

THE  
**WORKS**  
OF  
**THE REV . JOHN NEWTON**

LATE RECTOR OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF  
ST. MARY WOOLNOTH AND ST. MARY WOOLCHURCH-HAW,  
LOMBARD STREET, LONDON.

---

CONTAINING  
AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE, &c.,  
LETTERS ON RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS,  
CARDIPHONIA, DISCOURSES INTENDED FOR THE PULPIT,  
SERMONS PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF OLNEY,  
A REVIEW OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, OLNEY HYMNS, POEMS,  
MESSIAH, OCCASIONAL SERMONS, AND TRACTS.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED  
**MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE, &c.**

BY THE REV. R. CECIL, A. M.

---

**COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.**

---

**EDINBURGH**

*Printed at the University Press, for*

**PETER BROWN AND THOMAS NELSON.**

---

1830.

MEMOIRS  
OF  
THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

---

PREFACE.

THE Memoirs of the Hon. and Rev. William Bromley Cadogan, and those of John Bacon, Esq. were written at the particular request of their relations. But in publishing these of the late Rev. JOHN NEWTON, I profess myself a volunteer; and my motives were the following:—When I perceived my venerable friend bending under a weight of years, and considered how soon, from the very course of nature, the world must lose so valuable an instructor and example; when I reflected how common it is for hasty and inaccurate accounts of extraordinary characters to be obtruded on the public by venal writers, whenever more authentic documents are wanting; above all, when I considered how striking a display such a life affords of the nature of true religion, of the power of divine grace, of the mysterious but all-wise course of divine providence, and of the encouragement afforded for our dependence upon that providence in the most trying circumstances; I say, on these accounts I felt, that the leading features of such a character should not be neglected, whilst it was easy to authenticate them correctly.

Besides which, I have observed a want of books of a certain class for young people; and have often been inquired of by Christian parents for publications that might amuse their families, and yet tend to promote their best interests. The number, however, of this kind which I have seen, and that appeared unexceptionable, is but small: For, as the characters and sentiments of some men become moral blights in society, men whose mouths seldom open but, like that of sepulchres, they discover the putridity they contain, and infect more or less whoever ventures within their baneful influence; so the reformed subject of these Memoirs was happily a remarkable instance of the reverse. The change that took place in his heart, after such a course of profligacy, affords a convincing demonstration of the truth and force of Christianity. Instead of proceeding as a blight in society, he became a blessing. His future course was a striking example of the beneficial effects of the Gospel; and that, not only from the pulpit and by his pen, but also by his conversation in the large circle of his acquaintance, of which there is, yet living, a multitude of witnesses.

Impressed, therefore, with the advantages which I conceived would result from the publication of these Memoirs, I communicated my design some years ago to Mr N. Whatever tended to promote that cause in which his heart had been long engaged, I was sure would not fail to obtain his concurrence. He accordingly promised to afford whatever materials might be necessary, beyond those which his printed Narrative contained. He promised also to read over and revise whatever was added from my own observation; and he soon after brought me an Account in writing, containing every thing memorable which he recollected before the commencement of his Narrative. I shall, therefore, detain the reader no longer than to assure him, that the whole of the following Memoirs (except what relates to Mr N.'s character) was submitted to him in MS., while he was capable of correcting it, and received his sanction.

## MEMOIRS,

&c. &c.

---

THESE Memoirs seem naturally to commence with the Account mentioned in the Preface, and which I here transcribe:—

“I was born in London, the 24th of July, 1725, old style. My parents, though not wealthy, were respectable. My father was many years master of a ship in the Mediterranean trade. In the year 1748 he went Governor of York Fort, in Hudson’s Bay, where he died in the year 1750.

“My mother was a Dissenter, a pious woman, and a member of the late Dr. Jennings’s church. She was of a weak, consumptive habit, and loved retirement; and as I was her only child, she made it the chief business and pleasure of her life to instruct me, and bring me up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I have been told, that from my birth she had, in her mind, devoted me to the ministry; and that, had she lived till I was of a proper age, I was to have been sent to St Andrews, in Scotland, to be educated. But the Lord had appointed otherwise. My mother died before I was seven years of age.

“I was rather of a sedentary turn, not active and playful, as boys commonly are, but seemed as willing to learn as my mother was to teach me. I had some capacity, and a retentive memory. When I was four years old, I could read (hard names excepted) as well as I can now; and could likewise repeat the answers to the questions in the Assembly’s Shorter Catechism, with the proofs; and all Dr. Watts’ smaller Catechisms, and his Children’s Hymns.

“When my father returned from sea, after my mother’s death, he married again. My new mother was the daughter of a substantial grazier at Aveley in Essex. She seemed willing to adopt and bring me up; but, after two or three years, she had a son of her own, who engrossed the old gentleman’s notice. My father was a very sensible and a moral man, as the world rates morality, but neither he nor my stepmother were under the impressions of religion; I was, therefore, much left to myself, to mingle with idle and wicked boys, and soon learnt their ways.

“I never was at school but about two years (from my eighth to my tenth year); it was a boarding-school at Stratford in Essex. Though my father left me much to run about the streets, yet, when under his eye, he kept me at a great distance. I am persuaded he loved me, but he seemed not willing that I should know it. I was with him in a state of fear and bondage. His sternness, together with the severity of my schoolmaster, broke and overawed my spirit,

and almost made me a dolt; so that part of the two years I was at school, instead of making progress, I nearly forgot all my good mother had taught me.

“The day I was eleven years old, I went on board my father’s ship in Longreach. I made five voyages with him to the Mediterranean. In the course of the last voyage, he left me some months at Alicant in Spain, with a merchant, a particular friend of his, with whom I might have done well, if I had behaved well. But by this time my sinful propensities had gathered strength by habit. I was very wicked, and therefore very foolish; and, being my own enemy, I seemed determined that nobody should be my friend.

“My father left the sea in the year 1742. I made one voyage afterwards to Venice before the mast; and soon after my return, was impressed on board the Harwich. Then began my awfully mad career, as recorded in the Narrative; to which, and to the Letters to a Wife, I must refer you for any farther dates and incidents.

“I am truly yours,

“JOHN NEWTON.

“DEC. 19, 1795.”

A few articles may be added to this account from the Narrative, where we find, that his pious mother “stored his memory with whole chapters, and smaller portions of Scripture, catechisms, hymns, and poems; and often commended him with prayers and tears to God also, that in his sixth year he began to learn Latin, though the intended plan of his education was soon broken; and that he lost this valuable parent, July 11, 1732.

We also find, that, after his father’s second marriage, he was sent to the school above mentioned, and in the last of the two years he spent there, a new usher came, who, observing and suiting his temper, he prosecuted Latin with great eagerness, and before he was ten years old, he had reached and maintained the first post in the second class, which, in that school, was Tully and Virgil. But by being pushed forward too fast, and not properly grounded (a method too common in inferior schools), he soon lost all he had learned.

In the next and most remarkable period of Mr. N.’s life, we must be conducted by the Narrative above mentioned. It has been observed, that at eleven years of age he was taken by his father to sea. His father was a man of remarkably good sense, and great knowledge of the world; he took much care of his son’s morals, but could not supply a mother’s part. The father had been educated at a Jesuits’ college, near Seville in Spain, and had an air of such distance and severity in his carriage as discouraged his son, who always was in fear, when before him, and which deprived him of that influence he might otherwise have had.

From this time to the year 1742, Mr. N. made several voyages, but at considerable intervals: these intervals were chiefly spent in the country, excepting a few months in his fifteenth year, when he was placed, with a very advantageous prospect, at Alicant, already mentioned.

About this period of his life, with a temper and conduct exceedingly various, he was often disturbed with religious convictions; and being from a child fond of reading, he met with Bennet's "Christian Oratory:" and though he understood little of it, the course of life it recommended, appeared very desirable. He therefore began to pray, to read the Scriptures, to keep a diary, and thought himself religious; but soon became weary of it, and gave it up. He then learned to curse and to blaspheme, and was exceedingly wicked when out of the view of his parents, though at so early a period.

Upon his being thrown from a horse near a dangerous hedge-row, newly cut, his conscience suggested to him the dreadful consequences of appearing in such a state before God. This put him, though but for a time, upon breaking off his profane practices; but the consequence of these struggles between sin and conscience was, that on every relapse he sunk into still greater depths of wickedness. He was roused again by the loss of a companion, who had agreed to go with him one Sunday on board a man-of-war. Mr. N. providentially coming too late, the boat had gone without him, and was upset, by which his companion and several others were drowned. He was exceedingly affected at the funeral of this companion, to think, that by the delay of a few minutes (which at the time occasioned much anger) his life had been preserved: but this also was soon forgotten. The perusal of the "Family Instructor" produced another temporary reformation. In short, he took up and laid aside a religious profession three or four different times before he was sixteen years of age.

"All this while," says he, "my heart was insincere; I often saw the necessity of religion, as a means of escaping hell, but I loved sin, and was unwilling to forsake it. I was so strangely blind and stupid, that sometimes, when I have been determined upon things, which I knew were sinful, I could not go on quietly till I had first dispatched my ordinary task of prayer, in which I have grudged every moment of the time; when this was finished, my conscience was in some measure pacified, and I could rush into folly with little remorse."

But his last reform was the most remarkable. "Of this period," says he, "at least of some part of it, I may say in the apostle's words, 'After the strictest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee.' I did everything 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, and in meditation and prayer. I fasted often: I even abstained from

all animal food for three months. I would hardly answer a question, for fear of speaking an idle word. I seemed to bemoan my former miscarriages very earnestly, and sometimes with tears: in short, I became an ascetic, and endeavoured, as far as my situation would permit, to renounce society, that I might avoid temptation.”

This reformation, it seems, continued for more than two years. “But,” he adds, “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.”

That it was a poor religion, and quite unlike that which he afterwards possessed, will appear from what immediately follows: for had it been taken up upon more scriptural ground, and been attended with that internal evidence and satisfaction, which true religion only brings, he could not so soon have fallen a dupe to such a writer as Shaftesbury. It was at a petty shop at Middleburgh, in Holland, that he first met with a volume of the *Characteristics*. The declamation, called by his Lordship a Rhapsody, suited the romantic turn of his mind. Unaware of its tendency, he imagined he had found a valuable guide. This book was always in his hand, till he could nearly repeat the Rhapsody. Though it produced no immediate effect, it operated like a slow poison, and prepared the way for all that followed.

About the year 1742, having lately come from a voyage, his father, not intending to return to sea, was contriving for Mr. N.’s settlement in the world. But to settle a youth, who had no spirit for business, who knew but little of men or things, who was of a romantic turn—a medley, as he expressed it, of religion, philosophy, and indolence, and quite averse to order—must prove a great difficulty. At length a merchant in Liverpool, an intimate friend of the father, and afterwards a singular friend to the son, offered to send him for some years to Jamaica, and undertook the charge of his future welfare. This was consented to, and preparation made for the voyage, which was to be prosecuted the following week. In the meantime, he was sent by his father, on some business, to a place, a few miles beyond Maidstone in Kent. But the journey, which was designed to last but three or four days, gave such a turn to his mind as roused him from his habitual indolence, and produced a series of important and interesting occurrences.

A few days before this intended journey, he received an invitation to visit some distant relations in Kent. They were particular friends of his mother, who died at their house; but a coolness having taken place upon his father’s second marriage, all intercourse between them had ceased. As his road lay within half a mile of the house, and he obtained his father’s leave to call on them, he went thither, and met with the kindest reception from these friends. They had two daughters: it seems the elder had been intended, by both the

mothers, for his future wife. Almost at the first sight of this girl, then under fourteen years of age, he was impressed with such an affection for her, as appears to have equalled all that the writers of romance have imagined.

“I soon lost,” says he, “all sense of religion, and became deaf to the remonstrances of conscience and prudence, but my regard for her was always the same; and I may, perhaps, venture to say, that none of the scenes of misery and wickedness I afterwards experienced, ever banished her a single hour together from my waking thoughts for the seven following years.”

His heart being now riveted to a particular object, everything with which he was concerned appeared in a new light. He could not now bear the thought of living at such a distance as Jamaica, for four or five years, and therefore determined not to go thither. He dared not communicate with his father on this point, but, instead of three days, he staid three weeks in Kent, till the ship had sailed, and then he returned to London. His father, though highly displeased, became reconciled, and in a little time he sailed with a friend of his father’s to Venice.

In this voyage, being a common sailor, and exposed to the company of his comrades, he began to relax from the sobriety which he had preserved, in some degree, for more than two years. Sometimes, pierced with convictions, he made a few faint efforts, as formerly, to stop; and though not yet absolutely profligate, he was making large strides towards a total apostasy from God. At length he received a remarkable check by a dream, which made a very strong, though not abiding, impression upon his mind.

