formed for her amusement, in the course of the day, she would attend to nothing, till she had finished her stated reading of the scripture ; in which she employed much time, and great attention. I have her bible by me, (which I would not part with for half the manuscripts in the Vatican) in which, almost every principal text from the beginning to the end of the book, is marked in the margin, with a pencil, by her own dear hand. The good word of God was her medicine and her food, while she was able to read it. She read Dr. Watts' psalms and hymns and the Olney hymns, in the same manner. There are few of them in which one, two or more verses are not thus marked ; and, in many, which I suppose she read more frequently, every verse is marked.

But in October, the enemy was permitted for a while to take advantage of her bodily weakness, to disturb the serenity and peace of her mind. Her thoughts became clouded, and confused ; and she gradually lost, not only the comfortable evidence, of her own interest, in the precious truths of the bible, but she lost all hold of the truth itself. She doubted the truth of the bible, or whether truth existed. And together with this, she expressed an extreme reluctance to death ; and could not easily bear, the most distant

hint of her approaching end, though we were expecting it daily, and hourly. This was the *acme*, the high water-mark of my trial; this was hard to bear indeed.

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

as to give her freedom to enlarge upon her hopes, and views, as I had wished, till near her dissolution ; and then she was too low to speak at all.

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

body was immoveable, she was still permitted the use of her hands.

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

Her head became so affected, that I could do little more than sit and look at her. Our intercourse by words was nearly broken off. She could not easily bear the sound of the gentlest foot upon the carpet, nor of the

softest voice. On Sunday the 12th December, when I was preparing for church in the morning she sent for me, and we took a final farewell, as to this world. She faintly uttered an endearing compellation, which was familiar to her, and gave me her hand, which I held, while I prayed by her bed-side. We exchanged a few tears; but I was almost as unable to speak, as she was. But I soon returned after, and said, "If your mind, as I trust, is in a state of peace, it will be a comfort to me, if you can signify it by holding up your hand. She held it up, and waved it to and fro several times.

That evening, her speech, her sight, and I believe her hearing, wholly failed. She appeared perfectly composed, without taking notice of any thing, or discovering any sign of pain, or uneasiness, till Wednesday, evening, towards seven o'clock. She then began to breathe very hard: her breathing might be called groaning, for it was heard in every part of the house; but I believe it was entirely owing to the difficulty of expiration, for she lay quite still, with a placid countenance, as if in a gentle slumber, there was no start or struggle, or a feature ruffled. I took my post by her bed side, and watched her nearly three hours, with a candle in my hand, till I saw her breathe her last, on the 15th of December 1790, a little before ten in the evening."

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

How wonderful must be the moment after death ! What a transition did she then experience ! She was instantly freed from sin, and all its attendant sorrows, and I trust, instantly admitted to join the heavenly choir. That moment, was remarkable, to me, likewise. It removed from me, the chief object, which made another day, or hour of life, as to my own personal concern, desirable. At the same time, it set me free from a weight of painful feelings, and anxieties, under which, nothing short of a divine power, could have so long supported me.

I believe it was about two or three months before her death, when I was walking up and down the room, offering disjointed prayers, from a heart torn with distress, that a thought suddenly struck me, with unusual force, to this effect : The promises of God must be true ; surely the Lord will help me, *if I am willing to be helped !* It occurred to me, that we are often led, from a vain complacence in what we call our sensibility, to indulge that unprofitable grief, which both our duty, and

our peace, require us to resist, to the utmost of our power. I instantly said aloud, Lord, I am helpless indeed, in myself, but I hope I am willing, without reserve, that thou shouldst help me.

It had been much upon my mind, from the beginning of this trial, that I was a minister, and that the eyes of many were upon me, that my turn of preaching had very much led me to endeavor to comfort the afflicted, by representing the gospel as a catholicon, affording an effectual remedy for every evil, a full compensation for every want or loss, to those who truly receive it. So that though a believer may be afflicted, he cannot be properly unhappy ; unless he gives way to self-will, and unbelief. I had often told my hearers, that a state of trial, if rightly improved, was, to the Christian, a post of honor, affording the fairest opportunity of exemplifying the power of divine grace, to the praise and glory of the giver. It had been, therefore, my frequent, daily prayer, that I might not by impatience, or despondence, be deprived of the advantage my situation afforded me, of confirming by my own practice the doctrine which I had preached to others, and that I might not give them occasion to apply to me, the words of Eliphaz to Job, ch. iv. 4, 5, "Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees ; but

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

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

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

I was not supported by lively, sensible consolations, but by being enabled to realize to my mind, some great and leading truths of the word of God. I saw, what indeed, I knew before, but never till then so strongly and clearly perceived, that as a sinner, I had no *right*, and as a believer, I could have no *reason*, to complain. I considered her as a loan, which He who lent her to me, had a right to resume whenever he pleased; and that as I had deserved to forfeit her every day, from the first; it became me, rather to be

* From a text which I had reserved from my first entrance on the ministry, for this particular service, if I should survive her, and be able to speak.

thankful that she was spared to me so long, than to resign her with reluctance, when called for. Farther, that his sovereignty, was connected with infinite wisdom, and goodness; and consequently, if it were possible for me to alter any part of his plan, I could only spoil it—that such a short sighted creature as I, so blind to the possible consequences of my wishes, was only unworthy, but unable to choose well for myself; and that it was therefore my great mercy and privilege, that the Lord condescended to choose for me. May such considerations powerfully affect the hearts of my readers under their troubles, and then, I shall not regret having submitted to the view of the public, a detail which may seem more proper for the subject of a private letter to a friend. They who can feel for me, will, I hope, excuse me. And it is chiefly for their sakes, that I have written it.

When my wife died, the world seemed to die with her, (I hope, to revive no more.) I see little now, but my ministry and my Christian profession, to make a continuance in life, for a single day, desirable; though I am willing to wait my appointed time. If the world cannot restore *her* to me (not that I have the remotest wish that her return was possible) it can do nothing for me. The Bank of England is too poor to compensate, for such a loss as mine. But the Lord, the

all sufficient God, speaks, and it is done. Let those who know him, and trust him, be of good courage. He can give them strength according to their day ; he can increase their strength, as their trials are increased, to any assignable degree. And what He *can*, He has promised He *will* do. The power, and faithfulness, on which the successive changes of day and night, and of the seasons of the year, depend, and which uphold the stars in their orbits, is equally engaged to support his people, and to lead them, safely and unhurt, (if their path be so appointed) through floods and flames. Though I believe she has never yet been (and probably never will be) out of my waking thoughts, for five minutes at a time ; though I sleep in the bed, in which she suffered, and languished so long ; I have not had one uncomfortable day, nor one restless night, since she left me. I have lost a right hand, which I cannot but miss continually, but the Lord enables me to go on, cheerfully, without it.

May his blessing rest upon the reader !
May glory, honor, and praise be ascribed to his great and holy name, now and for ever !
Amen.

VERSES SUNG AFTER HER FUNERAL

SERMON.

HABAK. iii. 17, 18.

Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

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

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

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

But sin has poison'd all below,
Our blessings, burdens prove;
On ev'ry hand we suffer woe,
But most, where most we love.

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

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

But you, who love the Saviour's voice
and rest upon his name ;
Amidst these changes may rejoice
For he is still the same.

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

o

EBENEZER:
A MEMORIAL

OF THE UNCHANGEABLE GOODNESS
OF GOD, UNDER CHANGING
DISPENSATIONS.

WRITTEN FEB. 12, 1775.

The twenty-fifth Anniversary of our Marriage.

THE LORD GAVE—

FOR what this day recals to mind
My praise to God is due ;
How many blessings he design'd
To give, in giving you.

When hateful, hating and forlorn
In Afric's wilds I stray'd ;
His hand secur'd my safe return,
But *you*, the *mean*, was made.

How little then, could be foreseen
My path in future life !
But he prepar'd each following scene,
By making you, my wife.

The happy day that join'd our hands
(Sweet prelude to his grace,)
More firm in my remembrance, stands
Than if engrav'd in brass.

But ah ! my heart, by sin betray'd,
(How painful is the thought)
Soon, of the gift, an Idol made,
The giver soon forgot !

How justly, might some sudden turn
Have parted us again ;
And left my guilty soul to mourn
In agony and pain !

But though we both and chiefly I,
For good have render'd ill,
His mercy hath been always nigh,
His hand preserves us still.

With mutual love, and peace, and health,
And friends, we have been blest ;
And, if not what the world calls *wealth*,
We have *enough* possess'd.

From place to place, from year to year,
The Lord has been our guide ;
Our sure resource in time of fear,
When all has fail'd beside.

Thus five and twenty years, the sun
Has trod his annual path ;
And we apace are posting on
To meet the stroke of death !

Sure none a happier life have known,
Than ours thus far, has been ;
But could we covet, now 'tis gone,
To live it o'er again ?

Like checker'd cloth, the warp with love
And comfort has been spread ;
But cares and crosses interwove
Have furnish'd half the thread.

Yes ! even we, who so much joy,
So much endearment know,
Have found that something will annoy,
And tarnish all below !

Yet ev'ry cross a mercy is,
A blessing ev'ry thorn ;
That tells us, here is not our bliss,
We were for nobler born.

That I am hers, and she is mine,
Invites my feeble lays ;
But Saviour, that we both are thine,
Demands my highest praise.

With thee, dear Lord, who rulest all,
The wise appointment lies,
To which of us the lot must fall,
To close the other's eyes !

Then all our intercourse while here,
(How happy, and how kind !)
Will like a fleeting dream appear,
Which leaves no trace behind.

Prepare us ev'ry day we live,
For that important hour ;
And when at length it shall arrive,
Support us by thy pow'r.

Farewel, it meant, a last adieu !
I soon shall cease from pain ;
This silent tear I drop for you :
We part—to meet again.

I said, “ If leaving all below,
You now have peace divine ;
And would, but cannot tell me so,
Give me, at least a sign.”

She rais'd, and gently wav'd her hand,
And fill'd me with a joy,
To which the wealth of sea and land
Compar'd, were but a toy.

I trust, indeed, she knew thy grace,
Before this trying day ;
But Satan had, a while access,
To fill her with dismay.

Till then, tho' two long years she pin'd
Without an hour of ease ;
Cheerful she still appear'd, resign'd,
And bore her cross, in peace.

Daily while able, closely too,
She read the word of God ;
And thence her hope and comfort drew,
Her med'cine and her food.

A stranger might have well presum'd,
From what he saw her bear :
This burning bush was not consum'd,
Because the LORD was there.

Three days she could no notice take,
Nor speak, nor hear, nor see ;
O Lord ! did not my heart-strings ache !
Did not I cry to thee !

That while I watch'd her, night and day,
My will, to thine, might bow ?
And by this rod, didst thou not say,
“ Behold your Idol now !

“ From her you lov'd too much, proceed
“ Your sharpest grief and pains ;
“ For soon or late, the heart must bleed
“ That Idols entertains.”

Yes Lord we both have guilty been,
And justly are distress'd ;
But since thou dost forgive our sin,
I welcome all the rest.

Only uphold us in the fire,
Our fainting spirits cheer ;
And I thy mercy will admire
When most thou seem'st severe.

Fainter her breath, and fainter grew,
Until she breath'd her last :
'The soul was gone, before we knew
The stroke of death was past.

Soft was the moment, and serene,
That all her sufferings clos'd ;
No agony, nor struggle seen,
No feature discompos'd.

Who first departs, may thy kind smile
 Strengthen, with joy to go;
 And the survivor reconcile
 To stay a while below.

Then may it seem of little weight,
 Which of us goes before;
 Assur'd that we shall shortly meet
 To part again no more.

Oh, with what wonder, joy, and praise
 Our souls shall then review
 The snares, and mercies of the ways,
 We were conducted through!