I shall relate this dream in his own words, referring to the Narrative those who wish to know his opinion of dreams, and his application of this one in particular to his own circumstances:—

“The scene presented to my imagination was the harbour of Venice, where we had lately been. I thought it was night, and my watch upon the deck; and that, as I was walking to and fro by myself, a person came to me (I do not remember from whence) and brought me a ring, with an express charge to keep it carefully; assuring me, that while I preserved that ring I should be happy and successful: but, if I lost or parted with it, I must expect nothing but trouble and misery. I accepted the present and the terms willingly, not in the least doubting my own care to preserve it, and highly satisfied to have my happiness in my own keeping. I was engaged in these thoughts, when a second person came to me, and, observing the ring on my finger, took occasion to ask me some questions concerning it. I readily told him its virtues: and his answer expressed a surprise at my weakness, in expecting such effects from a ring. I think he reasoned with me 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, 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, at the same instant, a terrible fire burst out from a range of mountains (a part of the Alps), which appeared at some distance behind the city of Venice. I saw the hills as distinct as if awake, and that 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 a way. 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 (I am not certain which), came to me, 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 not time to answer, before I saw this unexpected friend go down under the water, just in the spot where I had dropped it, and he soon returned, bringing the ring with him: the moment he came on board, the flames in the mountains were extinguished, and my seducer left me. Then was 'the prey taken from the hand of the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered.' My fears were at an end, and with joy and gratitude I approached my kind deliverer to receive the ring again; but he refused to return it, and spoke to this effect, 'If you should be intrusted with this ring again, you would very soon bring yourself into the same distress; you are not able to keep it, but I will preserve it for you, and whenever it is needful will produce it in your behalf.' Upon this I awoke, in a state of mind not to be described: I could hardly eat, or sleep, or transact my necessary business for two or three days; but the impression soon wore off, and in a little time I totally forgot it; and I think it hardly occurred to my mind again till several years afterwards."

Nothing remarkable happened in the following part of that voyage. Mr. N. returned home in December, 1743, and, repeating his visit to Kent, protracted his stay in the same imprudent manner he had done before. This so disappointed his father's designs for his interest, as almost induced him to disown his son. Before anything suitable offered again, this thoughtless son, unmindful of the consequences of appearing in a check shirt, was marked by a lieutenant of the Harwich man-of-war, who immediately impressed and carried him on board a tender. This was at a critical juncture, as the French fleets were hovering upon our coast: so that his father was incapable of procuring

his release. A few days after, he was sent on board the Harwich at the Nore. Here a new scene of life was presented, and for about a month much hardship endured. As a war was daily expected, his father was willing he should remain in the navy, and procured him a recommendation to the captain, who sent him upon the quarter-deck as a midshipman. He might now have had ease and respect, had it not been for his unsettled mind and indifferent behaviour. The companions he met with here completed the ruin of his principles; though he affected to talk of virtue, and preserved some decency, yet his delight and habitual practice was wickedness.

His principal companion was a person of talents and observation, an expert and plausible infidel, whose zeal was equal to his address. "I have been told," says Mr. N., "that afterwards he was overtaken in a voyage from Lisbon in a violent storm; the vessel and people escaped, but a great sea broke on board, and swept him into eternity." Being fond of this man's company, Mr. N. aimed to discover what smattering of reading he had: his companion, observing that Mr. N. had not lost all the restraints of conscience, at first spoke in favour of religion; and having gained Mr. N.'s confidence, and perceiving his attachment to the Characteristics, he soon convinced his pupil that he had never understood that book. By objections and arguments Mr. N.'s depraved heart was soon gained. He plunged into infidelity with all his spirit; and, like an unwary sailor, who quits his post just before a rising storm, the hopes and comforts of the Gospel were renounced at the very time when every other comfort was about to fail.

In December 1744, the Harwich was in the Downs, bound to the East Indies. The captain gave Mr. N. leave to go on shore for a day; but, with his usual inconsideration, and following the dictates of a restless passion, he went to take a last leave of the object with which he was so infatuated. Little satisfaction attended the interview in such circumstances, and on new-year's day he returned to the ship. The captain was so highly displeased at this rash step, that it occasioned ever after the loss of his favour.

At length they sailed from Spithead, with a very large fleet. They put into Torbay, with a change of wind, but sailed the next day, on its becoming fair. Several of the fleet were lost at leaving the place, but the following night the whole fleet was greatly endangered upon the coast of Cornwall, by a storm from the southward. The ship on which Mr. N. was aboard escaped unhurt, though several times in danger of being run down by other vessels; but many suffered much: this occasioned their putting back to Plymouth.

While they lay at Plymouth, Mr. N. heard that his father, who had an interest in some of the ships lately lost, was come down to Torbay. He thought, that, if he could see his father, he might easily be introduced into a service which would be better than pursuing a long and uncertain voyage to the East

Indies. It was his habit in those unhappy days, never to deliberate; as soon as the thought occurred, he resolved to leave the ship at all events: he did so, and in the worst manner possible. He was sent one day in the boat to prevent others from desertion, but betrayed his trust, and deserted himself. Not knowing which road to take, and fearing to inquire, lest he should be suspected, yet having some general idea of the country, he found, after he had travelled some miles, that he was on the road to Dartmouth. That day, and part of the next, everything seemed to go on smoothly. He walked fast, and thought to have seen his father in about two hours, when he was met by a small party of soldiers, whom he could not avoid or deceive: they brought him back to Plymouth, through the streets of which he proceeded guarded like a felon. Full of indignation, shame, and fear, he was confined two days in the guard-house, then sent on ship-board, and kept a while in irons; next he was publicly stript and whipt, degraded from his office, and all his former companions forbidden to show him the least favour, or even to speak to him. As midshipman he had been entitled to command, in which (being sufficiently haughty and vain) he had not been temperate; but was now in his turn brought down to a level with the lowest, and exposed to the insults of all.

The state of his mind at this time can only be properly expressed in his own words:—

“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 former brethren were somewhat disposed to screen me from ill-usage; but during the little time I remained with them afterwards, I found them cool very fast in their endeavours to protect me. Indeed, they could not avoid such conduct, 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, and took several occasions to show it, and the voyage was expected to be (as it proved) for five years. Yet 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 hope 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, nor to listen to my complaint. Whether I looked inward or outward, I could perceive nothing but darkness and misery. I think no case, except that of a conscience wounded by the wrath of God, could be more dreadful than mine. I cannot

express with what wishfulness and regret I cast my last looks upon the English shore; I kept my eyes fixed upon it, till, the ship's distance increasing, it insensibly 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."

During his passage to Madeira, Mr. N. describes himself as a prey to the most gloomy thoughts; though he had deserved all, and more than all he had met with from the captain, yet pride suggested that he had been grossly injured; "and this so far," says he, "wrought upon my wicked heart, that I actually formed designs against his life, and that was one reason which made me willing to prolong my own. I was sometimes divided between the two, not thinking it practicable to effect both. The Lord had now to appearance given me up to judicial hardness; I was capable of anything. 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 with 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 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 now the only restraint I had left: though I neither feared God, nor regarded man, I could not bear that she should think meanly of me when I was dead."

Mr. N. had been at Madeira some time; and the business of the fleet being now completed, they were to sail the following day. On that memorable morning he happened to be late in bed, and would have continued to sleep, but that an old companion, a midshipman, came down, between jest and earnest, and bid him rise. As he did not immediately comply, the midshipman cut down the hammock in which he lay: this obliged him to dress himself; and though very angry, he durst not resent it, but was little aware that this person, without design, was a special instrument of God's providence. Mr. N. said little, but went upon deck, where he saw a man putting his clothes into a boat, who informed him he was going to leave the ship. Upon inquiry, he found that two men from a Guinea ship, which lay near them, had entered on board the Harwich, and that the commodore (the late Sir George Pocock) had ordered the captain to send two others in their room. Inflamed with this information, Mr. N. requested that the boat might be detained a few minutes; he then entreated the lieutenants to intercede with the captain, that he might be dismissed upon this occasion: though he had formerly behaved ill to these

officers, they were moved with pity, and were disposed to serve him. The captain, who had refused to exchange him at Plymouth, though requested by Admiral Medley, was easily prevailed with now. In little more than half an hour from his being asleep in bed, he found himself discharged, and safe on board another ship. The events depending upon this change, will show it to have been the most critical and important.

The ship he now entered was bound to Sierra Leone, and the adjacent parts of what is called the windward coast of Africa. The commander knew his father—received him kindly—and made professions of assistance; and probably would have been his friend, if, instead of profiting by his former errors, he had not pursued a course, if possible, worse. He was under some restraint on board the *Harwich*, but being now among strangers, he could sin without disguise. “I well remember,” says he, “that while I was passing from the one ship to the other, I rejoiced in the exchange, with this reflection, that I might now be as abandoned as I pleased, without any control; and from this time I was exceedingly vile indeed, little, if anything, short of that animated description of an almost irrecoverable state, which we have in 2 Pet. 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.” By this conduct he soon forfeited the favour of his captain: for, besides being careless and disobedient, upon some imagined affront, he employed his mischievous wit in making a song to ridicule the captain as to his ship, his designs, and his person; and he taught it to the whole ship’s company.

He thus proceeded for about six months, at which time the ship was preparing to leave the coast; but, a few days before she sailed, the captain died. Mr. N. was not upon much better terms with his mate, who succeeded to the command, and upon some occasion had treated him ill. He felt certain, that, if he went in the ship to the West Indies, the mate would have put him on board a man-of-war, a consequence more dreadful to him than death itself: to avoid this, he determined to remain in Africa, and pleased himself with imagining it would be an opportunity of improving his fortune.

Upon that part of the coast there were a few white men settled, whose business it was to purchase slaves, &c., and sell them to the ships at an advanced price: one of these, who had first landed in circumstances similar to Mr. N.’s, had acquired considerable wealth. This man had been in England, and was returning in the same vessel with Mr. N., of which he owned a quarter part. His example impressed Mr. N. with hopes of the same success, and he obtained his discharge, upon condition of entering into the trader’s service, to whose generosity he trusted without the precaution of terms. He received, however, no compensation for his time on board the ship, but a bill

upon the owners in England, who failing before his return, the bill was never paid; the day, therefore, on which the vessel sailed, he landed upon the island of Benaoes like one shipwrecked, with little more than the clothes upon his back.

“The two following years,” says he, “of which I am now to give some account, will seem as an absolute blank in my life: but I have seen frequent cause since to admire the mercy of God in banishing me to those distant parts, and almost excluding me from all 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. 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, but thought themselves too good to speak to me. I was as yet an outcast ready to perish, but the Lord beheld me with mercy—he even now 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.”

The reader will have a better idea of the situation Mr. N. was now in by his brief sketch of it.—

“From Cape de Verd, the most western point of Africa, to Cape Mount, the whole coast is full of rivers: the principal are the Gambia, Rio Grande, Sierra Leone, and Sherbro. Of the former, as it is well known, and as I was never there, I need say nothing. The Rio Grande (like the Nile) divides into many branches near the sea. On the most northerly, called Cacheo, the Portuguese have a settlement. The most southern branch, known by the name of Rio Nuna, is, or was, the usual boundary of the white men’s trade northward. Sierra Leone is a mountainous peninsula, uninhabited, and I believe inaccessible, upon account of the thick woods, excepting those parts which lie near the water. The river is large and navigable. From hence about twelve leagues to the south-east are three contiguous islands, called the Benaoes, twenty miles in circuit: this was about the centre of the white men’s residence. Seven leagues farther, the same way, lie the Plantanes, three small islands, two miles distant from the continent, at the point which forms one side of the Sherbro. This river is more properly a sound, running within a long island, and receiving the confluence of several large rivers, (rivers unknown to song, but far more deeply engraven in my remembrance than the Po or Tiber. The southernmost of these has a very peculiar course, almost parallel to the coast: so that in tracing it a great many leagues upwards, it will seldom lead one above three miles, and sometimes not more than half a mile from the sea shore.”

Mr. N.'s new master had resided near Cape Mount, but at this time had settled at the Plantanes, on the largest of the three islands. It is low and sandy, about two miles in circumference, and almost covered with palm-trees. They immediately began to build a house. Mr. N. had some desire to retrieve his time and character, and might have lived tolerably well with his master, if this man had not been much under the direction of a black woman, who lived with him as a wife, and influenced him against his new servant. She was a person of some consequence in her own country, and he owed his first rise to her interest. This woman, for reasons not known, was strangely prejudiced against Mr. N. from the first; he also had unhappily a severe fit of illness, which attacked him before he had an opportunity to show what he could or would do in the service of his master. Mr. N. was sick when his master sailed in a shallop to Rio Nuna, and was left in the hands of this woman. He was taken some care of at first, but not soon recovering, her attention was wearied, and she entirely neglected him. Sometimes it was with difficulty he could procure a draught of cold water when burning with a fever! His bed was a mat, spread upon a board or chest, with a log for his pillow. Upon his appetite returning, after the fever left him, he would gladly have eaten, but "no one gave unto him." She lived in plenty, but scarcely allowed him sufficient to sustain life, except now and then, when in the highest good humour, she would send him victuals in her own plate after she had dined. And this (so greatly was he humbled) he received with thanks and eagerness, as the most needy beggar does an alms.