WRITTEN ON DECEMBER 15, 1791.

*The First Anniversary of her Dismission from
 this State of Sin and Sorrow.*

THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY. BLESSED
 BE THE NAME OF THE LORD.

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort! Who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comforts wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

LORD! she was thine, and not my own
 Thou hast not done me wrong;
 I thank thee for the precious loan
 Afforded me so long.

For though no single day has been,
Or talent, well improv'd ;
I chiefly see, and mourn, my sin
In what I chiefly lov'd.

I trembled when thou saidst, " Resign
A much abused trust ;"
But could not wonder or repine ;
I own'd the sentence just.

Yet mercy sweeten'd my distress ;
And, while I felt the rod,
Gave me abundant cause to bless
An all-sufficient God.

Sharp was my pain, and deep my wound,
(A wound which still must bleed)
But daily help, and strength I found
Proportion'd to my need.

Like Jonah (well our stories suit)
I view'd my gourd well pleas'd ;
Like him, I could not see the root
On which the worm had seiz'd.

But saw, at length the hour draw nigh,
(That hour I since have known)
When all my earthly joy must die,
And I be left alone.

She dropt a tear, and grasp'd my hand.
And fain she would have spoke ;
But well my heart could understand
The language of her look.

The parting struggle all was mine;
 " 'Tis the Survivor dies,"
For she was freed, and gone to join
 The triumph of the skies.

To me it was a stormy day,
 Tho' glad for her release ;
But he whom seas and storms obey,
 Soon bid the tempest cease.

My selfish heart had wish'd her here,
 To spend her days in pain :
That she, what I could say, might hear,
 And speak to me again.

Our kindness to our suff'ring friends
 Would keep them still below ;
But he who loves them better, sends,
 And at his call, they go.

Each moment, since that trying hour,
 My loss I keenly feel ;
But trust, I feel my Saviour's pow'r
 To sanctify and heal.

Ah world ! Vain world ! by whom my Lord
 Was crucify'd and slain ;
What comfort now, canst thou afford
 To mitigate my pain ?

Long since, I should, by his dear Cross,
 Have learnt to die to thee ;
But if I learn it by my loss,
 That loss my gain will be.

Now Lord, to thee I would apply,
On thee alone depend ;
Thou art, when creatures fail and die,
An ever-living friend !

Now thou hast made a void within,
Which only thou canst fill ;
Oh ! grant me pardon of my sin,
And grace to do thy will.

That I with joy thy flock may feed,
A pattern to them be,
And comfort them in time of need,
Vouchsafe to comfort me.

Let me believe, and love and praise,
And wonder and adore,
And view the guiding all my ways ;
I ask for nothing more.

To thee I would commit the rest :
The when, the how, the where,
Thy wisdom will determine best,
Without my anxious care.

May I, with faith and patience wait,
For soon thy call will come ;
When I shall change this mortal state
For an Eternal home.

The veils of sin and unbelief
Shall then be rent in twain ;
And they, who parted here with grief,
Shall meet with joy again.

Then will the Lord himself appear,
With all his blood-bought sheep,
To wipe from ev'ry face, the tear,
And they no more shall weep.

May thoughts, like these relieve my toil,
And cheer my spirit up!
Who would not suffer here a while,
For such a glorious hope;

SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIFTEENTH
DECEMBER, 1790.

WHILE grace her balm, to sooth my pain
And heal my wound, applies;
To make it throb, and bleed again.
Officious mem'ry tries.

Too well she knows each tender string
That twines about my heart;
And how to fix a piercing sting
In the most feeling part!

May I not yet some respite take
From dwelling on her death?
Did I not feel her heart-strings break,
And watch her last drawn breath?

Oh! cease, at length to haunt my mind
With images of grief;
Canst thou no pleasing topics find
To yield me some relief?

But as a sieve the bran retains,
And let the flour fall thro',

So careful mem'ry keeps my pains,
And loss, in constant view ;

While comforts, countless as the sands
Which crown my favor'd lot,
Tho' each, my warmest praise demands,
Are heedlessly forgot.

And can I then forget the times,
When helpless, hopeless lost,
I pin'd in miseries and crimes,
On Africa's horrid coast ?

To Christ my Lord, a daring foe,
To men, a wretched slave ;
Yet, on that brink of endless woe
He shew'd his pow'r to save.

His mercy, tho' by me unsought,
Kept me from falling in ;
His arm my full deliv'rance wrought,
His grace forgave my sin.

He taught my base blaspheming tongue
To aim at pray'r and praise ;
Became my shield, and strength, and song
And guided all my ways.

Thus freed from misery and death,
My sorrow chang'd to joy ;
He sent me forth to preach the faith
I labor'd to destroy.

His mercies thro' my future life
Were new from day to day ;
The chief of all, was that dear wife
He since has call'd away.

Shall one so favor'd e'er repine
Or one so vile complain?
No—let me praise—she long was mine
And shall be mine again.
If death could break our union past
(Frail, tho' endear'd the tie)
The stronger band of grace shall last,
When death itself shall die!



A; or, Grace in the Blade. Mark iv. 28.

Dear Sir,

ACCORDING to your desire, I sit down to give you my general views of a progressive work of grace, in the several stages of a believer's experience; which I shall mark by the different characters A. B. C. answerable to the distinction our Lord teaches us to observe from the growth of the corn, Mark iv. 28. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." The Lord leads all his people effectually and savingly to the knowledge of the same essential truths, but in such a variety of methods, that it will be needful in this disquisition, to set aside, as much as possible, such things as may be only personal and occasional in the experience of each, and to collect those only which in a greater or less degree are common to them all. I shall not therefore give you a copy of my own experience, or of that of any individual; but shall endeavor, as clearly as I can, to state what the scripture teaches us concerning the nature and essentials of a work of grace, so far as it will bear a general application to all those who are the subjects of gracious operations.

By nature we are all dead in trespasses and sins, not only strangers to God, but in a

state of enmity and opposition to his government and grace. In this respect, whatever difference there may be in the characters of men as members of society, they are all, whether wise or ignorant, whether sober or profane, equally incapable of receiving or approving divine truths, 1 Cor. ii. 14. On this ground our Lord declares, "No man can come unto me, except the father who has sent me, draws him." Though the term Father most frequently expresses a known and important distinction in the adorable Trinity, I apprehend our Lord sometimes uses it to denote God, or the Divine Nature, in contradistinction from his humanity, as in John xiv. 9. And this I take to be the sense here: "No man can come unto me unless he is taught of God," and wrought upon by a divine power. The immediate exertion of this power, according to the œconomy of salvation, is rather ascribed to the Holy Spirit than to the Father, John xvi. 8—11, but it is the power of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: and therefore severally attributed to the Father, Son, and Spirit, John v. 21. and ch. vi. 44. 63; 2 Cor. iii. 18; 2 Thess. iii. 5.

By A, I would understand a person who is under the drawings of God, which will infallibly lead him to the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation. The beginning of this

work is instantaneous. It is effected by a certain kind of light communicated to the soul, to which it was before an utter stranger. The eyes of the understanding are opened and enlightened. The light at first afforded is weak and indistinct, like the morning dawn; but when it is once begun, it will certainly increase and spread to the perfect day. We commonly speak as if conviction of sin was the first work of God upon the soul that he is in mercy about to draw unto himself. But I think this is inaccurate. Conviction is only a part, or rather an immediate effect of that first work; and there are many convictions which do not at all spring from it, and therefore are only occasional and temporary, though for a season they may be very sharp, and put a person upon doing many things. In order to a due conviction of sin, we must previously have some adequate conceptions of the God with whom we have to do. Sin may be feared as dangerous without this; but its nature and demerit can only be understood by being contrasted with the holiness, majesty, goodness, and truth, of the God against whom it is committed. No outward means, no mercies, judgments, or ordinances, can communicate such a discovery of God or produce such a conviction of sin, without the concurrence of this divine light and power to the soul. The natural conscience and

and passions may be indeed so far wrought upon by outward means, as to stir up some desires and endeavors : but if these are not founded in a spiritual apprehension of the perfections of God, according to the revelation he has made of himself in his word, they will sooner or later come to nothing ; and the person affected will either return by degrees to his former ways, 2 Peter ii. 20 ; or he will sink into a self-righteous form of godliness, destitute of the power, Luke xviii. 11. And therefore as there are so many things in the dispensation of the gospel, suited to work upon the natural passions of men, the many woful miscarriages and apostacies amongst professors are more to be lamented than wondered at. For though the seed may seem to spring up, and look green for a season, if there be no depth for it to take root, it will surely wither away. We may be unable to judge with certainty upon the first appearance of a religious profession, whether the work be thus deep and spiritual or not ; but “ the Lord knows them that are his ;” and wherever it is real it is an infallible token of salvation. Now as God only thus reveals himself by the medium of scripture truth, the light received this way leads the soul to the scripture from whence it springs, and all the leading truths of the word of God soon begin to be perceived and assented to. The evil of

sin is acknowledged, the evil of the heart is felt. There may be for a while some efforts to obtain the favor of God by prayer, repentance and reformation; but for the most part it is not very long before these things are proved to be vain and ineffectual. The soul, like the woman mentioned, Mark v. 26. wearied with vain expedients, finds itself worse and worse, and is gradually brought to see the necessity and sufficiency of the gospel salvation. A, may soon be a believer thus far: That he believes the word of God, sees and feels things to be as they are there described, hates and avoids sin, because he knows it is displeasing to God, and contrary to his goodness; he receives the record which God has given of his Son; has his heart affected and drawn to Jesus by views of his glory, and of his love to poor sinners; ventures upon his name and promises as his only encouragement to come to a throne of grace; waits diligently in the use of all means appointed for the communion and growth of grace; loves the Lord's people, accounts them the excellent of the earth, and delights in their conversation. He is longing, waiting, and praying, for a share in those blessings which he believes they enjoy, and can be satisfied with nothing less. He is convinced of the power of Jesus to save him; but through remaining ignorance and legality, the remembrance of sin com-

mitted, and the sense of present corruption, he often questions his willingness, and, not knowing the aboundings of grace, and the security of the promises, he fears lest the compassionate Saviour should spurn him from his feet.

While he is thus young in the knowledge of the gospel, burdened with sin, and perhaps beset with Satan's temptations, the Lord, "who gathers the lambs in his arms, "and carries them in his bosom," is pleased at times to favor him with cordials, that he may not be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Perhaps his heart is enlarged in prayer, or under hearing, or some good promise is brought home to his mind, and applied with power and sweetness. He mistakes the nature and design of these comforts, which are not given him to rest in, but to encourage him to press forward. He thinks he is then right because he has them, and fondly hopes to have them always. Then his mountain stands strong. But ere long he feels a change: his comforts are withdrawn; he finds no heart to pray; no attention in hearing; indwelling sin revives with fresh strength, and perhaps Satan returns with redoubled rage. Then he is at his wits end; thinks his hopes were presumptuous, and his comforts delusions. He wants to feel something that may give him a warrant to trust in the free promises

of Christ. His views of the Redeemer's gracefulness are very narrow ; he sees not the harmony and glory of the divine attributes in the salvation of a Sinner ; he sighs for mercy, but fears that justice is against him. However, by these changing dispensations the Lord is training him up, and bringing him forward. He receives grace from Jesus, whereby he is enabled to fight against sin ; his conscience is tender, his troubles are chiefly spiritual troubles ; and he thinks, if he could but attain a sure and abiding sense of his acceptance in the beloved, hardly any outward trial would be capable of giving him much disturbance. Indeed notwithstanding the weakness of his faith, and the prevalence of a legal spirit, which greatly hurts him, there are some things in his present experience which he may perhaps look upon with regret hereafter, when his hope and knowledge will be more established. Particularly that sensibility and keenness of appetite with which he now attends the ordinances, desiring the sincere milk of the word with earnestness and eagerness, as a babe does the breast. He counts the hours from one opportunity to another ; and the attention and desire with which he hears may be read in his countenance. His zeal is likewise lively, and may be, for want of experience, too importunate and forward. He has a love for souls, and a

concern for the glory of God ; which, though it may at sometimes create him trouble, and at others be mixed with some undue motions of self, and yet in its principle is highly desirable and commendable ; John, xviii. 10.