"Once," says he, "I well remember, I was called to receive this bounty from her own hand, but, being exceedingly weak and feeble, I dropped the plate. Those who live in plenty can hardly conceive how this loss touched me: but she had the cruelty to laugh at my disappointment, and though the table was covered with dishes (for she lived much in the European manner) she refused to give me any more.

"My distress has been at times so great as to compel me to go by night, and pull up roots in the plantation (though at the risk of being punished as a thief), which I have eaten raw upon the spot for fear of discovery. The roots I speak of are very wholesome food, when boiled or roasted, but as unfit to be eaten raw in any quantity as a potato. 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; yea, 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 slowly recovering, the same woman would sometimes pay Mr. N. a visit, not to pity or relieve, but to insult him. She would call him worthless and indolent, and compel him to walk; which, when he could scarcely do, she would set her attendants to mimic his motions, to clap their hands, laugh, throw limes at him, and sometimes they would even throw stones. But though her attendants were forced to join in this treatment, Mr. N. was rather pitied than scorned, by the meanest of her slaves, on her departure.

When his master returned from the voyage, Mr. N. complained of ill-usage, but was not credited, and as he did it in her hearing, he fared worse for it. He accompanied his master in his second voyage, and they agreed pretty well, till his master was persuaded by a brother trader, that Mr. N. was dishonest. This seems to be the only vice he could not be charged with, as his honesty seemed to be the last remains of a good education which he could now boast of: and though his great distress might have been a strong temptation to fraud, it seems he never once thought of defrauding his master in the smallest matter. The charge, however, was believed, and he was condemned without evidence. From that time he was used very hardly; whenever his master left the vessel, he was locked upon deck with a pint of rice for his day’s allowance, nor had he any relief till his master’s return. “Indeed,” says he, “I believe I should have been nearly starved, but for an opportunity of catching fish sometimes. When fowls were killed for my master’s own use, I seldom was allowed any part but the entrails, to bait my hooks with: and at what we called 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 would 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 trousers, a cotton handkerchief instead of a cap, and a cotton cloth about two yards long, to supply the want of upper garments: and thus accoutred, I have been exposed for twenty, thirty, perhaps near forty hours together, 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 sick-



ness, 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 they returned, and the rest of the time Mr. N. spent with his master was chiefly at the Plantanes, and under the same regimen as has been mentioned. His heart was now bowed down, but not at all to a wholesome repentance. While his spirits sunk, the language of the prodigal was far from him: destitute of resolution, and almost all reflection, he had lost the fierceness which fired him when on board the Harwich, and rendered him capable of the most desperate attempts, but he was no farther changed than a tiger tamed by hunger.

However strange it may appear, he attests it as a truth, that though destitute both of food and clothing, and depressed beyond common wretchedness, he could sometimes collect his mind to mathematical studies. Having bought Barrow’s Euclid at Plymouth, and it being the only volume he brought on shore, he used to take it to remote corners of the island, and draw his diagrams with a long stick upon the sand. “Thus,” says he, “I often beguiled my sorrows, and almost forgot my feelings; and thus without any other assistance, I made myself in a good measure master of the first six books of Euclid.”

“With my staff I passed this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.” These words of Jacob might well affect Mr. N. when remembering the days in which he was busied in planting some lime or lemon trees. The plants he put into the ground were no higher than a young gooseberry bush. His master and mistress, in passing the place, stopped a while to look at him; at length his master said, “Who knows but, by the time these trees grow up and bear, you may go home to England, obtain the command of a ship, and return to reap the fruits of your labours? We see strange things sometimes happen.”

“This,” says Mr. Newton, “as he intended it, was a cutting sarcasm. I believe he thought it full as probable that I should live to be king of Poland; yet it proved a prediction, and they (one of them at least) lived to see me return from England, in the capacity he had mentioned, and pluck some of the first limes from those very trees. How can I proceed in my relation, till I raise a monument to the Divine goodness, by comparing the circumstances in which the Lord has since placed me with what I was in at that time! Had you seen me, sir, then go so pensive and solitary in the dead of night to wash my one shirt upon the rocks, and afterwards put it on wet, that it might dry upon my back, while I slept—had you seen me so poor a figure, that when a ship’s boat came to the island, shame often constrained me to hide myself in the woods, from the sight of strangers; especially, had you known that my conduct, principles, and heart, were still darker than my outward condition—

how little would you have imagined, that one who so fully answered to the *στυγητοι και μισουντες*\* 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 of my heart, which was not contrary and shocking both to religion and reason; and 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.”

Things continued thus nearly twelve months. In this interval Mr. N. wrote two or three times to his father, describing his condition, and desiring his assistance: at the same time signifying, that he had resolved not to return to England unless his parent were pleased to send for him. His father applied to his friend at Liverpool, who gave orders accordingly to a captain of his, who was then fitting out for Gambia and Sierra Leone.

Sometime within the year, Mr. N. obtained his master’s consent to live with another trader, who dwelt upon the same island. This change was much to his advantage, as he was soon decently clothed, lived in plenty, was treated as a companion, and trusted with his effects to the amount of some thousand pounds. This man had several factories, and white servants in different places; particularly one in Kittam, the river already described as running so near along the sea coast. Mr. N. was soon appointed there, and had a share in the management of business, jointly with another servant; they lived as they pleased; business flourished, and their employer was satisfied.

“Here,” says he, “I began to be wretch enough to think myself happy. There is a significant phrase frequently used in those parts, that such a white man is grown black. It does not intend an alteration of complexion, but disposition. I have known several, who settling in Africa after the age of thirty or forty, 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 even become dupes to all the pretended 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 good. Not that I had lost those ideas which chiefly engaged my heart to England; but a 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, as soon as I had fixed my connexions

---

\* Hateful and hating one another.

and plans with these views, the Lord providentially interposed to break them in pieces, and save me from ruin in spite of myself.”

In the meantime, the ship that had orders to bring Mr. N. home, arrived at Sierra Leone. The captain made inquiry for Mr. N. there, and at the Benanoes; but finding he was at a great distance, thought no more about him. A special providence seems to have placed him at Kittam just at this time; for the ship coming no nearer the Benanoes, and staying but a few days, if he had been at the Plantanes, he would not probably have heard of the ship till she had sailed: the same must have certainly been the event had he been sent to any other factory, of which his new master had several. But though the place he went to was a long way up a river, much more than a hundred miles distant from the Plantanes, yet, by its peculiar situation already noticed, he was still within a mile of the sea coast. The interposition was also more remarkable, as at that very juncture he was going in quest of trade, directly from the sea, and would have set out a day or two before, but that they waited for a few articles from the next ship that came, in order to complete the assortment of goods he was to take with him.

They used sometimes to walk to the beach, in hopes of seeing a vessel pass by; but this was very precarious, as at that time the place was not resorted to by ships of trade: many passed in the night, others kept at a considerable distance from the shore, nor does he remember that any one had stopped while he was there.

In Feb. 1747 his fellow-servant, walking down to the beach in the forenoon, saw a vessel sailing by, and made a smoke in token of trade. She was already beyond the place, and the wind being fair, the captain demurred about stopping: had Mr. N.’s companion been half an hour later, the vessel would have been beyond recall. When he saw her come to an anchor, he went on board in a canoe, and this proved the very ship already spoken of, which brought an order for Mr. N.’s return. One of the first questions the captain put was concerning Mr. N.; and understanding he was so near, the captain came on shore to deliver his message.

“Had,” says he, “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, however, unwilling to lose him, framed a story, and gave him a very plausible account of his having missed a large packet of letters and papers, which he should have brought with him; but said he had it from his father’s own mouth, as well as from his employer, that a person lately dead had left Mr. N. four hundred pounds per annum; and added, that, if embarrassed in his circumstances, he had express orders to redeem Mr. N. though it should cost one half of his cargo. Every particular of this was false; nor could Mr.

N. believe what was said about the estate, except that, as he had some expectations from an aged relation, he thought a part of it might be true.

But though his father's care and desire to see him was treated so lightly, and would have been insufficient alone to draw him from his retreat, yet the remembrance of Mrs. N., the hopes of seeing her, and the possibility that his accepting this offer might once more put him in the way of gaining her hand, prevailed over all other considerations.

The captain farther promised (and in this he kept his word), that Mr. N. should lodge in his cabin, dine at his table, and be his companion, without being liable to service. Thus suddenly was he freed from a captivity of about fifteen months. He had neither a thought nor a desire of this change one hour before it took place; but, embarking with the captain, he in a few hours lost sight of Kittam.

The ship in which he embarked as a passenger, was on a trading voyage for gold, ivory, dyers' wood, and bees' wax. Such a cargo requires more time to collect than one of slaves. The captain began his trade at Gambia, had been already four or five months in Africa, and, during the course of a year after Mr. N. had been with him, they ranged the whole coast as far as Cape Lopez, which lies about a degree south of the equinoxial, and more than a thousand miles farther from England than the place from whence he embarked.

"I have," says he, "little to offer worthy of 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 his vessel."

Although Mr. N. lived long in the excess of almost every other extravagance, he was never, it seems, fond of drinking: his father was often heard to say, that while his son avoided drunkenness, some hopes might be entertained of his recovery. Sometimes, however, in a frolic, he would promote a drinking bout; not through love of liquor, but disposition to mischief. The last proposal he made of this kind, and at his own expense, was in the river Gabon, whilst the ship was trading on the coast, as follows:—

Four or five of them sat down one evening, to try who could hold out

longest in drinking geneva and rum alternately; a large sea-shell supplied the place of a glass. Mr. N. was very unfit for such a challenge, as his head was always incapable of bearing much liquor: he began, however, and proposed, as a toast, some imprecation against the person who should start first: this proved to be himself. Fired in his brain, he arose and danced on the deck like a madman; and while he was thus diverting his companions, his hat went overboard. Seeing the ship's boat by moonlight, he endeavoured eagerly to throw himself over the side into the boat, that he might recover his hat. His sight, however, deceived him, for the boat was not (as he supposed) within his reach, but perhaps twenty feet from the ship's side. He was, however, half overboard, and would in the space of a moment have plunged into the water, when somebody caught hold of his clothes, and pulled him back. This was an amazing escape, as he could not swim, had he been sober; the tide ran very strong, his companions were too much intoxicated to save him, and the rest of the ship's company were asleep.

Another time, at Cape Lopez, before the ship left the coast, he went with some others into the woods, and shot a buffalo, or wild cow: they brought a part of it on board, and carefully marked the place (as he thought) where the rest was left. In the evening they returned to fetch it, but set out too late. Mr. N. undertook to be their guide; but night coming on before they could reach the place, they lost their way. Sometimes they were in swamps, and up to their middle in water; and, when they recovered dry land, they could not tell whether they were proceeding towards the ship, or the contrary way. Every step increased their uncertainty—night grew darker—and they were entangled in thick woods, which perhaps the foot of man had never trodden, and which abound with wild beasts; besides which, they had neither light, food, nor arms, while expecting a tiger to rush from behind every tree. The stars were clouded, and they had no compass to form a judgment which way they were going. But it pleased God to secure them from the beasts; and, after some hours perplexity, the moon arose, and pointed out the eastern quarter. It appeared then, that instead of proceeding towards the sea, they had been penetrating into the country: at length, by the guidance of the moon, they recovered the ship.

These, and many other deliverances, produced at that time no salutary effect. The admonitions of conscience, which from successive repulses had grown weaker and weaker, at length entirely ceased; and for the space of many months, if not for some years, he had not a single check of that sort. At times he was visited with sickness, and believed himself to be near death, but had not the least concern about the consequences. "In a word," says he, "I seemed to have every mark of final impenitence and rejection; neither judgments nor mercies made the least impression on me."

At length, their business being finished, they left Cape Lopez, and after a few days stay at the island of Annabona, in order to lay in provisions, they sailed homeward about the beginning of January, 1784. From Annabona to England is perhaps more than seven thousand miles, if the circuits are included, which are necessary to be made on account of the trade winds. They sailed first westward, till near the coast of Brazil, then northward, to the banks of Newfoundland, without meeting anything extraordinary. On these banks they stopped half a day to fish for cod: this was then chiefly for diversion, as they had provision enough, and little expected those fish (as it afterwards proved), would be all they would have to subsist on. They left the banks, March 1st, with a hard gale of wind westerly, which pushed them fast homewards. By the length of this voyage, in a hot climate, the vessel was greatly out of repair, and very unfit to endure stormy weather. The sails and cordage were likewise very much worn, and many such circumstances concurred to render what followed imminently dangerous.

Among the few books they had on board was Stanhope's *Thomas a Kempis*. Mr. N. carelessly took it up, as he had often done before, to pass away the time, but which he had read with the same indifference as if it were a romance. But, in reading it this time, a thought occurred, "What if these things should be true?" He could not bear the force of the inference, and therefore shut the book, concluding that, true or false, he must abide the consequences of his own choice, and put an end to these reflections by joining in the vain conversation which came in his way. "But now," says he, "the Lord's time was come, and the conviction I was so unwilling to receive was deeply impressed upon me by an awful dispensation."

He went to bed that night in his usual carnal security, but was awaked from a sound sleep by the force of a violent sea which broke on board: so much of it came down as filled the cabin with water in which he lay. This alarm was followed by a cry from the deck, that the ship was sinking. He essayed to go upon deck, but was met upon the ladder by the captain, who desired him to bring a knife. On his returning for the knife, another person went up in his place who was instantly washed overboard. They had no leisure to lament him, nor expected to survive him long, for the ship was filling with water very fast. The sea had torn away the upper timbers on one side, and made it a mere wreck in a few minutes; so that it seems almost miraculous that any survive to relate the story. They had immediate recourse to the pumps, but the water increased against their efforts. Some of them were set to bailing, though they had but eleven or twelve people to sustain this service: but notwithstanding all they could do, the vessel was nearly full, and with a common cargo must have sunk; but having a great quantity of bees' wax and wood on board, which was specifically lighter than water, and providentially

receiving this shock in the very crisis of the gale, towards morning, they were enabled to employ some means for safety, which succeeded beyond hope. In about an hour's time day began to break, and the wind abated: they expended most of their clothes and bedding to stop the leaks; over these they nailed pieces of boards, and at last perceived the water within to subside.

At the beginning of this scene Mr. N. was little affected: he pumped hard, and endeavoured to animate himself and his companions. He told one of them, that in a few days this distress would serve for a subject over a glass of wine; but the man being less hardened than himself, replied, with tears, "No; it is too late now." About nine o'clock, being almost spent with cold and labour, Mr. N. went to speak with the captain, and, as he was returning, said, almost without meaning, "If this will not do, the Lord have mercy upon us!" thus expressing, though with little reflection, his desire of mercy for the first time within the space of many years. Struck with his own words, it directly occurred to him, "What mercy can there be for me!" He was, however, obliged to return to the pump, and there continued till noon, almost every passing wave breaking over his head, being, like the rest, secured by ropes, that they might not be washed away. He expected, indeed, that every time the vessel descended in the sea, she would rise no more; and though he dreaded death now, and his heart foreboded the worst, if the Scriptures, which he had long opposed, were true, yet he was still but half convinced, and remained for a time in a sullen frame, a mixture of despair and impatience. He thought, if the Christian religion were true, he could not be forgiven, and was therefore expecting, and almost at times wishing, to know the worst of it.

The following part of his Narrative will, I think, be best expressed in his own words:—"The 10th, that is, in the present style, the 21st of March, is a day much to be remembered by me, and I have never suffered it to pass wholly unnoticed since the year 1746. On that day the Lord sent from on high, and delivered me out of deep waters. I continued at the pump from three in the morning till near noon, and then I could do no more. I went and lay down upon my bed, uncertain, and almost indifferent, whether I should 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 of my life—the calls, warnings, and deliverances I had met with—the licentious course of my conversation—particularly by unparalleled effrontery, in making the Gospel history (which I could not 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 or could be such a sinner as myself; and then comparing the advantages I had broken through, I concluded at first, that my sins were too great to be forgiven. The Scripture likewise seemed to say the same: for I had formerly been well acquainted with the Bible, and many passages upon this occasion returned upon my memory; particularly those awful passages, Prov. i. 24–31; Heb. vi. 4, 6; and 2 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 have 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 after (perhaps) several years, that 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 were to put forth the greatness of his power, a poor sinner would be instantly overwhelmed, and crushed as a moth.

“But to return: when I saw beyond all probability, that there was still hope of respite, and heard about six in the evening that the ship was freed from water, there arose a gleam of hope. I thought I saw the hand of God displayed in our favour. I began to pray: I could not utter the prayer of faith: I could not draw near to a reconciled God and call him Father: my prayer was like the cry of the ravens, which yet the Lord does not disdain to hear. I now began to think of that Jesus whom I had so often derided: I recollected the particulars of his life and of his death; a death for sins not his own, but, as I remembered, for the sake of those, who, in their distress, should put their trust in him. And now I chiefly wanted evidence. The comfortless principles of infidelity were deeply riveted, and I rather wished than believed these things were real facts. You will please to observe, 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 nor necessity), but how I should gain an assurance that the Scriptures were of 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 be true, the promise in this passage must be true likewise: I have need of that very Spirit, by which the whole was written, in order to understand it aright. He has engaged here to give that Spirit to those who ask: I must therefore pray for it, and if it be of God he will make good his own word. My purposes were strengthened by John vii. 17. I concluded from thence, that though I could not say from my heart, that I believed the Gospel, yet I would, for the present, take it for granted; and that by studying it in this light, I should be more and more confirmed in it.

If what I am writing could be perused by our modern infidels, they would say (for I too well know their manner), that I was very desirous to persuade myself into this opinion. I confess I was, and so would they be, if the Lord should show them, as he was pleased to show me at that time, the absolute necessity of some expedient to interpose between a righteous God and a sinful soul: upon the Gospel scheme I saw at least a peradventure of hope, but on every other side I was surrounded with black, unfathomable despair.”

The wind being now moderate, and the ship drawing nearer to its port, the ship’s company began to recover from their consternation, though greatly alarmed by their circumstances. They found, that the water having floated their moveables in the hold, all the casks of provision had been beaten to pieces by the violent motion of the ship. On the other hand, their livestock had been washed overboard, in the storm. In short, all the provisions they saved, except the fish lately caught on the banks for amusement, and a little of the pulse kind which used to be given to the hogs, would have supported them but a week, and that at a scanty allowance. The sails, too, were mostly blown away, so that they advanced but slowly even while the wind was fair. They imagined they were about a hundred leagues from land, but were in reality much farther. Mr. N.’s leisure was chiefly employed in reading, meditation on the Scriptures, and prayer for mercy and instruction.

Things continued thus for about four or five days, when they were awakened one morning by the joyful shouts of the watch upon deck, proclaiming the sight of land, with which they were all soon raised. The dawning was uncommonly beautiful, and the light, just sufficient to discover distant objects, presented what seemed a mountainous coast, about twenty miles off, with two or three small islands; the whole appeared to be the north-west extremity of Ireland, for which they were steering. They sincerely congratulated each other, having no doubt, that, if the wind continued, they should be in safety and plenty the next day. Their brandy, which was reduced to a little more than a pint, was, by the captain’s orders, distributed among them; who added, “We shall soon have brandy enough.” They likewise ate up the residue of their bread, and were in the condition of men suddenly reprieved from

death.

But while their hopes were thus excited, the mate sunk their spirits by saying, in a graver tone, that “he wished it might prove land at last.” If one of the common sailors had first said so, the rest would probably have beaten him. The expression, however, brought on warm debates, whether it was land or not; but the case was soon decided, for one of their fancied islands began to grow red from the approach of the sun. In a word, their land was nothing but clouds; and in half an hour more the whole appearance was dissipated.

Still, however, they cherished hope from the wind continuing fair, but of this hope they were soon deprived. That very day, their fair wind subsided into a calm, and the next morning the gale sprung up from the south-east, directly against them, and continued so for more than a fortnight afterwards. At this time the ship was so wrecked, that they were obliged to keep the wind always on the broken side, except when the weather was quite moderate; and were thus driven still farther from their port in the north of Ireland, as far as the Lewis, or western isles of Scotland. Their station now was such as deprived them of any hope of relief from other vessels. “It may indeed be questioned,” says Mr. N., “whether our ship was not the very first that had been in that part of the ocean, at the same time of the year.”

Provisions now began to fall short, the half of a salted cod was a day’s subsistence for twelve people: they had no stronger liquor than water, no bread, hardly any clothes, and very cold weather. They had also incessant labour at the pumps, to keep the ship above water. Much labour and little food wasted them fast, and one man died under the hardship. Yet their sufferings were light when compared with their fears. Their bare allowance could continue but little longer, and a dreadful prospect appeared of their being either starved to death, or reduced to feed upon one another.

At this time Mr. N. had a farther trouble, peculiar to himself. The captain, whose temper was quite soured by distress, was hourly reproaching him as the sole cause of the calamity, and was confident, that his being thrown overboard would be the only means of preserving them. The captain, indeed, did not intend to make the experiment, but the continued repetition of this in my ears,” says Mr. N., “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—that I was at last found out by the powerful hand of God—and condemned in my own breast.”

While, however, they were thus proceeding, at the time when they were ready to give up all for lost, and despair appeared in every countenance, they began to conceive hope, from the wind’s shifting to the desired point, so as best to suit that broken part of the ship, which must be kept out of the water, and so gently to blow as their few remaining sails could bear. And thus it

continued, at an unsettled time of the year, till they were once more called up to see land, and which was really such. They saw the island of Tory, and the next day anchored in Lough Swilly, in Ireland, on the 8th of April, just four weeks after the damage they had sustained from the sea. When they came into this port, their very last victuals were boiling in the pot, and before they had been there two hours, the wind, which seemed to have been providentially restrained till they were in a place of safety, began to blow with great violence; so that, if they had continued at sea that night, they must, in all human estimation, have gone to the bottom! “About this time,” says Mr. N., “I began to know that there is a God, who hears and answers prayer.”

Mr. N.’s history is now brought down to the time of his arrival in Ireland, in the year 1748; and the progress he had hitherto made in religion will be best related in his own words. I shall, therefore, make a longer extract than usual, because it is important to trace the operation of real religion in the heart. Speaking of the ship in which he lately sailed, he says, “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 that of the prodigal, Luke xv. 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! Such reflections gaining 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. 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 of its exact suitableness to answer all my needs. I saw, that, by the way they were pointed out, God might declare, not his mercy only, but his justice also, in the pardon of sin, on 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 unto himself.’ I had no idea of those systems, which allow the Saviour no higher honour than that of an upper servant, or at the most a demi-god. 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, and 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 misspent life, and purposed an immediate reformation. I was quite freed from the habit of swearing, which seemed to have been deeply rooted in me, as a second nature. Thus, to all appearance, I was a new man.

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

“From this period I could no more make a mock at sin, or jest with holy things; I no more questioned the truth of Scripture, or lost a sense of the rebukes of conscience. Therefore I consider this as the beginning of my return to God, or rather of his return to me; but I cannot consider myself to have been a believer (in the full sense of the word) till a considerable time afterwards.”

While the ship was refitting at Lough Swilly, Mr. N. repaired to Londonderry, where he soon recruited his health and strength. He was now a serious professor, went twice a day to the prayers at church, and determined to receive the sacrament the next opportunity. When the day came, he arose very early, was very earnest in his private devotions, and solemnly engaged himself to the Lord; not with a formal, but sincere surrender, and under a strong sense of the mercies lately received. Having, however, as yet but an imperfect knowledge of his own heart, and of the subtlety of Satan’s temptations,

he was afterwards seduced to forget the vows of God that were upon him. Yet he felt a peace and satisfaction in the ordinance of that day, to which he had been hitherto an utter stranger.

The next day he went abroad with the mayor of the city, and some gentlemen, shooting; climbing up a steep bank, and pulling his fowling-piece in a perpendicular direction after him, it went off so near his face as to destroy the corner of his hat. The remark he makes on this ought not to be omitted: "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 their stay in Ireland, Mr. N. wrote home. The vessel he was in had not been heard of for eighteen months, and was given up for lost. His father had no expectation of hearing that his son was alive, but received his letter a few days before he embarked from London to become Governor of York Fort, in Hudson's Bay, where he died. He intended to take his son with him, had he returned to England in time. Mr. N. received two or three affectionate letters from his father; and hoped, that in three years more he should have had the opportunity of asking his forgiveness, for the uneasiness his disobedience had occasioned; but the ship that was to have brought his father home came without him." It appears he was seized with the cramp, when bathing, and was drowned before the ship arrived in the Bay. Before his father's departure from England, he had paid a visit in Kent, and gave his consent to the union that had been so long talked of.

Mr. N. arrived at Liverpool the latter end of May 1748, about the same day that his father sailed from the Nore. He found, however, another father in the gentleman whose ship had brought him home. This friend received him with great tenderness, and the strongest assurances of assistance; yet not stronger than he afterwards fulfilled, for to this instrument of God's goodness he felt he owed everything. "Yet," as Mr. N. justly observes, "it would not have been in the power even of this friend to have served me effectually, if the Lord had not met 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, nor regard to the future, could have restrained me within the bounds of common prudence; but now I was in some measure restored to my senses."

This friend immediately offered Mr. N. the command of a ship, which, upon mature consideration, he for the present declined. He prudently considered, that hitherto he had been unsettled and careless; and therefore that he had better make another voyage, and learn obedience and acquire farther experience in business, before he ventured to undertake such a charge. The

mate of the vessel in which he came home was preferred to the command of a new ship, and Mr. N. engaged to go in the station of mate with him.