The grace of God influences both the understanding and the affections. Warm affections, without knowledge, can rise no higher than superstition ; and that knowledge which does not influence the heart and affections, will only make a hypocrite. The true believer is rewarded in both respects ; yet we may observe, that though A, is not without knowledge, this state is more usually remarkable for the warmth and liveliness of the affections. On the other hand, as the work advances, though the affections are not left out, yet it seems to be carried on principally in the understanding. The old christians has more solid, judicious, connected views of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the glories of his person and redeeming love, hence his hope is more established, his dependence more simple, and his peace and strength, *cæteris paribus*, more abiding and uniform, than in the case of a young convert, but the latter has for the most part, the advantage in point of sensible fervency. A tree is most valuable when laden with ripe fruit, but it has a peculiar beauty when in blossom. It is spring time with A ;

he is in bloom, and, by the grace and blessing of the heavenly husbandman, will bear fruit in old age. His faith is weak, but his heart is warm. He will seldom venture to think himself a believer; but he sees and feels, and does those things which no one could unless the Lord was with him. The very desire and bent of his soul is to God, and to the word of his grace. His knowledge is but small, but it is growing every day. If he is not a *father* or *young man* in grace, he is a dear *child*. The Lord has visited his heart, delivered him from the love of sin, and fixed his eyes supremely upon Jesus Christ. The spirit of bondage is gradually departing from him, and the hour of liberty, which he longs for, is approaching, when, by a farther discovery of the glorious gospel, it shall be given him to know his acceptance, and to rest upon the Lord's finished salvation. We shall then take notice of him by the name of B, in a second letter, if you are not unwilling I should prosecute the subject.—I am, &c.

B; *or, Grace in the Ear.* Mark, iv. 28.

Dear Sir,

THE manner of the Lords work in the hearts of his people is not easily traced, though the fact is certain, and the evidence demonstrable, from Scripture. In attempting to explain it, we can only speak in general and are at a loss to form such a description as shall take in the immense variety of cases which occur in the experience of believers. I have already attempted such a general delineation of a young convert, under the character of A, and am now to speak of him by the name of B.

This state I suppose to commence, when the soul, after an interchange of hopes and fears, according to the different frames it passes through, is brought to rest in Jesus, by a spiritual apprehension of his complete suitability and sufficiency, as the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of all who trust in him, and is enabled by an appropriating faith to say, "He is mine, and I am his." There are various degrees of this persuasion: it is of a growing nature, and is capable of increase so long as we remain in this world. I call it assurance, when it arises from a simple view of the grace and glory of the Saviour, independent of our frames and

feelings, so as to enable us to answer all objections from unbelief and Satan, with the apostle's words, "Who is he that condemn-
"eth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that
"is risen again, who is even at the right hand
"of God, who also maketh intercession for
"us." Rom. viii. 34. This, in my judgment, does not belong to the essence of faith, so that B should be deemed more truly a believer than A, but to the establishment of faith. And now faith is stronger, it has more to grapple with. I think the characteristic of the state of A is *desire*, and of B is *conflict*. Not that B's desires have subsided, or A was a stranger to conflict; but as there was a sensible eagerness and keenness in A's desires, which perhaps is seldom known to be equally strong afterwards; so there are usually trials and exercises in B's experience, something different in their kind, and sharper in their measure, than what A was exposed to, or indeed had strength to endure. A, like Israel, has been delivered from Egypt by great power and a stretched out arm, has been pursued and terrified by many enemies, has given himself up for lost again and again. He has at last seen his enemies destroyed, and has sung the song of Moses and the Lamb upon the banks of the Red-Sea. Then he commences B. Perhaps, like Israel, he thinks his difficulties are at an end, and expects to

go on rejoicing till he enters the promised land. But, alas ! his difficulties are in a manner but beginning ; he has a wilderness before him, of which he is not aware. The Lord is now about to suit his dispensations to humble and to prove him, and to shew him what is in his heart, that he may do him good at the latter end, and that all the glory may redound to his own free grace.

Since the Lord hates and abhors sin, and teaches his people whom he loves to hate it likewise, it might seem desirable, (and all things are equally easy to him) that at the same time they are delivered from guilt and reigning power of sin, they should likewise be perfectly freed from the defilement of indwelling sin, and be made fully conformable to him at once. His wisdom has, however, appointed otherwise. But from the above promise, of his hatred of sin, and his love to his people, I think we may certainly conclude, that he would not suffer sin to remain in them, if he did not purpose to over rule it, for the fuller manifestation of the glory of his grace and wisdom, and for the making his salvation more precious to their souls. It is however, his command, and therefore their duty ; yea, further, from the new nature he has given them, it is their desire, to watch and strive against sin ; and to propose the mortification of the whole body of sin, and the advance-

ment of sanctification in their hearts, as their great and constant aim, to which they are to have an habitual persevering regard. Upon this plan B sets out. The knowledge of our acceptance with God, and of our everlasting security in Christ, has in itself the same tendency upon earth as it will have in heaven, and would, in proportion to the degree of evidence and clearness, produce the same effects, of continual love, joy, peace, gratitude, and praise, if there was nothing to counteract it. But B is not all spirit. A depraved nature still cleaves to him, and he has the seeds of every natural corruption yet remaining in his heart. He lives likewise in a world that is full of snares, and occasions suited to draw forth those corruptions; and he is surrounded by invisible spiritual enemies, the extent of whose power and subtilty he is yet to learn by painful experience. B, knows, in general, the nature of his christian warfare, and sees his right to live upon Jesus for righteousness and strength. He is not unwilling to indure hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ; and believes, that though he may be sore thrust at that he may fall, the Lord will be his stay. He knows, that his heart is "deceitful and desperately wicked;" but he does not, he cannot know at first, the full meaning of that expression. Yet it is for the Lord's glory, and will in the end make his grace and love

still more precious, that B should find new and mortifying proofs of an evil nature as he goes on, such as he could not have once believed had they been foretold him, as in the case of Peter, Mark xiv. 29. And, in effect, the abominations of the heart do not appear in their full strength and aggravation, but in the case of one, who, like B, has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and rejoiced in his salvation. The exceeding sinfulness of sin is manifested, not so much by its breaking through the restraints of threatenings and commands, as by its being capable of acting against light and against love. Thus it was with Hezekiah. He had been a faithful and zealous servant of the Lord for many years; but I suppose he knew more of God, and of himself, in the time of his sickness, than he had ever done before. The Lord, who had signally defended him from Senacherib, was pleased likewise to raise him from the borders of the grave by a miracle, and prolonged the time of his life in answer to prayer. It is plain, from the song which he penned upon his recovery, that he was greatly affected with the mercies he had received; yet still there was something in his heart which he knew not, and which it was for the Lord's glory he should be made sensible of; and therefore he was pleased to leave him to himself. It is the only instance in which he is said to have been left to himself, and the only

instance in which his conduct is condemned. I apprehend, that in the state of B, that is, for a season after we have known the Lord, we have usually the most sensible and distressing experience of our evil natures. I do not say, that it is necessary that we should be left to fall into gross outward sin, in order to know what is in our hearts ; though I believe many have thus fallen, whose hearts, under a former sense of redeeming love, have been as truly set against sin ; as the hearts of others who have been preserved from such outward falls. The Lord makes some of his children examples and warnings to others, as he pleases. They who are spared, and whose worst deviations are only known to the Lord and to themselves, have great reason to be thankful. I am sure I have : the merciful Lord has not suffered me to make any considerable blot in my profession during the time I have been numbered amongst his people. But I have nothing to boast of herein. It has not been owing to my wisdom, watchfulness, or spirituality, though in the main he has not suffered me to live in the neglect of his appointed means. But I hope to go softly all my days under the remembrance of many things, for which I have as great a cause to be abased before him, as if I had not been left to sin grievously in the sight of men. Yet with respect to my acceptance in the beloved, I know

not if I have had a doubt of a quarter of an hour's continuance for many years past. But, Oh ! the multiplied instances of stupidity, ingratitude, impatience, and rebellion, to which my conscience has been witness ! And as every heart knows its own bitterness I have generally heard the like complaints from others of the Lord's people with whom I have conversed, even from those who have appeared to be eminently gracious and spiritual. B does not meet with these things perhaps at first, nor every day. The Lord appoints occasions and turns in life, which try our spirits. There are particular seasons when temptations are suited to our frames, tempers and situations ; and there are times when he is pleased to withdraw, and to permit Satan's approach, that we may feel how vile we are in ourselves. We are prone to spiritual pride, to self dependence, to vain confidence, to creature attachments, and a train of evils. The Lord often discovers to us one sinful disposition by exposing us to another. He sometimes shows what he can do for us and in us ; and at other times how little we can do, and how unable we are to stand without him. By a variety of these exercises, through the over-ruling and edifying influences of the Holy Spirit, B is trained up in a growing knowledge of himself and of the Lord. He learns to be more distrustful of

his own heart, and to suspect a snare in every step he takes. The dark and disconsolate hours which he has brought upon himself in times past, make him doubly prize the light of God's countenance, and teach him to dread whatever might grieve the Spirit of God, and cause him to withdraw again. The repeated and multiplied pardons which he has received, increase his admiration of and the sense of his obligations to, the rich sovereign abounding mercy of the covenant. Much has been forgiven him, therefore he loves much, and therefore he knows how to forgive and pity others. He does not call evil good, or good evil; but his own experiences teach him tenderness and forbearance. He experiences a spirit of meekness towards those who are overtaken in a fault and his attempts to restore such, are according to the pattern of the Lord's dealings with himself. In a word, B's character, in my judgment, is complete, and he becomes a C, when the habitual frame of his heart answers to that passage in the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xvi. 63. "That thou mayest remember, and
"be confounded, and never open thy mouth
"any more (to boast complain, or censure,)
"because of thy shame, when I am pacified
"towards, thee for all that thou hast done,
"saith the Lord God."

I am, &c.

C ; or, the full Corn in the Ear. Mark iv. 28.