There was something so peculiar in Mr. N.'s case, after this extraordinary deliverance, and because others in like circumstances might be tempted to despair, that I think it proper to make another extract from his Narrative, as such accounts cannot be well conveyed but in his own words.

“We must not 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 favoured, 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 and 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 Liverpool, I began to intermit and grow slack in waiting upon the Lord: I grew vain and trifling in my conversation; and though my heart smote me often, yet my armour was gone, and I declined fast: and by the time we arrived at Guinea, I seemed to have forgotten all the Lord’s mercies, and my own engagements, and was (profaneness excepted) almost as bad as before. The enemy prepared a train of temptations, and I became his easy prey; 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.’”

In this voyage Mr. N.’s business, while upon the coast, was to sail in the long boat, from place to place, in order to purchase slaves. The ship, at this time, was at Sierra Leone, and he at the Plantanes, the scene of his former captivity, and where everything he saw tended to remind him of his present ingratitude. He was now in easy circumstances, and courted by those who

had once despised him. The lime-trees he had formerly planted, were growing tall and promised fruit, upon his expected return with a ship of his own. Unaffected, however, with these things, he needed another providential interposition to rouse him; and accordingly he was visited with a violent fever, which broke the fatal chain, and once more brought him to himself. Alarmed at the prospect before him, he thought himself now summoned away. The dangers and deliverances through which he had passed—his earnest prayers in the time of trouble—his solemn vows before the Lord at his table—and his ungrateful returns for all his goodness—were present at once to his mind. He began then to wish that he had sunk in the ocean, when he first cried for mercy. For a short time he concluded that the door of hope was quite shut. Weak, and almost delirious, he arose from his bed, crept to a retired part of the island, and here found a renewed liberty in prayer: daring to make no more resolves, he cast himself upon the Lord, to do with him as he should please. It does not appear that anything new was presented to his mind, but that, in general, he was enabled to hope and believe in a crucified Saviour.

After this, the burthen was removed from his conscience, and not only his peace, but his health was gradually restored, when he returned to the ship. And though subject to the efforts and conflicts of sin, dwelling in him, he was ever after delivered from the power and dominion of it.

His leisure hours in this voyage were chiefly employed in acquiring Latin, which he had now almost forgotten. This desire took place from an imitation he had seen of one of Horace's Odes in a Magazine. In this attempt at one of the most difficult of the poets, he had no other help than an old English translation, with Castalio's Latin Bible. He had the edition *in usum Delphini*, and, by comparing the odes with the interpretation, and tracing such words as he understood from place to place by the index, together with what assistance he could get from the Latin Bible, he thus, by dint of hard industry, made some progress. He not only understood the sense of many odes, and some of the epistles, but "I began," says he, "to relish the beauties of the composition; acquired a spice of what Mr. Law calls, 'classical enthusiasm;' and, indeed, by this means I had Horace more *ad unguem* than some who are masters of the Latin tongue; for my helps were so few, that I generally had the passage fixed in my memory before I could fully understand its meaning."

During the eight months they were employed upon the coast, Mr. N.'s business exposed him to innumerable dangers from burning suns, chilling dews, winds, rains, and thunder storms, in an open boat; and on shore, from long journeys through the woods, and from the natives, who in many places are cruel, treacherous, and watching opportunities for mischief. Several boats, during this time, were cut off, several white men poisoned, and from his own boat he buried six or seven people, with fevers; when going on shore,

or returning, he was more than once overset by the violence of the surf, and brought to land half dead, as he could not swim. Among a number of such escapes, which remained upon his memory, the following will mark the singular providence that was over him:—

On finishing their trade, and being about to sail to the West Indies, the only service Mr. N. had to perform in the boat, was to assist in bringing the wood and water from the shore. They were then at Rio Cestors. He used to go into the river, in the afternoon, with the sea breeze, to procure his lading in the evening, in order to return on board in the morning with the land-wind. Several of these little voyages he 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, he was preparing to return to the river as formerly—he had taken leave of the captain—received his orders—was already in the boat—and just going to put off; in that instant the captain came up from the cabin, and called him on board again. Mr. N. went, expecting farther orders, but the captain said, “he had taken it into his head” (as he phrased it), that Mr. N. should remain that day in the ship, and accordingly ordered another man to go in his room. Mr. N. was surprised at this, as the boat had never been sent away without him before. He asked the captain the reason of his resolution, but none was assigned, except as above, that so he would have it. The boat, therefore went without Mr. N., but returned no more: it sunk that night in the river; and the person who supplied Mr. N.’s place was drowned! Mr. N. was much struck when news of the event was received the next morning. The captain himself, though quite a stranger to religion, even to the denying a particular providence, could not help being affected; but declared, that he had no other reason for countermanding Mr. N. at that time, but that it came suddenly into his mind to detain him.

A short time after he was thus surprisingly preserved, they sailed for Antigua, and from thence to Charlestown, in South Carolina. In that place there were many serious people; but, at this time, Mr. N. was little capable of availing himself of their society, supposing that all who attended public worship were good Christians, and that whatever came from the pulpit must be very good. He had two or three opportunities, indeed, of hearing a minister of eminent character and gifts, whom, though struck with his manner, he did not rightly understand. Almost every day, when business would permit, he used to retire into the woods and fields (being his favourite oratories), and began to taste the delight of communion with God, in the exercises of prayer and praise; and yet so much inconsistency prevailed, that he frequently spent the evening in vain and worthless company. His relish, indeed, for worldly diversions was much weakened; and he was rather a spectator than a sharer



in their pleasures; but he did not as yet see the necessity of absolutely relinquishing such society. It appears, that compliances of this sort, in his present circumstances, were owing rather to a want of light than to any obstinate attachment: as he was kept from what he knew to be sinful, he had, for the most part, peace of conscience; and his strongest desires were towards the things of God. He did not as yet apprehend the force of that precept, “Abstain from all appearance of evil;” but he very often ventured upon the brink of temptation. He did not break with the world at once, as might have been expected, but was gradually led to see the inconvenience and folly of first one thing and then another, and as such to give them up.

They finished their voyage, and arrived in Liverpool. When the ship’s affairs were settled, Mr. N. went to London, and from thence he soon repaired to Kent. More than seven years had now elapsed since his first visit: no views of the kind seemed more chimerical than his, or could subsist under greater discouragements; yet while he seemed abandoned to his passions, he was still guided, by a hand that he knew not, to the accomplishment of his wishes. Every obstacle was now removed—he had renounced his former follies—his interest was established—and friends on all sides consenting. The point was now entirely between the parties immediately concerned, and, after what had passed, was easily concluded; accordingly their hands were joined, February the 1st, 1750.

“But, alas!” says he, “this mercy, which raised me to all I could ask or wish in a temporal view, and which ought to have been an animating motive to obedience and praise, had a contrary effect: I rested in the gift and forgot the giver. My poor narrow heart was satisfied. A cold and careless frame as to spiritual things, took place, and gained ground daily. Happy for me, the season was advancing; and in June I received orders to repair to Liverpool. This roused me from my dream; and I found the pains of absence and separation fully proportioned to my preceding pleasure.\* Through all my following voyages, my irregular and excessive affections were as thorns in my eyes,

---

\* In writing to Mrs. Newton from St Alban’s, he inserts a prayer for his own health and that of Mrs. N., upon which he remarks as follows:—

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

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

Mr. N. sailed from Liverpool, in August 1750, commander of a good ship. He had now the command and care of thirty persons: he endeavoured to treat them with humanity, and to set them a good example.\* He likewise established public worship, according to the Liturgy of the Church of England, officiating himself twice every Lord’s day. He did not proceed farther than this while he continued in that occupation.

Having now much leisure, he prosecuted the study of Latin with good success. He remembered to take a Dictionary this voyage, and added Juvenal to Horace; and, for prose authors, Livy, Caesar, and Sallust. He was not aware of the mistake of beginning with such difficult writers; but, having heard Livy highly commended, he was resolved to understand him: he began with the first page, and made it a rule not to proceed to a second till he understood the first. Often at a stand, but seldom discouraged, here and there he found a few lines quite obstinate, and was forced to give them up, especially as his edition had no notes. Before, however, the close of that voyage, he informs us, that he could, with a few exceptions, read Livy, almost as readily as an English author. Other prose authors, he says, cost him but little trouble, as in surmounting the former difficulty he had mastered all in one. In short, in the space of two or three voyages, he became acquainted with the best classics. He read Terence, Virgil, several pieces of Cicero, and the modern classics, Buchanan, Erasmus, and Casimir; and made some essays towards writing elegant Latin.

“But by this time,” he observes, “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 Scriptures; and for the sake of this I was made willing to part with all my newly- acquired riches. I began to think, that life was too short (especially my life) to admit of leisure for

---

“Thou wert pleased likewise to disappoint me, by thy providence, of some money, which I expected to receive on my marriage; so that, excepting our apparel, when I sailed from Liverpool on my first voyage, the sum total of my worldly inventory was—seventy pounds in debt.”

\* I have heard Mr. Newton observe, that, as the commander of a slave-ship, he had a number of women under his absolute command: and knowing the danger of his situation on that account, he resolved to abstain from flesh in his food, and to drink nothing stronger than water, during the voyage; that, by abstemiousness, he might subdue every improper emotion: and that, upon his setting sail, the sight of a certain point of land was the signal for his beginning a rule, which he was enabled to keep.

such elaborate trifling. Neither poet nor historian could tell me a word of Jesus; and I therefore applied myself to those who could. The classics were at first restrained to one morning in the week, and at length laid aside.”

This his first voyage after his marriage lasted the space of fourteen months, through various scenes of danger and difficulty; but nothing very remarkable occurred; and, after having seen many fall on his right hand and on his left, he was brought home in peace, Nov. 2, 1751.

In the interval, between his first and second voyage, he speaks of the use he found in keeping a sort of diary, of the unfavourable tendency of a life of ease among his friends, and of the satisfaction of his wishes proving unfavourable to the progress of grace; upon the whole, however, he seems to have gained ground, and was led into farther views of Christian doctrine and experience by Scougal’s *Life of God in the Soul of Man*, Hervey’s *Meditations*, and the *Life of Colonel Gardiner*. He seems to have derived no advantages from the preaching he heard, or the Christian acquaintance he made; and though he could not live without prayer, he durst not propose it, even to his wife, till she first urged him to the mutual practice of it.

In a few months, the returning season called him abroad again, and he sailed from Liverpool, in a new ship, July 1752\*. “I never knew,” says he, “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 among 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 who knew me for some thousand miles round. Many a time, upon these occasions, I have restored the beautiful lines of Propertius to the right owner; lines full of blasphemy and madness when addressed to a creature, but full of comfort and propriety in the mouth of a believer.

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

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

---

\* Mr.. N. had had an unexpected call to London; and, on his return, when within a few miles of Liverpool, he mistook a marl-pit for a pond, and, in attempting to water his horse, both the horse and the rider plunged into it overhead. He was afterwards told, that, near that time, three persons had lost their lives by a mistake of the same kind.

Amidst the darkness of the night,  
In solitude my company.

In the course of this voyage, Mr. N. was wonderfully preserved through many unforeseen dangers. At one time there was a conspiracy among his own people to become pirates, and take possession of the ship. When the plot was nearly ripe, they watched only for opportunity: two of them were taken ill in one day; one of them died. This suspended the affair, and opened a way to its discovery. The slaves on board frequently plotted insurrections, and were sometimes upon the very brink of one when it was disclosed. When at a place called Mana, near Cape Mount, Mr. N. intended to go on shore the next morning to settle some business; but the surf of the sea ran so high, that he was afraid to attempt landing. He had often ventured at a worse time, but then feeling a backwardness which he could not account for, the high surf furnished a pretext for indulging it: he therefore returned to the ship without doing any business. He afterwards found, that, on the day he intended to land, a scandalous and groundless charge had been laid against him, which greatly threatened his honour and interest, both in Africa and England, and would perhaps have affected his life, had he landed. The person most concerned in this affair owed him about a hundred pounds, which he sent in a huff, and otherwise, perhaps, would not have paid it at all. Mr. N. heard no more of this accusation till the next voyage, and then it was publicly acknowledged to have been a malicious calumny, without the least shadow of a ground.

But, as these things did not occur every day, Mr. N. prosecuted his Latin, being very regular in the management of his time. He allotted about eight hours for sleep and meals, eight hours for exercise and devotion, and eight hours to his books; and thus, by diversifying his engagements, the whole day was agreeably filled up.

From the coast he went to St. Christopher's, where he met with a great disappointment: for the letters, which he expected from Mrs. N., were by mistake forwarded to Antigua. Certain of her punctuality in writing, if alive, he concluded by not hearing from her, that she was surely dead. This fear deprived him of his appetite and rest, caused an incessant pain in his stomach, and, in the space of three weeks, he was near sinking under the weight of an imaginary stroke. "I felt," says he, "some severe symptoms of that mixture of pride and madness, commonly called a broken heart; and, indeed, I wonder that this case is not more common. 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! 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 of my unbelief and ingratitude towards him.”

In August, 1753, Mr. N. returned to Liverpool: after that voyage, he continued only six weeks at home, and, in that space, nothing very memorable occurred.

We now follow Mr. N. in his third voyage to Guinea: it seems to be the shortest of any that he had made, and which is principally marked by an account of a young man, who had formerly been a midshipman, and his intimate companion on board the *Harwich*. This youth, at the time Mr. N. first knew him, was sober, but afterwards sadly infected with Mr. N.’s then libertine principles. They met at Liverpool, and renewed their former acquaintance: as their conversation frequently turned upon religion, Mr. N. was very desirous to recover his companion, to whom he gave a plain account of the manner and reasons of his own change, and used every argument to induce him to relinquish his infidelity. When pressed very close, his usual reply was, that Mr. N. was the first person who had given him an idea of his liberty, which naturally occasioned many mournful reflections in the mind of his present instructor. This person was going master to Guinea himself; but, meeting with a disappointment, Mr. N. offered to take him as a companion, with a view of assisting him in gaining future employment; but principally, that his arguments, example, and prayers, might be attended with good effect. But his companion was exceedingly profane; grew worse and worse; and presented a lively, but distressing picture, continually before Mr. N.’s eyes, of what he himself had once been. Besides this, the man was not only deaf to remonstrance himself, but laboured to counteract Mr. N.’s influence upon others: his spirit and passions were likewise so exceedingly high, that it required all Mr. N.’s prudence and authority to hold him in any degree of restraint.

At length Mr. N. had an opportunity of buying a small vessel, which he supplied with a cargo from his own ship: he gave his companion the command of it; and sent him away to trade on the ship’s account. When they parted, Mr. N. repeated and enforced his best advice: it seemed greatly to affect his companion at the time; but when he found himself released from the restraint of his instructor, he gave a 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 seems to have died convinced, but not changed: his rage and despair struck those who were about him with horror; and he pronounced his own fatal doom before he expired, without any sign, that he either hoped or asked for mercy.—I trust the reader will deem the features of this awful case (though a digression from the principal subject) too instructive to be omitted.

Mr. N. left the coast in about four months, and sailed for St. Christopher’s.

Hitherto, he had enjoyed a perfect and equal state of health in different climates for several years. But in this passage he was visited with a fever, which gave him a very near prospect of eternity: he was, however, supported in a silent composure of spirit by the faith of Jesus, and found great relief from those words, "He is able to save to the uttermost." He was for a while troubled, whether by a temptation, or by the fever disordering his faculties, that he should be lost or overlooked amidst the myriads, that are continually entering the unseen world; but the recollection of that Scripture, "the Lord knoweth them that are his," put an end to his doubts. After a few days, however, he began to amend, and by the time they arrived in the West Indies, he was perfectly recovered.

In this way he was led for about the space of six years: he had learnt something of the evil of his heart—had read the Bible over and over—had perused several religious books—and had a general view of Gospel truth: but his conceptions still remained confused in many respects, not having in all this time met with one acquaintance qualified to assist his inquiries.

On his arrival at St. Christopher's he found a captain of a ship from London, a man of experience in the things of God. For near a month, they spent every evening together on board each other's ship alternately: prolonging their visits till near day-break. While Mr. N. was an eager recipient, his companion's discourse not only informed his understanding, but inflamed his heart—encouraged him in attempting social prayer—taught him the advantage of Christian converse—put him upon an attempt to make his profession more public, and to venture to speak for God. His conceptions now became more clear and evangelical; he was delivered from a fear, which had long troubled him, of relapsing into his former apostasy; and taught to expect preservation, not from his own power and holiness, but from the power and promise of God. From this friend he likewise received a general view of the present state of religion, and of the prevailing errors and controversies of the times, and a direction where to inquire in London for farther instruction. Mr. N.'s passage homewards gave him leisure to digest what he had received: and he arrived safely at Liverpool, August 1754.\*

---

\* In a MS. note on a letter from sea, Mr. Newton remarks:—"I now enter my 70th year. Still thou art singularly bountiful to me: still I have reason to think myself favoured, as to externals, beyond the common lot of mortals. Thou didst bear me above the removal of her I most valued, to the admiration of all who knew me. The best part of my childhood and youth was vanity and folly: but, before I attained the age of man, I became exceedingly vile indeed; and was seated in the chair of the scorner in early life. The troubles and miseries I for a time endured were my own. I brought them upon myself, by forsaking thy good and pleasant paths; and choosing the way of transgressors, which I found very hard; they led to slavery, contempt, famine, and despair.

"But my recovery from that dreadful state was wholly of thee. Thou didst prepare the means, unthought of and undesired by me. How nice were the turns upon which my

His stay at home, however, was intended to be but short; and by the beginning of November he was ready again for the sea. But the Lord saw fit to overrule his design. It seems, from the account he gives, that he had not had the least scruple as to the lawfulness of the slave-trade: he regarded it as the appointment of Providence: he considered this employment as respectable and profitable; yet he could not help thinking himself a sort of gaoler, and was sometimes shocked with an employment so conversant with chains, bolts, and shackles. On this account he had often prayed, that he might be fixed in a more humane profession, where he might enjoy more frequent communion with the people and ordinances of God; and be freed from those long domestic separations, which he found so hard to bear. His prayers were now answered, though in an unexpected way.

Mr. N. was within two days of sailing, and in apparent good health; but as he was one afternoon drinking tea with Mrs. N. he was seized with a fit, which deprived him of sense and motion. When he had recovered from this fit, which lasted about an hour, it left a pain and dizziness in his head, which continued, with such symptoms, as induced the physicians to judge it would not be safe for him to proceed on the voyage. By the advice of a friend, therefore, to whom the ship belonged, he resigned the command on the day before she sailed; and thus he was not only freed from that service, but from the future consequences of a voyage which proved extremely calamitous. The person who went in his room, died; as did most of the officers, and many of the crew.

As Mr. N. was now disengaged from business, he left Liverpool, and spent most of the following year in London, or in Kent. Here he entered upon a new trial, in a disorder that was brought upon Mrs. N. from the shock she received in his late illness; as he grew better, she became worse with a disorder, which the physicians could not define, nor medicines remove. Mr. N. was therefore placed for about eleven months in what Dr. Young calls the

—Dreadful post of observation,  
Darker every hour.—

The reader will recollect, that Mr. N.'s friend at St. Christopher's had given him information for forming a religious acquaintance in London; in consequence of which, he became intimate with several persons eminent for that character; and profited by the spiritual advantages, which a great city

---

delivery from Africa depended! Had the ship passed one quarter of an hour sooner, I had died there a wretch, as I had lived. But thou didst pity and hear my first lisping in prayer, at the time the storm fell upon me. Thou didst preserve me from sinking and starving. Thus I returned home, and thou didst provide me friends, when I was destitute and a stranger.”

affords with respect to means. When he was in Kent, his advantages were of a different kind; most of his time he passed in the fields and woods. "It has been my custom," says he, "for many years, to perform my devotional exercises *sub dio* when I have opportunity, and I always find these scenes have some tendency both to refresh and 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 great temple, which the Lord has built for his own honour."

During this time he had to weather two trials, the principal of which was Mrs. N.'s illness. She still grew worse, and he had daily more reason to fear that hour of separation, which appeared to be at hand. He had likewise to provide some future settlement; the African trade was overdone that year, and his friends did not care to fit out another ship till that which had been his returned. Though a provision of food and raiment had seldom been with him a cause of great solicitude, yet he was some time in suspense on this account; but, in August following, he received a letter, that he was nominated to a post, which afforded him a competency, both unsought and unexpected.

When he had gained this point, his distress respecting Mrs. N. was doubled; he was obliged to leave her in the greatest extremity of pain and illness; and when he had no hope that he should see her again alive. He was, however, enabled to resign her and himself to the divine disposal; and, soon after he was gone, she began to amend, and recovered so fast, that in about two months he had the pleasure to meet her at Stone, on her journey to Liverpool.

From October 1755, he appears to have been comfortably settled at Liverpool, and mentions his having received, since the year 1757, much profit from his acquaintance in the West Riding of Yorkshire. "I have conversed," says he, "at large, among all parties, without joining any; and in my attempts to hit the golden mean, I have been sometimes drawn too near the different extremes; yet the Lord has enabled me to profit by my mistakes." Being at length placed in a settled habitation, and finding his business would afford him much leisure, he considered in what manner he could improve it. Having determined, with the apostle "to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified," he devoted his life to the prosecution of spiritual knowledge, and resolved to pursue nothing but in subservience to this design. But as what follows will appear most natural, and must be better expressed in his own words, I shall transcribe them from the conclusion of his Narrative.

"This resolution," says Mr. N., "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 even aimed at a critical skill in any of these; I had no business with them, but as in reference to something else. I never read one classic author in the Greek; I thought it too late in life to take such a round in this language as I had done in the Latin. I only wanted the signification of scriptural words and phrases, and for this I thought I might avail myself of Scapula, the Synopsis, and others, who had sustained the drudgery before me. In the Hebrew, I can read the historical books and Psalms with tolerable ease; but in the prophetic 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.

“Together with these studies, I have kept up a course of reading the best writers in Divinity, that have come to my hand, in the Latin and English tongues, 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 Scriptures.

“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 reflection on Gal. i. 23, 24. I could but wish for such a public opportunity to testify the riches of Divine grace. I thought I was, above most living, a fit person to proclaim that faithful saying, ‘that Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners;’ and as my life had been full of remarkable turns, and I seemed selected to show what the Lord could do, I was in some hopes, that perhaps, sooner or later, he might call me into his service.

“I believe it was a distant hope of this that determined me to study the original Scriptures; but it remained an imperfect desire in my own breast, till it was recommended to me by some Christian friends. I started at the thought when first seriously proposed to me: but, afterwards, set apart some weeks to consider the case, to consult my friends, and to entreat the Lord’s direction. The judgment of my friends, and many things that occurred, tended to engage me. My first thought was to join the Dissenters, from a presumption that I could not honestly make the required subscriptions; but Mr. C——, in

a conversation upon these points, moderated my scruples; and, preferring the Established Church in some respects, I accepted a title from him some months afterwards; and solicited ordination from the late Archbishop of York. I need not tell you I met a refusal, nor what steps I took afterwards to succeed elsewhere. At present I desist from any applications. My desire to serve the Lord is not weakened; but I am not so hasty to push myself forward as I was formerly. It is sufficient that he knows how to dispose of me, and that he both can and will do what is best. To him I commend myself: I trust that his will and my true interest are inseparable. To his name be glory for ever: and with this I conclude my story.”

A variety of remarks occurred to me while abridging the Narrative, but I refrained from putting them down, lest, by interrupting its course, and breaking the thread of the history, I should rather disgust than profit the reader. I have heard Mr. N. relate a few additional particulars, but they were of too little interest to be inserted here; they went, however, like natural incidents, to a farther authentication of the above account, had it needed any other confirmation than the solemn declaration of the pious relator. Romantic relations, indeed, of unprincipled travellers, which appear to have no better basis than a disposition to amuse credulity, to exhibit vanity, or to acquire gain, may naturally raise suspicion, and produce but a momentary effect at most on the mind of the reader; but facts, like the present, manifest such a display of the power, providence, and grace of God; and at the same time such a deep and humbling view of human depravity, when moved and brought forth by circumstances, as inexperience can scarcely credit, but which must interest the eye of pious contemplation, and open a new world of wonders.

I must now attempt to conduct the reader without the help of Mr. N.’s Narrative, finished Feb. 2, 1763; to which, as I have already observed, he referred me for the former and most singular part of his life. When I left the above account with him for revision, he expressed full satisfaction as to all the facts related; but said, he thought I had been too minute even in the abridgment, since the Narrative itself had been long before the public. I remarked, in reply, that the Narrative contained a great variety of facts—that these Memoirs might fall into the hands of persons who had not seen the Narrative—but that, without some abridgment of it, no clear view could be formed of the peculiarity of his whole dispensation and character—and, therefore, that such an abridgment appeared to be absolutely necessary, and that he had recommended it at my first undertaking the work. With these reasons he was well satisfied. I now proceed to the remaining, though less remarkable, part of his life.

Mr. Manesty, who had long been a faithful and generous friend of Mr. N. having procured him the place of tide-surveyor in the port of Liverpool, Mr.

N. gives the following account of it:—"I entered upon business yesterday. I find my duty is to attend the tides one week, and visit the ships that arrive, and such as are in the river; and the other week to inspect the vessels that are in the docks; and thus alternately the year round. The latter is little more than a sinecure, but the former requires pretty constant attendance, both by day and night. I have a good office, with fire and candle, and fifty or sixty people under my direction; with a handsome six-oared boat and a coxswain to row me about in form."\*

We cannot wonder that Mr. N. latterly retained a strong impression of a particular providence, superintending and conducting the steps of man; since he was so often reminded of it in his own history. The following occurrence is one of many instances. Mr. N. after his reformation, was remarkable for his punctuality: I remember his often sitting with his watch in his hand lest he should fail in keeping his next engagement. This exactness with respect to time, it seems, was his habit while occupying his post at Liverpool. One day, however, some business had so detained him, that he came to his boat much later than usual, to the surprise of those who had observed his former punctuality. He went out in the boat as heretofore, to inspect a ship, but the ship blew up just before he reached her: it appears, that if he had left the shore a few minutes sooner, he must have perished with the rest on board.