Dear Sir,

BY way of distinction, I assigned to A the characteristic of *desire*, to B that of *conflict*. I can think of no single word more descriptive of the state of C than *contemplation*. His eminence, in comparison of A, does not consist in the sensible warmth and fervency in his affections ; in this respect many of the most exemplary believers have looked back with a kind of regret upon the time of their espousals, when, though their judgments were but imperfectly formed, and their views of gospel truths were very indistinct they felt a fervor of spirit the remembrance of which is both humbling and refreshing ; and yet they cannot recall the same sensations. Nor is he properly distinguished from B by a consciousness of his acceptance in the Beloved, and an ability of calling God his father ; for this I have supposed B has attained to. Though, as there is a growth in every grace, C having had his views of the gospel, and of the Lord's faithfulness and mercy, confirmed by a longer experience, his assurance is of course more *stable* and more *simple*, than when he first saw himself safe from all condemnation. Neither has C, properly

speaking, any more strength or stock of grace in herent in himself than B, or even than A. He is in the same state of absolute dependance, as incapable of performing spiritual acts, or of resisting temptations by his own power, as he was at the first day of his setting out. Yet in a sense he is much stronger, because he has a more feeling and constant sense of his own weakness. The Lord has been long teaching him this lesson by a train of various dispensations ; and through grace he can say, he has not suffered so many things in vain. His heart has deceived him so often, that he is now in a good measure weaned from trusting to it ; and therefore he does not meet with so many disappointments. And having found again and again the vanity of all other helps, he is now taught to go to the Lord *at once* for " grace to help in every time of " need." Thus he is strong, not in himself, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

But C's happiness and superiority to B lies chiefly in this, that by the Lord's blessing on the use of means, such as prayer, reading and hearing of the word, and by a sanctified improvement of what he has seen of the Lord, and of his own heart, in the course of his experience, he has attained clearer, deeper, and more comprehensive views of the mystery of redeeming love ; of the glorious

excellency of the Lord Jesus, in his person, offices, grace, and faithfulness ; of the harmony and glory of all the divine perfections manifested in and by him to the church ; of the stability, beauty, fulness, and certainty of the holy Scriptures, and of the heights, depths, lengths, and breadths of the love of God in Christ. Thus though his sensible feelings may not be so warm as when he was in the state of A, his judgment is more solid, his mind more fixed, his thoughts more habitually exercised upon the things within the vail. His great business is to behold the glory of God in Christ ; and by beholding, he is changed into the same image, and brings forth in an eminent and uniform manner the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. His contemplations are not barren speculations, but have a real influence, and enable him to exemplify the christian character to more advantage, and with more consistence, than can in the present state of things be expected either from A or B. The following particulars may illustrate my meaning.

I. Humility. A measure of this grace is to be expected in every true christian ? but it can only appear in proportion to the knowledge they have of Christ and of their own hearts. It is a part of C's daily employment

to look back upon the way by which the Lord has led them, and while he reviews the *Ebenexers* he has set up all along the road, he sees, in almost an equal number, the monuments of his own perverse returns, and how he has in a thousand instances rendered to the Lord evil for good. Comparing these things together, he can without affectation drop the Apostle's language, and style himself "less than the least of all saints, and of sinners the chief. A and B know that they ought to be humbled; but C is truly so, and feels the force of that text which I mentioned in my last; Ezek. xvi. 63. Again, as he knows most of himself, so he has seen most of the Lord. The apprehension of infinite majesty combined with infinite love makes him shrink into the dust. From the exercise of this grace he derives two others, which are exceedingly ornamental, and principal branches of the mind which was in Christ.

The one is, submission to the will of God. The views he has of his own vileness, unworthiness, and ignorance, and of the divine sovereignty, wisdom and love, teach him to be content in every state, and to bear his appointed lot of suffering with resignation, according to the language of David in time of affliction. "I was dumb and opened not
" my mouth because thou didst it."

The other is, tenderness of spirit towards his fellow Christians. He cannot but judge of their conduct according to the rule of the word. But his own heart, and the knowledge he has acquired of the snares of the world, and the subtilty of Satan, teach him to make all due allowances, and qualify him for admonishing and restoring, in the spirit of meekness, those who have been overtaken in a fault. Here A is usually blameable ; the warmth of his zeal, not being duly corrected by a sense of his own imperfections, betrays him often into a censorious spirit. But C can bear with A likewise, because he hath been so himself, and he will not expect green fruit to be ripe.

II. Spirituality. A spiritual taste, and a disposition to account all things mean and vain, in comparison of the knowledge and love of God in Christ, are essential to a true Christian. The world can never be his prevailing choice ; 1 John ii. 13. Yet we are renewed but in part, and are prone to an undue attachment to worldly things. Our spirits cleave to the dust, in defiance to the dictates of our better judgments ; and I believe the Lord seldom gives his people a considerable victory over this evil principle, until he has let them feel how deeply it is rooted in their hearts. We may often see persons entangled and clogged in this respect, of whose

sincerity in the main we cannot justly doubt ; especially upon some sudden and unexpected turn in life, which brings them into a situation they have not been accustomed to. A considerable part of our trials are mercifully appointed to wean us from this propensity, and it is gradually weakened by the Lord's shewing us at one time the vanity of the creature, and at another his own excellence and all-sufficiency. Even C is not perfect in this respect ; but he is more sensible of the evil of such attachments, more humbled for them, more watchful against them, and more delivered from them. He still feels a fetter, but he longs to be free. His allowed desires are brought to a point ; and he sees nothing worth a serious thought, but with communion with God and progress in holiness. Whatever changes C may meet with, he will in general be the same man still. He has learned with the apostle, not only to suffer want, but (which is perhaps the harder lesson) how to abound. A palace would be a prison to him, without the Lord's presence, and with this a prison would be a palace. From hence arises a peaceful reliance upon the Lord : he has nothing which he cannot commit into his hands, which he is not habitually aiming to resign to his disposal. Therefore he is not afraid of evil tidings ; but when the hearts of others shake like the leaves of a tree, he is

fixed, trusting in the Lord, who he believes *can* and *will* make good every loss, sweeten every bitter, and appoint all things to work together for his advantage. He sees that the time is short, lives upon the foretastes of glory, and therefore accounts not his life, or any inferior concernment, dear, so that he may finish his course with joy.

III. A union of heart to the glory and will of God, is another noble distinction of C's spirit. The glory of God and the good of his people are inseparably connected. But of these great ends the first is unspeakably the highest and most important, and into which every thing else will be finally resolved. Now, in proportion as we advance nearer to him, *our* judgment, aim, and end, will be conformable to *his*, and his glory will have the highest place in our hearts. At first it is not so, or but very imperfectly. Our concern is chiefly about ourselves; nor can it be otherwise. The convinced soul inquires, What shall I do to be saved? The young convert is intent upon sensible comforts; and in the seasons when he sees his interest secure, the prospect of the troubles he may meet, with in life makes him often wish for an early dismissal, that he may be at rest, and avoid the heat and burden of the day. But C has attained to more enlarged views; he has a desire to part and to be with Christ, which

would be importunate if he considered only himself ; but his chief desire is, that God may be glorified in him, whether by his life or by his death. He is not his own ; nor does he desire to be his own ; but so that the power of Jesus may be manifested in him, he will take pleasure in infirmities, in distresses, in temptations ; and though he longs for heaven, would be content to live as long as Methuselah upon earth, if by any thing he could do or suffer, the will and glory of God might be promoted. And though he loves and adores the Lord for what he has done and suffered for him, delivered him from, and appointed him to : yet he loves and adores him likewise with a more simple and direct love, in which self, is in a manner forgot, from the consideration of his glorious excellence and perfections, as he is in himself. That God in Christ is glorious over all, and blessed for ever, is the very joy of his soul ; and his heart can frame no higher wish, than that the sovereign, wise, holy will of God may be accomplished in him, and all his creatures. Upon this grand principle his prayers, schemes, and actions are formed. Thus C is already made like the angels, and, so far as is consistent with the inseparable remnants of a fallen nature, the will of God is regarded by him upon earth, as it is by the inhabitants of heaven.

The power of divine grace in C may be exemplified in a great variety of situations. C may be rich or poor, learned or illiterate, of a lively natural spirit, or of a more slow and phlegmatical constitution. He may have a comparatively smooth, or are markably thorny path in life ; he may be a minister or layman ; these circumstantialia will give some tincture and difference in appearance to the work ; but the work itself is the same ; and we must, as far as possible, drop the consideration of them all, or make proper allowances for each, in order to form a right judgment of the life of faith. The outward expression of grace may be heightened and set off to advantage by many things which are merely natural, such as evenness of temper, good sense, a knowledge of the world, and the like ; and it may be darkened by things which are not properly sinful, but unavoidable, such as lowness of spirits, weak abilities, and pressure of temptations, which may have effects that they who have not had experience in the same things cannot properly account for. A double quantity of real grace, if I may so speak, that has a double quantity of hindrances to conflict with, will not be easily observed, unless the hindrances are likewise known and attended to ; and a smaller measure of grace may appear great when its exercise meets with no remarkable obstruction.

For these reasons, we can never be competent judges of each other, because we cannot be competently acquainted with the whole complex case. But our great and merciful High-priest knows the whole ; he considers our frame, "remembers that we are but dust," makes gracious allowances, pities, bears, accepts, and approves, with unerring judgment. The sun, in his daily course, beholds nothing so excellent and honorable upon earth as C, though perhaps he may be confined to a cottage, and is little known or noticed by men. But he is the object and residence of divine love, the charge of angels, and ripening for everlasting glory. Happy C ! his toils, sufferings, and exercises, will be soon at an end ; soon his desires will be accomplished ; and he who has loved him, and redeemed him with his own blood, will receive him to himself, with a "Well done, thou good and faithful servant ; enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

If this representation is agreeable to the Scriptures, how greatly are they mistaken, and how much to be pitied, who, while they make profession of the gospel, seem to have no idea of the effects it is designed to produce upon the hearts of believers, but either allow themselves in a worldly spirit and conversation, or indulge their unsanctified tempers, by a fierce contention for names, noti-

ons, and parties. May the Lord give to you
and to me daily to grow in the experience of
that wisdom which "is first pure, then peace-
" able, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full
" of mercy and good works, without partiali-
" ty, and without hypocrisy.

I am &c.

(1) *On Man in his Fallen State.**Lord what is Man !**Dear Sir,*

WE hear much in the present day of the dignity of human nature. And it is allowed man was an excellent creature as he came out of the hands of God ; but if we consider this question with a view to fallen man, as depraved by sin, how can we but join with the Psalmist in wonder that the great God should make any account of him ?

Fallen as man is from his original state of happiness and holiness, his natural faculties and abilities afford sufficient evidence that the hand which made him is divine. He is capable of great things. His understanding, will, affections, imagination, and memory, are noble and amazing powers. But view him in a moral light, as an intelligent being, incessantly dependent upon God, accountable to him, and appointed by him to a state of existence in an unchangeable world ; considered in this relation, man is a monster, a vile, base, stupid, obstinate, and mischievous creature : no words can fully describe him.—Man, with all his boasted understanding and attainments, is a fool ; so long as he is destitute of the saving grace of God, his conduct,

as to his most important concernments, is more absurd and inconsistent than that of the meanest idiot ; with respect to his affections and pursuits, he is degraded far below the beasts ; and for the malignity and wickedness of his will, can be compared to nothing so properly as to the devil.

The question here is not concerning this or that man, a Nero or a Heliogabalus, but concerning human nature, the whole race of mankind, the few excepted who are born of God. There is indeed a difference amongst men, but it is owing to the restraints of Divine Providence, without which earth would be the very image of hell. A wolf or a lion, while chained, cannot do so much mischief as if they were let loose, but the nature is the same in the whole species. Education and interest, fear and shame, human laws, and the secret power of God over the mind, combine to form many characters that are eternally decent and respectable ; and even the most abandoned are under a restraint which prevents them from manifesting a thousandth part of the wickedness which is in their hearts. But the heart itself is universally deceitful and desperately wicked.

Man is a fool. He can indeed measure the earth and almost count the stars ; he bounds in arts and inventions in science and policy,—and shall he then be called a fool ?

—The ancient heathens, the inhabitants of Egypt, Greece and Rome, were eminent for the kind of wisdom. They are to this day studied as models by those who aim to excel in history, poetry, painting, architecture, and other exertions of human genius, which are suited to polish the manners without improving the heart. But their most admired philosophers, legislators, logicians, orators, and artists, were as destitute as infants or idiots, of that knowledge which alone deserves the name of true wisdom. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. Ignorant and regardless of God, yet conscious of their weakness, and of their dependence upon a power above their own, and stimulated by an inward principle of fear, of which they knew neither the origin nor right application, they worshipped the creature more than the Creator, yea, placed their trusts in stocks and stones, in the work of men's hands, in non-entities and chimeras.