This anecdote I had from a clergyman, upon whose word I can depend, who had been long in intimate habits with Mr. N., and who had it from Mr. N. himself: the reason of its not appearing in his letters from Liverpool to Mrs. N. I can only suppose to be, his fearing to alarm her with respect to the dangers of his station. But another providential occurrence, which he mentions in those letters, I shall transcribe.

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

---

\* Letters to a Wife, vol. ii. p. 7.

was only an hour or two, he was too late. Mr. S— had already written, and sent off the letter; and I was appointed accordingly. These circumstances appear to me extraordinary, though of a piece with many other parts of my singular history.

And the more so, as by another mistake I missed the land-waiter's place, which was my first object, and which I now see would not have suited us nearly so well. I thank God I can now look through instruments, and second causes, and see his wisdom and goodness immediately concerned, in fixing my lot."

Mr. N. having expressed, near the end of his Narrative, the motives which induced him to aim at a regular appointment to the ministry in the church of England, and of the refusal he met with in his first making the attempt, the reader is father informed, that, on Dec. 16, 1758, Mr. N. received a title to a curacy from the Rev. Mr. C—, and applied to the archbishop of York, Dr. Gilbert, for ordination. The bishop of Chester having countersigned his testimonials, directed him to Dr. Newton, the archbishop's chaplain. He was referred to the secretary, and received the softest refusal imaginable. The secretary informed him, that he had "represented the matter to the archbishop, but his Grace was inflexible in supporting the rules and canons of the church," &c.

Travelling to Loughborough, Mr. N. stopped at Welwyn, and sending a note to the celebrated Dr. Young, he received for answer, that the doctor would be glad to see him. He found the doctor's conversation agreeable, and to answer his expectation respecting the author of the Night Thoughts. The doctor likewise seemed pleased with Mr. N. He approved Mr. N.'s design of entering the ministry, and said many encouraging things upon the subject: and when he dismissed Mr. N. desired him never to pass near Welwyn without calling upon him.

Mr. N. it seems, had made some small attempts at Liverpool, in a way of preaching or expounding. Many wished him to engage more at large in those ministerial employments, to which his own mind was inclined: and he thus expresses his motives in a letter to Mrs.. N. in answer to the objections she had formed. "The late death of Mr. Jones, of St Saviour's, has pressed this concern more closely upon my mind. I fear it must be wrong, after having so solemnly devoted myself to the Lord for his service, to wear away my time, and bury my talents in silence (because I have been refused orders in the church) after all the great things he has done for me."\*

In a note annexed, he observes, that "the influence of his judicious and affectionate counsellor moderated the zeal which dictated this letter, written

---

\* Letters to a Wife, vol. ii. p. 79.

in the year 1762, that had it not been for her, he should probably have been precluded from those important scenes of service, to which he was afterwards appointed but he adds, "The exercises of my mind upon this point, I believe, have not been peculiar to myself. I have known several persons, sensible, pious, of competent abilities, and cordially attached to the established church; who, being wearied out with repeated refusals of ordination, and perhaps, not having the advantage of such an adviser as I had, have at length struck into the itinerant path, or settled among the Dissenters. Some of these, yet living, are men of respectable characters, and useful in their ministry; but their influence, which would once have been serviceable to the true interests of the Church of England, now rather operates against it."

In the year 1764, Mr. N. had the curacy of Olney proposed to him, and was recommended by Lord D— to Dr. Green, bishop of Lincoln; of whose candour and tenderness he speaks with much respect. The bishop had admitted him as a candidate for orders. "The examination," says he, "lasted about an hour, chiefly upon the principal heads of Divinity. As I resolved not to be charged hereafter with dissimulation, I was constrained to differ from his lordship in some points: but he was not offended; he declared himself satisfied, and has promised to ordain me, either next Sunday, in town, or the Sunday following, at Buckden. Let us praise the Lord!"\*

Mr. N. was ordained deacon at Buckden, April 29, 1764, and priest in June the following year. In the parish of Olney, he found many, who not only had evangelical views of the truth, but had also long walked in the light and experience of it. The vicarage was in the gift of the Earl of D—, the nobleman to whom Mr. N. addressed the first twenty-six letters in his *Cardiphonia*. The earl was a man of real piety, and most amiable disposition; he had formerly appointed the Rev. Moses Brown vicar. Mr. Brown was an evangelical minister, and a good man; of course he had afforded wholesome instruction to the parishioners of Olney, and had been the instrument of a sound conversion in many of them. He was the author of a poetical piece entitled *Sunday Thoughts*, a translation of Professor Zimmerman's *Excellency of the Knowledge of Jesus Christ*, &c.

But Mr. Brown had a numerous family, and met with considerable trials in it; he too much resembled Eli in his indulgence of his children. He was also under the pressure of pecuniary difficulties, and had therefore accepted the chaplaincy of Morden College, Blackheath, while vicar of Olney. Mr. N. in these circumstances, undertook the curacy of Olney, in which he continued near sixteen years, previous to his removal to St Mary Woolnoth, to which he was afterwards presented, by the late John Thornton, Esq.

---

\* Letters to a Wife, vol. ii. p 89.

As Mr. N. was under the greatest obligations to Mr. Thornton's friendship while at Olney, and had been enabled to extend his own usefulness by the bounty of that extraordinary man, it may not be foreign to our subject to give some general outline of Mr. Thornton's character in this place.

It is said of Solomon, that "the Lord gave him largeness of heart, even as the sand on the sea-shore:" such a peculiar disposition for whatever was good or benevolent was also bestowed on Mr. Thornton. He differed as much from rich men of ordinary bounty, as they do from others that are parsimonious. Nor was this bounty the result of occasional impulse, like a summer shower, violent and short; on the contrary, it proceeded like a river pouring its waters through various countries, copious and inexhaustible. Nor could those obstructions of imposture and ingratitude, which have often been advanced as the cause of damming up other streams, prevent or retard the course of this. The generosity of Mr. Thornton, indeed, frequently met with such hindrances, and led him to increasing discrimination, but the stream of his bounty never ceased to hold its course. Deep, silent, and overwhelming, it still rolled on, nor ended even with his life.

But the fountain from whence this beneficence flowed, and by which its permanency and direction were maintained, must not be concealed. Mr. Thornton was a Christian. Let no one, however, so mistake me here, as to suppose, that I mean nothing more by the term Christian, than the state of one, who, convinced of the truth of revelation, gives assent to its doctrines—regularly attends its ordinances—and maintains an external moral and religious deportment. Such a one may have a name to live while he is dead; he may have a form of godliness without the power of it; he may even be found denying and ridiculing that power—till at length he can only be convinced of his error at an infallible tribunal; where a widow, that gives but a mite, or a publican, that smites on his breast, shall be preferred before him.

Mr. Thornton was a Christian indeed; that is, he was alive to God by a spiritual regeneration. With this God he was daily and earnestly transacting that infinitely momentous affair—the salvation of his own soul; and, next to that, the salvation of the souls of others. Temperate in all things, though mean in nothing, he made provision for doing good with his opulence, and seemed to be most in his element when appropriating a considerable part of his large income to the necessities of others.

But Mr. Thornton possessed that discrimination in his attempts to serve his fellow-creatures, which distinguishes an enlightened mind: he habitually contemplated man, as one, who has not only a body, subject to want, affliction, and death, but also a spirit, which is immortal, and must be happy or miserable for ever. He therefore felt, that the noblest exertions of charity are

those which are directed to the relief of the noblest part of our species. Accordingly, he left no mode of exertion untried to relieve man under his natural ignorance and depravity. To this end, he purchased advowsons and presentations, with a view to place in parishes the most enlightened, active and useful ministers. He employed the extensive commerce in which he was engaged, as a powerful instrument for conveying immense quantities of Bibles, prayer-books, and the most useful publications, to every place visited by our trade. He printed, at his own sole expense, large editions of the latter for that purpose; and it may safely be affirmed, that there is scarcely a part of the known world, where such books could be introduced, which did not feel the salutary influence of this single individual.

Nor was Mr. Thornton limited in his views of promoting the interests of real religion, with what sect soever it was connected. He stood ready to assist a beneficial design in every party, but would be the creature of none. General good was his object, and wherever or however it made its way, his maxim seemed constantly to be, "*valeat quantum, valere potest.*"

But the nature and extent of his liberality will be greatly misconceived, if any one should suppose it confined to moral and religious objects, though the grandest and most comprehensive exertions of it. Mr. Thornton was a philanthropist on the largest scale—the friend of man under all his wants. His manner of relieving his fellow-men was princely; instances might be mentioned of it, were it proper to particularize, which would surprise those who did not know Mr. Thornton. They were so much out of ordinary course and expectation, that I know some, who felt it their duty to inquire of him, whether the sum they had received was sent by his intention, or by mistake? To this may be added, that the manner of presenting his gifts was as delicate and concealed, as the measure was large.

Besides this constant course of private donations, there was scarcely a public charity, or occasion of relief to the ignorant or necessitous, which did not meet with his distinguished support. His only question was, "May the miseries of man, in any measure, be removed or alleviated?" Nor was he merely distinguished by stretching out a liberal hand: his benevolent heart was so intent on doing good, that he was ever inventing and promoting plans for its diffusion at home or abroad.

He that wisely desires any end, will as wisely regard the means; in this Mr. Thornton was perfectly consistent. In order to execute his beneficent designs, he observed frugality and exactness in his personal expenses. By such prospective methods, he was able to extend the influence of his fortune far beyond those, who, in still more elevated stations, are slaves to expensive habits. Such men meanly pace in trammels of the tyrant *custom*, till it leaves them scarcely enough to preserve their conscience, or even their credit, much

less to employ their talents in Mr. Thornton's nobler pursuits. He, however, could afford to be generous; and, while he was generous, did not forget his duty in being just. He made ample provision for his children: and though, while they are living, it would be indelicate to say more, I am sure of speaking truth when I say, they are so far from thinking themselves impoverished by the bounty of their father, that they contemplate with the highest satisfaction the fruit of those benefits to society, which he planted, which it may be trusted will extend with time itself, and which, after his example, they still labour to extend.

But, with all the piety and liberality of his honoured character, no man had deeper views of his own unworthiness before his God. To the Redeemer's work alone he looked for acceptance of his person and services: he felt, that all he did, or could do, was infinitely short of that which had been done for him, and of the obligations that were thereby laid upon him. It was this abasement of heart towards God, combined with the most singular largeness of heart toward his fellow-creatures, which distinguished John Thornton among men.

To this common patron of every useful and pious endeavour, Mr. N. sent the Narrative, from which the former part of these Memoirs is extracted. Mr. Thornton replied in his usual manner, that is, by accompanying his letter with a valuable bank note; and, some months after, he paid Mr. N. a visit at Olney. A closer connexion being now formed between friends, who employed their distinct talents in promoting the same benevolent cause, Mr. Thornton left a sum of money with Mr. N. to be appropriated to the defraying his necessary expenses, and relieving the poor. "Be hospitable," said Mr. Thornton, "and keep an open house for such as are worthy of an entertainment: help the poor and needy: I will stately allow you £200 a-year, and readily send whatever you have occasion to draw for more." Mr. N. told me, that he thought he had received of Mr. Thornton upwards of £3000 in this way, during the time he resided at Olney.

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

A minister, however, should not be so forgetful of his dispensation, as to repine at his want of power in this respect. He might as justly estimate his



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

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

It most evidently appears, that symptoms of Mr. Cowper's morbid state began to discover themselves in his earliest youth. He seems to have been at all times disordered, in a greater or less degree. He was sent to Westminster school at the age of nine years, and long endured the tyranny of an elder boy, of which he gives a shocking account in the paper above-mentioned; and which "produced," as one of his biographers observes, who had long intimacy with him, "an indelible effect upon his mind through life." A person so naturally bashful and depressed as Cowper, must needs find the profession of a barrister a farther occasion of anxiety: the post obtained for him by his friends in the House of Lords, overwhelmed him; and the remonstrances which those friends made against his relinquishing so honourable and lucrative an appointment (but which soon after actually took place), greatly increased the anguish of a mind already incapacitated for business. To all this were added events, which of themselves have been found sufficient to over-set the minds of the strongest; namely the decease of his particular friend and intimate, Sir William Russel; and his meeting with a disappointment in obtaining a lady, upon whom his affections were placed.