An acquaintance with their mythology, or system of religious fables, passes with us for a considerable branch of learning, because it is drawn from ancient books written in languages not known to the vulgar ; but in point of certainty or truth, we might receive as much satisfaction from a collection of dreams, or from the ravings of lunatics. If, therefore, we admit these admired sages as a tole-

rable specimen of mankind, must we not confess, that man in his best estate, while uninstructed by the spirit of God, is a fool? But are we wiser than they? Not in the least, till the grace of God makes us so. Our superior advantages only shew our folly in a more striking light. Why do we account any person foolish? A fool has no sound judgment; he is governed wholly by appearances, and would prefer a fine coat to the writings of a large estate. He pays no regard to consequences. Fools have sometimes hurt or killed their best friends, and thought they did no harm. A fool cannot reason, therefore arguments are lost upon him. At one time, if tied with a straw, he dares not stir; at another time, perhaps he can hardly be persuaded to move, though the house was on fire. Are these the characteristics of a fool? Then there is no fool like the sinner, who prefers the toys of earth to the happiness of heaven; who is held in bondage by the foolish customs of the world, and is more afraid of the breath of man than of the wrath of God.

Again, man in his natural state is a beast, yea below the beasts that perish. In two things he strongly resembles them: in looking no higher than to sensual gratifications, and in that selfishness of spirit which prompts him to propose himself and his own interest as

his proper and highest end. But in many respects he sinks sadly beneath them. Unnatural lusts and the want of natural affection towards their offspring, are abominations not to be found among the brute creation, What shall we say of mothers destroying their children with their own hands, or of the horrid act of self murder! Men are worse than beasts likewise in their obstinacy; they will not be warned. If a beast escapes from a trap, he will be cautious how he goes near it again, and in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird. But man, though he be often reprov'd, hardens his neck; he rushes upon his ruin with his eyes open, and can defy God to his face, and dare damnation.

Once more, let us observe how man resembles the devil. There are spiritual sins, and from these in their height the scripture teaches us to judge of Satan's character. Every feature in this description is strong in man; so that what our Lord said to the Jews is general application, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do." Man resembles Satan in *pride*: this stupid, wicked creature values himself upon his wisdom, power, and virtue, and will talk of being saved by his good works; though if he can, Satan himself need not despair. He resembles him in *malice*; and this diabolical disposition often proceeds to murder, and

would daily if the Lord did not restrain it. He derives from Satan the hateful spirit of *envy* ; he is often tormented beyond expression, by beholding the prosperity of his neighbors ; and proportionably pleased with their calamities, though he gains no other advantage from them than the gratification of this rancorous principle. He bears the image likewise of Satan in his cruelty. This evil is bound up even in the heart of a child. A disposition to take pleasure in giving pain to others, appears very early. Children, if left to themselves, soon feel a gratification in torturing insects and animals. What misery does the wanton cruelty of men inflict upon cocks, dogs, bulls, and other creatures, which they seem to think were formed for no other end than to feast their savage spirits with their torments ! If we form our judgments of men when they seem most pleased, and have neither anger or resentment to plead in their excuse, it is too evident, even from the nature of their amusements, whose they are, and whom they serve ; and are the worst of enemies to each other. Think of the horrors of war, the rage of duellists, of the murders and assassinations with which the world is filled, and then say, " Lord what is man ! " Farther, if *deceit* and *treachery* belong to Satan's character, then surely man resembles him. Is not the universal observation and

complaint of all ages, an affecting comment upon the prophet's words, "Trust ye not in a friend, put not confidence in a guide, keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom, for they hunt every man his brother with a net." How many have at this moment cause to say with David, "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords." Again, like Satan, men are eager in tempting others to sin; not content to damn themselves, they employ all their arts and influence to draw as many as they can with them into the same destruction. Lastly, in direct opposition to God, and goodness, in contemptuous enmity to the gospel of his grace, and a bitter persecuting spirit against those who profess it, Satan himself can hardly exceed them. Herein, indeed, they are his agents and willing servants; and because the blessed God is himself out of their reach, they labor to shew their despite to him in the persons of his people.

I have drawn but a sketch, a few outlines, of the picture of fallen man. To give an exact copy of him, to charge every feature with its full aggravation of horror, and to paint him *as he is*, would be impossible. Enough

has been observed to illustrate the propriety of the exclamation, "Lord what is man!" Perhaps some of my readers may attempt to deny or extenuate the charge, and may plead that I have not been describing mankind, but some of the most abandoned of the species, who hardly deserve the name of men. But I have already provided against this exception. It is human nature I describe; and the vilest and the most profligate individuals cannot sin beyond the power and limits of that nature which they possess in common with the more mild and moderate. Though there may be a difference in the fruitfulness of trees, yet the production of one apple decides the nature of the tree upon which it grew as certainly as if it had produced a thousand: so in the present case, should it be allowed that these enormities cannot be found in *all persons*, (it would be a sufficient confirmation of what I have advanced, if they can be found in *any*; unless it could be proved, that those who appeared more wicked than others were of a different species from the rest. But I need not make this concession, they must be insensible indeed who do not feel something within them, so very contrary to our common notions of goodness, as would perhaps make them rather submit to be banished from human society, than to be compelled *bona fide* to disclose to their fellow-

creature every thought and desire which arises in their hearts.

Many useful reflections may be drawn from this unpleasing subject. We cannot at present conceive how much we owe to the guardian care of Divine Providence, that any of us are preserved in peace and safety for a single day in such a world as this. Live where we will, we have those near us, who, both by nature and the power which Satan has over them are capable of the most atrocious crimes. But he whom they know not restrains them so that they cannot do the things that they would. When he suspends the restraint, they act immediately; then we hear of murders, rapes and outrages. But did not the Lord reign with a strong hand, such evils would be perpetrated every hour, and no one would be safe in the house or in the field. His ordinance of civil government is one great means of preserving the peace of society; but this is in many cases inadequate. The heart of man when fully bent upon evil, will not be intimidated or stopt by gibbets and racks.

How wonderful is the love of God in giving his son to die for such wretches! And how strong and absolute is the necessity of a new birth, if we would be but happy! Can beasts and devils inherit the kingdom of God! The due consideration of this subject is likewise

needful to preserve believers in an humble, thankful, watchful frame of spirit. Such we once were, and such, with respect to the natural principle remaining in us, which the apostle calls the flesh, or the old man, we still are. The propensities of fallen nature are not eradicated in the children of God, though by grace they are made partakers of a new principle, which enables them in the Lord's strength, to resist and mortify the body of sin, so that it cannot reign in them. Yet they are liable to sad surprisals; and the histories of Aaron, David, Solomon, and Peter, are left on record, to teach us what evil is latent in the hearts of the best men, and what they are capable of doing if left but a little to themselves. "Lord what is man!"

I am, &c.

(2) *On Man in his Fallen State.*

Lord what is Man!

Dear Sir,

THE nature of fallen man agrees to the description the apostle has given us of his boasted wisdom: it is earthly, sensual, devilish. I have attempted some general delineation of it in the preceding letter; but

the height of its malignity cannot be properly estimated, unless we consider its actings with respect to the light of the gospel. The Jews were extremely wicked at the time of our Lord's appearance upon earth: Yet he said of them, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin;" that is, as the light and power of his ministry deprived them of all excuse for continuing in sin, so it proved the occasion of shewing their wickedness in the most aggravated manner; and all their other sins were but faint proofs of the true state of their hearts, if compared with the discovery they made of themselves by their pertinacious opposition to *him*. In this sense, what the apostle has observed of the law of Moses, may be applied to the gospel of Christ: it entered that sin might abound. If we would estimate the utmost exertions of human depravity, and the strongest effects it is capable of producing, we must select our instances from the conduct of those to whom the gospel is known. The Indians who roast their enemies alive, give sufficient proof that man is *barbarous to his own kind*; which may likewise be demonstrated without going so far from home; but the preaching of the gospel discovers, *the enmity of the heart against God*, in ways and degrees, of which unenlightened savages and heathens are not capable of.

By the gospel, I now mean not merely the doctrine of salvation, as it lies in the holy scripture, but that public and authoritative dispensation of this doctrine which the Lord Jesus Christ has committed to his true ministers ; who having been themselves, by the power of his grace, brought out of darkness into marvellous light are by his Holy Spirit qualified and sent forth to declare to their fellow sinners, what they have seen, and felt, and tasted, of the word of life. Their commission is, to exalt the Lord alone, to stain the pride of all human glory.

They are to set forth the evil and demerit of sin, the strictness, spirituality, and sanction of the law of God, the total apostacy of mankind ; and from these premises to demonstrate the utter impossibility of a sinner's escaping condemnation by any works or endeavors of his own ; and then to proclaim a full and free salvation from sin and wrath, by faith in the name, blood, obedience, and mediation of God manifest in the flesh ; together with a denunciation of eternal misery to all who shall finally reject the testimony which God has given of his Son. Though these several branches of the will of God respecting sinners, and other truths in connection with them, are plainly revealed and repeatedly inculcated in the Bible ; and though the Bible is to be found in almost every house,

yet we see, in fact, it is as a sealed book, little read, little understood, and therefore but little regarded, except in those places which the Lord is pleased to favor with ministers who can confirm them from their own experience, and who, by a sense of his constraining love, and the worth of souls, are animated to make the faithful discharge of their ministry the one great business of their lives : who aim not to possess the wealth, but to promote the welfare of their hearers ; are equally regardless of the frowns or smiles of the world ; and count not their lives dear, so that they may be wise and successful in winning souls to Christ.

When the gospel in this sense of the word, first comes to a place, though the people are going on in sin they may be said to sin ignorantly ; they have not yet been warned of their danger. Some are drinking down iniquity like water ; others more soberly burying themselves in cares of business of the world ; others find a little time for what they call religious duties, which they persevere in, though they are utter strangers to the nature or the pleasure of spiritual worship partly, as thereby they think to bargain with God, and to make amends for such sins as they do not chuse to relinquish ; and partly because it gratifies their pride, and affords them (as they think) some ground for saying, "God, I thank thee I am not as other men." The preached

gospel declares the vanity and danger of these several ways which sinners chuse to walk in. It declares, and demonstrates, that different as they appear from each other, they are equally remote from the path of safety and peace, and all tend to the same point the destruction of those who persist in them. At the same time it provides against that despair into which men would be otherwise plunged, when convinced of their sins by revealing the immense love of God, the glory and grace of Christ, and inviting all to come to him, that they may obtain pardon, life and happiness. In a word, it shews the pit of hell under men's feet, and opens the gate and points out the way to heaven. Let us now briefly observe the effects it produces in those who do not receive it as the power of God unto salvation. These effects are various, as tempers and circumstances vary, but they may all lead us to adopt the Psalmist's exclamation, "Lord what is man!"

Many who have heard the gospel once or a few times, will hear it no more; it awakens their scorn, their hatred and rage. They pour contempt upon the wisdom of God, despise his goodness, defy his power; and their very looks express the spirit of the rebellious Jews, who told the prophet Jeremiah to his face, "As to the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will

not hearken to thee at all." The ministers who preach it, are accounted men that turn the world upside down ; and the people who receive it, fools or hypocrites. The word of the Lord is a burden to them, and they hate it with a perfect hatred. How strongly is the disposition of the natural heart manifested, by the confusion which often takes place in families, where the Lord is pleased to awaken one or two in a house, while the rest remain in their sins ! To profess, or even to be suspected of an attachment to the gospel of Christ, is frequently considered and treated as the worst of crimes, sufficient to cancel the strongest obligations of relation or friendship. Parents, upon such a provocation, will hate their children, and children ridicule their parents : many find, agreeable to our Lord's declaration, that from the time a sense of his love engaged their hearts to love him again, their worst foes have been those of their own household ; and that they who expressed the greatest love or tenderness for them before their conversion, can now hardly bear to see them.

The bulk of a people will perhaps continue to hear, at least now and then ; and to those who do, the spirit of God usually, at one time or other, bears testimony to the truth : their consciences are struck, and for a season they believe and tremble. But what is the

consequence? No man who has taken poison seeks more earnestly or speedily for an antidote, than those do for something to stifle and smother their convictions. They run to company, to drink, to any thing, for relief against the unwelcome intrusion of serious thoughts; and when they succeed and recover their former indifference, they rejoice as if they had escaped from great danger. The next step, is to ridicule their own convictions; and next to that, if they see any of their acquaintance under the same impressions, to use every art, and strain every nerve, that they may render them as obstinate as themselves. For this purpose they watch as a fowler for the bird, flatter or revile, tempt or threaten, and if they can prevail, and are the occasion of hardening any of their sins, they rejoice and triumph, as if they accounted it their interest and their glory to ruin the souls of their fellow creatures.

By frequent hearing they receive more light. They are compelled to know, whether they will or not, that the wrath of God hangs over the children of disobedience. They carry a sting in their consciences and at times feel themselves most miserable, and cannot but wish they had never been born, or that they had been dogs or toads rather than rational creatures. Yet they harden themselves still more. They affect to be happy and at

ease, and force themselves to wear a smile when anguish preys upon their hearts. They blaspheme the way of truth, watch for the faults of professors, and with a malicious joy publish and aggravate them. They see perhaps how the wicked die, but are not alarmed; they see the righteous die, but are not moved. Neither providences nor ordinances, mercies nor judgments, can stop them; for they are determined to go on and perish with their eyes open, rather than submit to the gospel.

But they do not always openly reject the gospel truths. Some who profess to approve and receive them, do thereby discover the evils of the heart of man, if possible, in a yet stronger light. They make Christ the minister of sin, and turn his grace into licentiousness. Like Judas, they say, Hail Master, and betray him. This is the highest pitch of iniquity. They pervert all the doctrines of the gospel. From election they draw an excuse for continuing in their evil ways; and contend for salvation without works, because they love not obedience. They extol the righteousness of Christ, but hold it in opposition to personal holiness. In a word, because they hear that God is good, they determine to persist in evil. "Lord what is man!"

Thus wilful and impenitent sinners go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. The word which they despise becomes to them a favor of death unto death. They take different courses, but all are travelling down to the pit; and, unless sovereign mercy interpose, will soon sink to rise no more. The final event is usually twofold. Many, after they have been more or less shaken by the word, settle in formality. If hearing would supply the place of faith, love, and obedience, they would do well; but by degrees they become sermon proof: the truths which once struck them lose their power by being often heard; and thus multitudes live and die in darkness, though the light has long shone around them. Others are more openly given up to a reprobate mind. Contempt of the gospel makes Infidels, Deists, and Atheists. They are filled with a spirit of delusion to believe a lie. These are scoffers walking after their own lusts; for where the principles of religion are given up, the conduct will be vile and abominable. Such persons sport themselves with their own deceivings, and strongly prove the truth of the gospel while they dispute against it. We often find that people of this cast have formerly been the subjects of strong convictions; but when the evil spirit has seemed to depart for a season, and returns again, the last state of that person is worse than the first.

Is it not possible that some of my readers may meet with their own characters under one or other of the views I have given of the desperate wickedness of the heart, in its actings against the truth? May the spirit of God constrain them to read with attention! Your case is dangerous, but I would hope not utterly desperate. Jesus is mighty to save. His grace can pardon the most aggravated offences, and subdue the most inveterate habits of sin. The gospel you have hitherto slighted, resisted, or opposed, is still the power of God unto salvation. The blood of Jesus upon which you have hitherto trampled, speaks better things than the blood of Abel, and is of virtue to cleanse those whose sins are as scarlet and crimson, and to make them white as snow. As yet you are spared; but it is high time to stop, to throw down your arms of rebellion, and humble yourselves at his feet. If you do, you may yet escape. But if not, know assuredly that wrath is coming upon you to the uttermost; and you will shortly find, to your unspeakable dismay, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,

I am, &c.

To a gay friend, on his recovery from illness.

Dear Sir,

I SUPPOSE you will receive many congratulations on your recovery from your late dangerous illness ; most of them perhaps more sprightly and better turned, but none, I persuade myself, more sincere and affectionate than mine, I beg you would prepare yourself by this good opinion of me, before you read further ; and let the reality of my regard excuse what you may dislike in my manner of expressing it.

When a person is returned from a doubtful, distant voyage, we are naturally led to enquire into the incidents he has met with, and the discoveries he has made. Indulge me in a curiosity of this kind especially as my affections give me an interest and concern in the event. You have been, my friend upon the brink, on the very edge of an eternal state : but God has restored you back to the world again. Did you meet with, or have you brought back. nothing *new* ? Did nothing occur to stop or turn your usual train of thought ? Were your apprehensions of invisible things exactly the same in the height of your disorder, when you were cut off from the world and all its engagements, as when you were,

in perfect health, and in the highest enjoyment of your own inclinations? If you answer me, "Yes, all things are just the same as formerly, the difference between sickness and health only excepted?" I am at a loss how to reply; I can only sigh and wonder; *sigh*, that it should be thus with any, that it should be thus with you whom I dearly love; and *wonder*, since this unhappy case, strange as it seems in one view, is yet so frequent, why it was not thus always with myself; for long and often it was just so. Many a time, when sickness has brought me, as we say, to death's door, I was as easy and insensible as the sailor, who, in the height of a storm, should presume to sleep on the top of the mast, quite regardless that the next tossing wave might plunge him into the raging ocean, beyond all possibility of relief. But at length a day came, which, though the most terrible day I ever saw, I can look back upon with thankfulness and pleasure: I say, the time came, when in such a helpless extremity, and under the expectation of immediate death, It pleased God to command the veil from my eyes, and I saw things in some measure as they really were. Imagine with yourself, a person trembling upon the point of a dreadful precipice, a powerful and inexorable enemy eager to push him down, and an assemblage of all that is horrible waiting at the bottom for

his fall ; even this will give you but a faint representation of the state of my mind at that time. Believe me, it was not a whim or a dream, which changed my sentiments and conduct, but a powerful conviction which will not admit the least doubt ; an evidence which, like that I have of my own existence, I cannot call in question without contradicting all my senses. And though my case was in some respects uncommon, yet something like it is known by one and another every day : and I have myself conversed with many, who after a course of years spent in defending Deistical principles, or indulging libertine practices, when they have thought themselves confirmed in their schemes by the full assent of what they then deemed impartial reason, have been like me brought to glory in the cross of Christ, and to live by that faith which they had before slighted and opposed. By these instances, I know that nothing is too hard for the Almighty. The same power which humbled me, can undoubtedly bring down the most haughty infidel upon earth. And as I likewise knew, that, to shew his power, he is often pleased to make use of weak instruments. I am encouraged, notwithstanding the apparent difficulty of succeeding, to warn those over whom friendship or affection gives me any influence, of the evil and the danger of a course of life formed upon the

prevailing maxims of the world. So far as I neglect this, I am unfaithful in my professions both to God and man.

I shall not at present trouble you in an argumentative way. If by dint of reasoning I could effect some change in your notions, my arguments, unless applied by a superior power, would still leave your heart unchanged or untouched. A man may give his assent to the gospel, and be able to defend it against others, and yet not have his own spirit influenced by it. This thought I shall leave with you, that if your scheme be not true to a demonstration, it must necessarily be false; for the issue is too important to make a doubt on the dangerous side tolerable. If the Christian could be possibly mistaken, he is still upon equal terms with those who pronounce him to be so: but if the Deist be wrong, (that is if we are in the right,) the consequence to him, must be unavoidable and intolerable. This, you will say, is a trite argument; I own it, but, beaten as it is, it will never be worn out or answered.

Permit me to remind you that the points in debate between us are already settled in themselves, and that our talking cannot alter or affect the nature of things; for they will be as they are, whatever apprehensions we may form of them; and remember likewise,

that we must all, each one for himself, experience on which side the truth lies. I used a wrong word when I spoke of your *recovery*; my dear friend look upon it only as a *reprieve*; for you carry the sentence of death about with you still; and unless you should be cut off (which God in his mercy forbid!) by a sudden stroke, you will as surely lie upon a death-bed as you have been now raised from a bed of sickness. And remember likewise, (how can I bear to write it!) that, should you neglect my admonitions, they will, notwithstanding, have an effect upon you, tho' not such an effect as I could wish. They will render you more inexcusable. I have delivered my own soul by faithfully warning you: but if you will not examine the matter with that seriousness it calls for; if you will not look up to God, the former of your body, and the preserver of your spirit, for direction and assistance how to please him: if you will have your reading and conversation only on one side of the question; if you determine to let afflictions and dangers, mercies and deliverances, all pass without reflections and improvement; if you will spend your life as though you thought you were sent into the world only to eat, sleep, and play, and after a course of years, to be extinguished like the snuff of a candle;—Why, then, you must abide the consequences. But assuredly, sooner or later,

God will meet you. My hearty, daily prayer is, that it may be in a way of mercy, and that you may be added to the number of the trophies of his invincible grace.

I am, &c.

That true Religion is necessary, in order to the best enjoyment of the pleasures of the present life.

TO A GAY FRIEND.

Dear Sir,

THOUGH I truly love you, and have no reason to doubt of the reality of your friendship to me, yet I cannot but apprehend that notwithstanding our mutual regard, and my frequent attempts to be witty (if I could) for your diversion, there is a something in most of my letters (which I cannot, dare not wholly suppress) that disgusts and wearies you, and makes you less inclined to keep up a frequent intercourse, than you would otherwise be. Rather than lose you quite, I will in general spare you as much as I can; but at present you must bear with me, and allow me full scope. You have given me a chal-

lenge, which I know not how to pass over : and since you so far justify my preaching as to condescend to preach (in your way) yourself, permit me for this time to preach again, and to take some passages in your letter for my text.

In the present debate I will accept your compliment, and suppose myself to be, as you say, a man of sense. You allow, then, that all the sense is not on your side. This indeed you cannot deny ; for whatever becomes of me, it is needless to tell you, that Hale, Boyle, and other great names I could mention, were men of as great penetration and judgment, had as good opportunities, and took as much pains to be informed of the truth as any of the advocates for infidelity can pretend to. And you cannot with any modesty or consistence absolutely determine, that they had not as good grounds for thinking themselves right, as you can have for concluding they were wrong.

But declining the advantage of human authority, I am content the point should rest between you and me. And here I beg you to observe, that I have one evident advantage over you in judging, namely, that I have experienced the good and evil on *both* sides, and you only on *one*. If you were to send me an inventory of your pleasures, how charmingly your time runs on, and how dexterously it is

divided between the coffee-house, play-house, the card-table, and tavern, with intervals of balls, concerts, &c. I could answer, that most of these I have tried and tried again, and know the utmost they can yield, and have seen enough of the rest, most heartily to despise them all. Setting religion entirely out of the question, I profess I had rather be a worm to crawl upon the ground, than to bear the name of MAN upon the poor terms of whiling away my life in an insipid round of such insignificant and unmanly trifles. I will return your own expression—I believe you to be a person of sense, but alas! how do you prostitute your talents and capacity; how far do you act below yourself, if you know no higher purpose of life than these childish dissipations, together with the more serious business of rising early and sitting up late, to amass money, that you may be able to enlarge your expences. I am sure, while I lived in these things, I found them unsatisfying and empty to the last degree; and the only advantage they afforded (miserable are they who are forced to deem it an advantage) was, that they often relieved me from the trouble and burden of thinking. If you have any other pleasures than these, they are such as must be evil and inconvenient even upon your own plan; and therefore my friendship will not allow me to bring them into the

account. I am willing to hope you do not stoop still lower in pursuit of satisfaction. Thus far we stand upon even ground. You know all that a life of pleasure can give, and I know it likewise.

On the other hand, if I should attempt to explain to you the source and streams of *my* best pleasures, such as comfortable assurance of the pardon of my sins, an habitual communion with the God who made heaven and earth, a calm reliance on the Divine Providence, the cheering prospect of a better life in a better world, with the pleasing foretastes of heaven in my own soul ; should I, or could I, tell you the pleasure I often find in reading the scripture, in the exercise of prayer, and in that sort of preaching and conversation which you despise ; I doubt not but you would think as meanly of my happiness as I do of your's. But here lies the difference, my dear friend, you condemn that which you have never tried. You know no more of these things than a blind man does of colors ; and notwithstanding all your flourishes, I defy you to be at all times able to satisfy yourself, that things may not possibly be as I have represented them.

Besides, what do I lose upon my plan, that should make me so worthy of your pity ? Have you a quicker relish in the prudent use of temporal comforts ! Do you think I do

not eat my food with as much pleasure as you can do, though perhaps with less cost and variety? Is your sleep sounder than mine? Have not I as much satisfaction in social life? It is true, to join much with the gay fluttering tribe, who spend their days in laugh and sing-song is equally contrary to my duty and inclination. But I have friends and acquaintance as well as you. Among the many who favor me with their esteem and friendship, there are some who are persons of sense, learning, wit, and (what perhaps may weigh as much with you) of fortune and distinction. And if you should say, "Aye, but they are all enthusiasts like yourself," you would say nothing to the purpose; since upon your maxim, that "happiness is according to opinion," it cannot be an objection, but the contrary, to have my acquaintance to my own taste. Thus much for the brighter side of your situation; or let me add one thing more. I know you have thoughts of marriage: do you think if you should enter into this relation, your principles are calculated to make you more happy in it than I am? You are well acquainted with our family life. Do you propose to know more of the peace and heart-felt joy of domestic union than I have known, and continue to know, to this hour? I wish you may equal us; and if you do, we shall still be as before, but upon even

ground. I need not turn a Deist to enjoy the best and the most that this life can afford.

But I need not tell you that the present life is not made up of pleasurable incidents only. Pain, sickness, losses, disappointments, injuries, and affronts with men, will more or less, at one time or other, be our lot. And can you bear these trials better than I? You will not pretend to it. Let me appeal to yourself: How often do you toss and disquiet yourself like a wild bull in a net, when things cross your expectations? As your thoughts are more engrossed with what you see, you must be more keenly sensible of what you feel. You cannot view these trials as appointed by a wise and heavenly Father in subservience to your good; you cannot taste the sweetness of his promises, nor feel the secret supports of his strength, in an hour of affliction; you cannot so cast your burden and care upon him, as to find a sensible relief to your spirit thereby; nor can you see his hand engaged and employed in effecting your deliverance. Of these things you know no more than of the art of flying; but I seriously assure you, and I believe my testimony will go farther with you than my judgment, that they are realities, and that I have found them to be so. When my worldly concerns have been most thorny and discouraging, I have

once and again felt the most of that peace which the world can neither give nor take away. However, I may state the case still lower. You do pretty well among your friends; but how do you like being alone? Would you not give something for that happy secret, which could enable you to pass a rainy day pleasantly, without the assistance of business, company, or amusement? Would it not mortify you greatly to travel for a week in an unfrequented road, where you should meet with no lively incidents to recruit and raise your spirits? Alas! what a poor scheme of pleasure is yours, that will not support an interval of reflection

What you have heard is true; I have a few friends who meet at my house once a fortnight, and we spend an hour or two in worshipping the God who made us. And can this move your indignation, or your compassion? Does it shew a much nobler spirit, a more refined way of thinking, to live altogether without God in the world? If I kept a card-assembly at those times, it would not displease you. How can you as a person of sense, avoid being shocked at your own unhappy prejudice? But I remember how it was once with myself, and forbear to wonder. May he who has opened my eyes, open yours. He only can do it. I do not expect to convince you by any thing I can

say as of myself; but if he be pleased to make use of me as his instrument, then you will be convinced. How should I then rejoice ! I should rejoice to be useful to any one, but especially to you, whom I dearly love. May God shew you your true self, and your true state ; then you will attentively listen to what you disdain to hear of, -his goodness in providing redemption and pardon for the chief of sinners, through him who died upon the cross for sins not his own. Keep this letter by you at my request ; and when you write tell me that you received it in good part ; and that you still believe me to be, &c.

EXTRACTS.

No. I.

WHEN the mind is regenerated, and a new heart given, divine things will appear in a new light ; and the heart will exercise itself in quite a new manner. The first thing that now presents itself to the mind, is the omnipresent the glorious God, the sum of all being and excellence. Now the heart sees and feels that there is a God, with a conviction and assurance that it never had before ; and is entertained and fixed in a calm, sweet view, and sense of greatness, majesty, wisdom, goodness, excellence, glory, with which it is captivated and charmed. Now the person finds himself surrounded with Diety, and sees God manifesting himself every where, and in every thing. The sun, moon, and stars ; the clouds, the mountains, the trees, the fields, the grass ; and every creature and thing, conspire in silent, yet clear, powerful, and striking language, to declare to him the being, perfections and glory of God. Now he sees he never before really believed there was a God. He never had any idea and sense of such a being before, nor received the abun-

dant and all-convincing evidence of his being and perfections.

In this view he sinks into nothing, as it were, before this great and glorious being; and his heart is filled with a sense of the glorious greatness and excellence of God, and his infinite worthiness to be loved, obeyed, and honored by all intelligent creatures.—Now, therefore, he sees the reasonableness and excellence of that law which requires all to love him with all their hearts: so the divine law comes into view, in all its justice, goodness and glory. His heart approves of it as most worthy to be maintained and honored, while it requires perfect, persevering love and obedience, on pain of eternal damnation. He therefore now sees the infinite evil of sin: its infinite odiousness and ill desert: and in this view, sees his own sinfulness and vileness, and sinks down, as it were, infinitely low, in a sense of his own infinite odiousness and guilt; and hates, judges, and condemns himself; heartily acknowledging the justice of his condemnation, feeling himself most righteously cast off forever, into eternal misery: and therefore in himself, wholly lost, and infinitely miserable.

And when he sees what he has done, how he has broken and dishonored the divine law; and despised and contemned God, and trampled on his most sacred authority; how

infinitely unreasonable, and injurious to the divine character he has been, he desires and wishes with all his heart that the mighty breach could be made up, and the injury repaired and removed ; that the blot he has cast on the glorious character of God might be wiped off, and full recompence and atonement made : and he has not the least wish that he might be pardoned and obtained the favor of God in any other way. And he immediately sees and feels that he is infinitely far from any possibility of doing this himself ; that he is infinitely in debt, and has nothing to pay ; has nothing but infinite vileness, unworthiness and guilt to offer, which can only pull down divine vengeance on his head ; that his repentance, however sincere, can do nothing towards making up the breach, or in the least degree atone for the least sin. He is, therefore, far from any disposition or thought, to attempt to offer any thing of his own, by which he might obtain the forgiveness of his sins, and the favor of God, which now appears infinitely important and desirable. Thus the law comes, sin revives, and he dies.

And now he is prepared to receive the good news reported in the gospel, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world !" This is good tidings of great joy. Behold the son of God, who

is equal with God, and is God, who himself made the world, is become a man ; has been in the world, and by his own obedience and sufferings unto death, has made full reparation and atonement for sin ; is risen from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, to give repentance and remission of sins ; and is ready to pardon and save all that come unto him, to which all, even the most guilty and vile, are freely invited ! Now the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shines in his heart, and the character of the Mediator appears to him in all its fulness and glory : and the way of salvation by Christ appears wise, excellent, and glorious, and pleases, rejoices, and charms his heart. And in a sense of his own infinite unworthiness, vileness, and guilt, he puts his whole trust in him for pardon and salvation, deliverance from the guilt and power and pollution of sin, “ desiring to be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

And while he attends to the dignity and excellence of Christ's person, and sees what he has done and suffered to obey and honor the divine law, and make atonement for sin, and sees, and tastes the wonderful amazing goodness of God and the Redeemer, exer-

cised and manifested in this redemption, his sense of the worthiness of the law of God, and the infinite vileness of sin, rises higher and higher ; and his heart is more and more warmed with love to God and the Redeemer, and filled with hatred and abhorrence of sin : and is especially broken in repentance and self-abhorrence, in a sense of his amazing ingratitude and vileness in neglecting and opposing this way of salvation, and slighting and rejecting such a Saviour.

And now with all his heart he renounces the ways of sin, and with pleasure and strength of soul gives himself up to God through Jesus Christ to serve and obey him forever : feeling it to be the happiest thing in the world, the greatest privilege he can imagine, to be wholly devoted to God in all the ways of strict and pure religion and holy obedience.

In these views and exercises of heart, active conversion from sin to God does consist. And all this is implied in faith in Jesus Christ, or receiving him, and believing on his name. And every one in whose mind these things do not take place, in the sum and substance of them, is not converted or born of God. Though I pretend not to say that the views and exercises of every one that is converted, do *sensibly* take place exactly in the order and connection in which I have now placed them, so that every true convert

shall be able to recollect that these things passed in his mind just so, and in this order from step to step: yet he must be sensible that all this has taken place in his heart and abides with him. And it may be demonstrated that they do in *fact* take place in this connection and order, and that there is no other possible way: though all may be so much at once, if I may so speak, and the exercises of the mind may be so quick, as not to be attended with any consciousness of their being in this particular arrangement.

But to proceed,——

The person of whom I am speaking is now become a *truly humble person*, in a sense of his own meanness, vileness, and infinite unworthiness and guilt, and his absolute dependance on God for strength and righteousness. This lays him low before God, and he is disposed to walk humbly with him, working out his own salvation *with fear and trembling*, i. e. in a sense of his own nothingness, weakness, and insufficiency with respect to any good things, and his perfect, continual, and as it were, infinite dependance on God, who alone worketh in him to will and to do. And as he has a more full, clear and constant view and sense of his own amazing vileness and misery than he can have of others, he is naturally disposed, in lowliness of mind, to prefer others

to himself, and lead a meek and humble conduct and behavior among men.

And he has now a new view and sense of the truth, divinity, excellence, and sweetness of the word of God, and he delights in the holy scriptures, and is disposed to meditate therein day and night. They are more precious to him than much fine gold, and sweeter than the honey and the honey comb. He now becomes a devout and zealous worshipper of God. With pleasure, he daily enters into his closet, and prays to, and praises him who sees in secret; and would not be deprived of this privilege for all the kingdoms in the world. He loves to join with christians in social prayer and religious conversation. And his feet run with constancy and eagerness to the place of public worship, where he devoutly joins in prayer and praise; and, with great attention, hears the word preached, receives instruction, and is quickened thereby.

And as he has given himself up to God sincerely and without reserve, he is from hence naturally led to desire to do it publicly, by espousing the cause of God, and appearing on his side, as a disciple and follower of Christ before the world, by a public profession of religion. And it appears to him to be a great privilege to be among the number of God's visible people, to be united with

them, and have the advantage of their christian watch and care. And without delay he joins with them, and attends on all Christ's holy institutions.

And in this change he becomes a friend to mankind, and his heart is filled with love to them. This effectually, and at once, cures him of all the ways of deceit, injustice, and injuriousness in his concerns and dealings with his neighbor, of which the world is so full, and which are so common among professing christians. And he is immediately possessed with that harmlessness, honesty, sincerity, truth, integrity, and faithfulness of heart, which is peculiar to a true christian. And he is not only just and upright ; but his heart is full of goodness, kind affection, tenderness, and mercy, which prompts him to do good to all as he has opportunity ; especially to seek and promote, in all the ways he can, the welfare of their souls in their eternal salvation.

In a word, he heartily devotes himself to the service of God and his fellow men, as his whole and only business. And to this end is faithful and diligent in his own proper station and calling ; " not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord." And in these things he perseveres and makes progress to the end of life ; for conversion is but the beginning of the same thing which is

carried on and makes advance into perfect holiness.

This is a short imperfect sketch of the true convert, the new man, who is born of the spirit of God.

EXTRACT.

No. II.

FOR some time after I was brought under concern for my soul, my heart rose against the doctrine of election to a high degree. I was disposed to call God a hard master, and to scruple the equality of his ways. But, before I obtained any satisfaction, that I had experienced a change of heart, I was brought to lay down my arms. I saw myself so vile as justly to deserve everlasting ruin. And I saw such fitness in the character and government of God, such propriety in his doing what he will with his own, that I chose to be in his hands, and to refer the disposal of my future state entirely to his pleasure. My first comfort arose from a view of the perfection of God; his sovereign right to dispose of all creatures; the certainty

that he would do me no wrong, and that he would dispose of me, and every other creature, in that way which should be most for his own glory and the general good of his kingdom. At this time I had no apprehension that my sins were forgiven. I continued some days in this situation, loathing myself, and wondering at the patience of God, in keeping me out of hell. My distress was now exceedingly different from what it had been in the former part of my concern. Instead of being distressed with fears of endless wrath, my sins were now the burden of my mind. Not because I had sinned against myself; but because I had sinned against the holy and benevolent God, who does all things well. At length, one evening, while I was pouring out my soul before the Lord; acknowledging his righteousness, and lamenting my own iniquities; I had a view of Jesus Christ as the Father's beloved, and one who was mighty to save, even the chief of sinners. The way of salvation by him appeared astonishingly glorious, honorable for God, and safe for men. The beauties of holiness, with which his character is adorned, appeared lovely in my eyes. My soul was filled with a mixture of wonder and delight. And the more I contemplated upon this amiable character, the greater my own vileness appeared. And the more ready he appeared to save me, the more unworthy

I felt myself, of his salvation. Then reflecting upon the temper of my mind, and the discoveries which had been made to my soul, I could not but entertain some hope that my heart was renewed, my sins pardoned, and that, through grace, I should be admitted to spend eternity in the enjoyment of Christ, and in celebrating the praises of redeeming love.

In these delightful hours I thought I could never more turn my attention to earthly objects; and I almost wished for wings, that I might fly away and be at rest. But since that time I have found so much pride in my heart, and have been so easily captivated by the allurements of the world, and diverted from the path of duty, that I have at times been ready to give up my hope as vain and delusive. At other times I find sweet delight in the service of God, and in contemplating upon his amiable character and admirable government; and have such longings of soul for a perfect dwelling in God, and such a change in my mind, as to the objects of my delight and aversion, that I am almost ready to say one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind now I see.

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No. III.

AS I was walking in a solitary place, I was brought to see myself lost and helpless. And here, in a mournful melancholy state was attempting to pray ; but found no heart to engage in that, or any other duty ; my former concern, and exercise, and religious affections were now gone. I thought the Spirit of God had quite left me ; but still was not distressed ; yet disconsolate, as if there was nothing in heaven or earth could make me happy. And having been thus endeavoring to pray (though being, as I thought, very stupid and senseless) for near half an hour, (and by this time the sun was about half an hour high, as I remember) then, as I was walking in a dark thick grove, unspeakable glory seemed to open to the view and apprehension of my soul : I do not mean any external brightness, for I saw no such thing ; nor do I intend any imagination of a body of light, some where away in the third heavens, or any thing of that nature ; but it was a new inward apprehension or view that I had of God, such as I never had before, nor any thing which had the least resemblance of it. I stood still, and wondered and

admired ! I knew that I never had seen before any thing comparable to it for excellency and beauty : It was widely different from all the conceptions that ever I had had of God, or things divine. I had no particular apprehension of any one person in the Trinity, either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost ; but it appeared to be divine glory that I then beheld : And my soul rejoiced with joy unspeakable, to see such a God, such a glorious divine Being ; and I was inwardly pleased and satisfied, that he should be God over all forever and forever. My soul was so captivated and delighted with the excellency, loveliness, greatness, and other perfections of God, that I was even swallowed up in him ; at least to that degree, that I had no thought (as I remember) at first, about my own salvation, and scarce reflected there was such a creature as myself.

Thus God, I trust brought me to a hearty disposition to exalt him, and set him on the throne, and principally and ultimately to aim at his honor and glory, as King of the Universe.

I continued in this state of inward joy and peace, yet astonishment, until near dark, without any sensible abatement ; and then began to think and examine what I had seen ; and felt sweetly composed in my mind all the evening following : I felt myself in a new world,

and every thing about me appeared with a different aspect from what it was wont to do.

At this time the way of salvation opened to me with infinite wisdom, suitableness, and excellency, that I wondered I should ever think of any other way of salvation ; was amazed that I had not dropped my own contrivances, and complied with this lovely, blessed, and excellent way before. If I could have been saved by my own duties, or any other way that I had formerly contrived, my whole soul would now have refused. I wondered that all the world did not see and comply with this way of salvation, entirely by the righteousness of Christ.

The sweet relish of what I then felt, continued with me for several days, almost constantly in a greater or less degree : I could not but sweetly rejoice in God, lying down and rising up.

EXTRACT.

No. IV.

FROM my childhood up, my mind had been wont to be full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty,

in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased; leaving them eternally to perish, and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied, as to this sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men, according to his sovereign pleasure. But never could give an account, how, or by what means, I was thus convinced; not in the least imagining in the time of it, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's Spirit in it: but only that now I saw further, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness, of it. However, my mind rested in it; and it put an end to all those cavils and objections, that had till then abode with me, all the preceding part of my life and there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind with respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty, from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against God's sovereignty, in the most absolute sense, in shewing mercy to whom he will shew mercy, and hardening and eternally damning whom he will. God's absolute sovereignty and justice, with respect to salvation and damnation, is what my mind seems to rest assured of, as much

as of any thing that I see with my eyes ; at least it is so at times, But I have often times since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of God's sovereignty than I had then. I have often since, not only had a conviction, but a *delightful* conviction. The doctrine of God's sovereignty has very often appeared, an exceeding pleasant, bright and sweet doctrine to me : and absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God.

EXTRACT.

No. V.

EDWARDS' RESOLUTIONS.

BEING sensible that I am unable to do any thing without God's help, I do humbly intreat him by his grace, to enable me to keep these resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ sake.

Remember to read over these resolutions once a week.

1. Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory, and my own good, profit, and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the

time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence. Resolved to do whatever I think to be my duty, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved to do this, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many and how great soever.

2. Resolved, to be continually endeavoring to find out some new invention and contrivance to promote the fore-mentioned things.

3. Resolved, never to do any manner of thing, whether in soul or body, less or more, but what tends to the glory of God; nor be, nor suffer it, if I can avoid it.

4. Resolved, never to lose one moment of time; but improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.

5. Resolved, to live with all my might, while I do live.

6. Resolved, never to do any thing, which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.

7. Resolved, to think much on all occasions of my own dying, and of the common circumstances which attend death.

8. Resolved, when I think of any theorem in divinity to be solved, immediately to do what I can towards solving it, if circumstances don't hinder.

9. Resolved, to be endeavoring to find out fit objects of charity and liberality.

10. Resolved, never to do any thing out of revenge.

11. Resolved, never to suffer the least motions of anger to irrational beings.

12. Resolved, that I will live so as I shall wish I had done when I come to die.

13. Resolved, to live so at all times, as I think is best in my devout frames, and when I have clearest notions of things of the gospel, and another world.

14. Resolved, to maintain the strictest temperance in eating and drinking.

15. Resolved, never to do any thing, which if I should see in another, I should count a just occasion to despise him for, or to think any way the more meanly of him.

16. Resolved, whenever I do any conspicuously evil action, to trace it back, till I come to the original cause; and then both carefully endeavor to do so no more, and to fight and pray with all my might against the original of it.

17. Resolved, to study the scriptures so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.

18. Resolved, to strive to my utmost every week to be brought higher in religion, and to a higher exercise of grace, than I was the week before.

19. Resolved, to be strictly and firmly faithful to my trust, that that in Prov. xx. 6.

newed, when I was received into the communion of the church; and which I have solemnly made this twelfth day of January, 1722—3.

28. Resolved, never hence-forward, till I die, to act as if I were any way my own, but entirely and altogether God's: agreeable to what is to be found in Saturday, Jan. 12.

29. Resolved, never to allow the least measure of any fretting uneasiness at my father or mother. Resolved to suffer no effects of it, so much as in the least alteration of speech, or motion of the eye: and to be especially careful of it with respect to any of our family.

30. Resolved, to endeavor to my utmost to deny whatever is not most agreeable to a good, and universally sweet and benevolent, quiet, peaceable, contented, easy, compassionate, generous, humble, meek, modest, submissive, obliging, diligent and industrious, charitable, even, patient, moderate, forgiving, sincere temper; and to do at all times what such a temper would lead me to. Examine strictly every week whether I have done so.

31. Resolved, constantly, with the utmost niceness and diligence, and the strictest scrutiny, to be looking into the state of my soul, that I may know whether I have truly an interest in Christ or no; that when I come to die, I may not have any negligence respecting this to repent of.

a faithful man who can find? may not be partly fulfilled in me.

20. Resolved always to do what I can towards making, maintaining, and establishing peace, when it can be without overbalancing detriment in other respects.

21. Resolved, in narrations, never to speak any thing but the pure and simple verity.

22. Resolved, never to speak evil of any, except I have some particular good call for it.

23. Resolved to enquire every night, as I am going to bed, wherein I have been negligent, what sin I have committed, and wherein I have denied myself; also at the end of every week, month, and year.

24. Resolved, never to speak any thing that is ridiculous, or matter of laughter on the Lord's day.

25. Resolved, never to do any thing that I so much question the lawfulness of, as that I intend at the same time, to consider and examine afterwards, whether it be lawful or no: except I as much question the lawfulness of the omission.

26. Resolved, to ask myself at the end of every day, week, month, and year, wherein I could possibly in any respect have done better.

27. Resolved, frequently to renew the dedication of myself to God, which was made at my baptism; which I solemnly re-

32. Resolved, I will act so as I think I shall judge would have been best, and most prudent, when I come into the future world.

33. I frequently hear persons in old age say how they would live if they were to live their lives over again: Resolved, that I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age.

34. Whenever I hear any thing spoken in conversation of any person, if I think it would be praise-worthy in me, Resolved to endeavor to imitate it.

35. Resolved, to endeavor to my utmost to act as I can think I should do, if I had already seen the happiness of heaven, and hell torments.

36. Resolved never to give over, nor in the least to slacken my sight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.

37. Resolved. when I fear misfortunes and adversities, to examine whether I have done my duty, and resolve to do it; and let it be just as Providence orders it, I will as far as I can, be concerned about nothing but my duty, and my sin.

38. Resolved never to do any thing but duty; and then according to Eph. vi, 6, 7, 8, do it willingly and cheerfully as unto the Lord, and not to man; knowing that whatever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord.

39. Resolved, very much to exercise myself in this all my life long, viz. with the greatest openness I am capable of, declare my ways to God, and lay open my soul to him: all my sins, temptations, difficulties, sorrows, fears, hopes, desires, and every thing, and every circumstance; according to Dr. Manton's 27th sermon on the 119th psalm.

40. Resolved, after afflictions, to enquire, what I am the better for them, what good I have got by them, and what I might have got by them.

THE END.