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

“Doom’d, as I am, in solitude to waste  
 The present moments, and regret the past;  
 Depriv’d of every joy I valued most—  
 My friend torn from me, and my mistress lost:  
 Call not this gloom I wear, this anxious mien,  
 The dull effect of humour or of spleen;  
 Still, still I mourn, with each returning day,  
 Him—snatch’d by fate, in early youth, away;  
 And her, through tedious years of doubt and pain,  
 Fix’d in her choice, and faithful—but in vain.  
 See me, ere yet my destin’d course half done,  
 Cast forth a wand’rer on a wild unknown!  
 See me, neglected on the world’s rude coast,  
 Each dear companion of my voyage lost!  
 Nor ask, why clouds of sorrow shade my brow,  
 And ready tears wait only leave to flow:  
 Why all that soothes a heart, from anguish free,  
 All that delights the happy—palls with me?

That any man, under such pressures, should at first turn his mind to those resources, which religion alone can afford, is both natural and rational. But Mr. Cowper was like a person looking from a high tower, who perceives only the danger of falling, but neither the security nor prospect it presents; and therefore it is no wonder, with so melancholy, morbid, and susceptible a mind, that his unhappiness should be increased. And yet this very mind of Cowper, when put under the care of Dr. Cotton, of St Alban’s (a physician as capable of administering to the spiritual as to the natural maladies of his patients), received the first consolation it ever tasted, and that from evangelical truths. It was under the care of this physician, that Mr. Cowper first obtained a clear view of those sublime and animating truths, which so distinguished and exalted his future strains as a poet. Here also he received that settled tranquillity and peace, which he enjoyed for several years afterwards. So far, therefore, was his constitutional malady from being produced or increased by his evangelical connexions, either at St Alban’s or at Olney, that he seems never to have had any settled peace but from the truths he learned in these societies. It appears, that among them alone he found the only sunshine he ever enjoyed, through the cloudy day of his afflicted life.

It appears also, that, while at Dr. Cotton’s, Mr. Cowper’s distress was, for a long time entirely removed, by marking that passage in Rom. iii. 25: “Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.” In this scripture he saw the remedy, which God provides for the relief of a guilty conscience, with such clearness, that, for several years after, his heart was filled with love, and his life occupied with prayer, praise, and doing good to his needy

fellow-creatures.

Mr. N. told me, that from Mr. Cowper's first coming to Olney, it was observed he had studied his Bible with such advantage, and was so well acquainted with its design, that not only his troubles were removed, but that to the end of his life he never had clearer views of the peculiar doctrines of the gospel than when he first became an attendant upon them; that (short intervals excepted) Mr. Cowper enjoyed a course of peace for several successive years; that, during this period, the inseparable attendants of a lively faith appeared, by Mr. Cowper's exerting himself to the utmost of his power in every benevolent service he could render to his poor neighbours: and that Mr. N. used to consider him as a sort of curate, from his constant attendance upon the sick and afflicted, in that large and necessitous parish.

But the malady, which seemed to be subdued by the strong consolations of the gospel, was still latent; and only required some occasion of irritation to break out again, and overwhelm the patient. Any object of constant attention, that shall occupy a mind previously disordered, whether fear, or love, or science, or religion, will not be so much the cause of the disease, as the accidental occasion of exciting it. Cowper's Letters will show us how much his mind was occupied at one time by the truths of the Bible, and at another time by the fictions of Homer; but his melancholy was originally a constitutional disease, a physical disorder, which, indeed, could be affected either by the Bible or by Homer, but was utterly distinct in its nature from the mere matter of either. And here I cannot but mark this necessary distinction, having often been witness to cases where religion has been assigned as the proper cause of insanity, when it has been only an accidental occasion, in the case of one already affected.\* Thus Cowper's malady, like a strong current, breaking down the banks which had hitherto sustained the pressure and

---

\* I have been an eye-witness of several instances of this kind of misrepresentation, but will detain the reader with mentioning only one. I was called to visit a woman whose mind was disordered, and on my observing, that it was a case which required the assistance of a physician rather than that of a clergyman, her husband replied: "Sir, we sent to you, because it is a religious case—her mind has been injured by constantly reading the Bible." "I have known many instances," said I, "of persons brought to their senses by reading the Bible; but it is possible, that too intense an application to that, as well as to any other subject, may have disordered your wife." "There is every proof of it," said he; and was proceeding to multiply his proofs, till his brother interrupted him by thus addressing me:—

"Sir, I have no longer patience to stand by and see you imposed on. The truth of the matter is this: my brother has forsaken his wife, and been long connected with a loose woman. He had the best of wives in her, and one who was strongly attached to him: but she has seen his heart and property given to another, and in her solitude and distress, went to the Bible, as the only consolation left her. Her health and spirits at length sunk under her troubles; and there she lies distracted, not from tending her Bible, but from the infidelity and cruelty of her husband." Does the reader wish to know what reply the husband made to this? He made no reply at all, but left the room with confusion of face.

obliquity of its course, prevailed against the supports he had received, and precipitated him again into his former distress.

I inquired of Mr. N. as to the manner in which Mr. Cowper's disorder returned, after an apparent recovery of nearly nine years continuance: and was informed, that the first symptoms were discovered one morning, in his discourse, soon after he had undertaken a new engagement in composition.

As a general and full account of this extraordinary genius is already before the public, such particulars would not have occupied so much room in these Memoirs, but with the view of removing the false statements that have been made.

Of great importance also was the vicinity of Mr. N.'s residence to that of the Rev. Mr. Scott, then curate of Ravenstone and Weston Underwood, and now Rector of Aston Sandford; a man whose ministry and writings have since been so useful to mankind. This clergyman was nearly a Socinian: he was in the habit of ridiculing evangelical religion, and laboured to bring over Mr. N. to his own sentiments. Mr. Scott had married a lady from the family of a Mr. Wright, a gentleman in his parish, who had promised to provide for him. But Mr. Scott's objections to subscription arose so high, that he informed his patron it would be in vain to attempt providing for him in the Church of England, as he could not conscientiously accept a living, on the condition of subscribing its Liturgy and Articles. "This," said Mr. N., "gave me hopes of Mr. Scott's being sincere, however wrong in his principles."

But the benefit which Mr. Scott derived from his neighbour, will best appear in his own words:—\*

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

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

---

\* Scott's Force of Truth, p. 11, fifth edition.

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

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

“It was at this time that my correspondence with Mr. N. commenced. At a visitation, May 1775, we exchanged a few words on a controverted subject, in the room among the clergy, which I believe drew many eyes upon us. At that time he prudently declined the discourse; but a day or two after he sent me a short note, with a little book for my perusal. This was the very thing I wanted; and I gladly embraced the opportunity, which, according to my wishes, seemed now to offer; God knoweth, with no inconsiderable expectations, that my arguments would prove irresistibly convincing, and that I should have the honour of rescuing a well-meaning person from his enthusiastical delusions.

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

“Concealing, therefore, the true motives of my conduct, under the offer of friendship, and a professed desire to know the truth (which, amidst all my

self-sufficiency and prejudice, I trust the Lord had even then given me), with the greatest affectation of candour, and of a mind open to conviction, I wrote him a long letter; purposing to draw from him such an avowal and explanation of his sentiments, as might introduce a controversial discussion of our religious differences.

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

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

“When I had made this little progress in seeking the truth, my acquaintance with Mr. N. was resumed. From the conclusion of our correspondence in December 1775, till April 1777, it had been almost wholly dropped. To speak plainly, I did not care for his company: I did not mean to make any use of him as an instructor, and I was unwilling the world should think us in any way connected. But, under discouraging circumstances, I had occasion to call upon him; and his discourse so comforted and edified me, that my heart, being by his means relieved from its burden, became susceptible of affection for him. From that time I was inwardly pleased to have him for my friend; though not, as now, rejoiced to call him so. I had, however, even at that time no thoughts of learning doctrinal truth from him, and was ashamed to be detected in his company; but I sometimes stole away to spend an hour with him. About the same period I once heard him preach; but still it was foolishness to me, his sermon being principally upon the believer’s experience, in some particulars with which I was unacquainted; so that, though I loved and

valued him, I considered him as a person misled by enthusiastical notions, and strenuously insisted, that we should never think alike till we met in heaven.”

Mr. Scott, after going on to particularize his progress in the discovery of truth, and the character of Mr. N. as its minister, afterwards adds:—

“The pride of reasoning, and the conceit of superior discernment, had all along accompanied me; and though somewhat broken, had yet considerable influence. Hitherto, therefore, I had not thought of hearing any person preach; because I did not think anyone in the circle of my acquaintance capable of giving me such information as I wanted. But being at length convinced, that Mr. N. had been right, and that I had been mistaken, in the several particulars in which we had differed, it occurred to me, that, having preached those doctrines so long, he must understand many things concerning them to which I was a stranger. Now, therefore, though not without much remaining prejudice, and not less in the character of a judge than of a scholar, I condescended to be his hearer, and occasionally to attend his preaching, and that of some other ministers. I soon perceived the benefit; for from time to time the secrets of my heart were discovered to me, far beyond what I had hitherto noticed; and I seldom returned from hearing a sermon without having conceived a meaner opinion of myself—without having attained to a farther acquaintance with my deficiencies, weaknesses, corruptions, and wants—or without being supplied with fresh matter for prayer, and directed to greater watchfulness. I likewise learned the use of experience in preaching; and was convinced that the readiest way to reach the hearts and consciences of others was to speak from my own. In short, I gradually saw more and more my need of instruction, and was at length brought to consider myself as a very novice in religious matters. Thus I began experimentally to perceive our Lord’s meaning, when he says, ‘Except ye receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, ye shall in nowise enter therein.’”

If I have seemed to digress in dwelling so long on these three characters, let the reader consider the importance of the facts—their intimate connexion with Mr. N.’s history—and let me inform him, that the author has something much nearer his heart than that of precision in setting forth the history of an individual; namely, that of exhibiting the nature and importance of vital and experimental religion: he therefore gladly brings forward any fact found in his way, which may tend to illustrate it.

But to return to the more immediate subject of these Memoirs. In the year 1776, Mr. N. was afflicted with a tumour, or wen, which had formed on his thigh; and on account of its growing more large and troublesome, he resolved to undergo the experiment of extirpation. This obliged him to go to London for the operation, which was successfully performed, October 10th, by the

late Mr. Warner, of Guy's Hospital. I remember hearing him speak several years afterwards of this trying occasion; but the trial did not seem to have affected him as a painful operation, so much as a critical opportunity in which he might fail in demonstrating the patience of a Christian under pain. "I felt," said he, "that being enabled to bear a very sharp operation, with tolerable calmness and confidence, was a greater favour granted to me than the deliverance from my malady.\*"

While Mr. N. thus continued faithfully discharging the duties of his station, and watching for the temporal and eternal welfare of his flock, a dreadful fire broke out at Olney, October 1777. Mr. N. took an active part in comforting and relieving the sufferers: he collected upwards of £200 for them; a considerable sum of money, when the poverty and late calamity of the place are regarded. Such instances of benevolence towards the people, with the constant assistance he afforded the poor, by the help of Mr. Thornton, naturally led him to expect that he should have so much influence as to restrain gross licentiousness on particular occasions. But, to use his own expression, he had "lived to bury the old crop on which any dependence could be placed." He preached a weekly lecture, which occurred that year on the 5th of November; and, as he feared that the usual way of celebrating it at Olney might endanger his hearers in their attendance at the church, he exerted himself to preserve some degree of quiet on that evening. Instead, however, of hearkening to his entreaties, the looser sort exceeded their former extravagance, drunkenness, and rioting, and even obliged him to send out money, to preserve his house from violence. This happened but a year before he finally left Olney. When he related this occurrence to me, he added, that he believed he should never have left the place while he lived, had not so incorrigible a spirit prevailed in a parish he had long laboured to reform.

But I must remark here, that this is no solitary fact, nor at all unaccountable. The gospel, we are informed, is not merely a "savour of life unto life," but also "of death unto death." Those whom it does not soften it is often found to harden. Thus we find St Paul went to the synagogue and spake

---

\* His reflections upon the occasion, in his diary, are as follow:—"Thou didst support me, and make this operation very tolerable. The cure, by thy blessing, was happily expedited: so that, on Sunday the 27th, I was enabled to go to church and hear Mr. F, and the Sunday following, to preach for him. The tenderness and attention of Dr. and Mrs. F—, with whom we were, cannot sufficiently describe; nor, indeed, the kindness of many other friends. To them I would be thankful, my Lord, but especially to thee; for what are creatures but instruments in thy hand, fulfilling thy pleasure? At home all was preserved quiet, and I met with no incident to distress or disturb me while absent. The last fortnight I preached often, and was hurried about in seeing my friends. But though I had a little leisure or opportunity for retirement, and my heart, alas! as usual, sadly reluctant and dull in secret, yet in public thou wert pleased to favour me with liberty."



boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them.”

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

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

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

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

might give them repentance to the acknowledging the truth.”

But, before we take a final leave of Olney, the reader must be informed of another part of Mr. N.’s labours. He had published a volume of Sermons before he took orders, dated Liverpool, January 1, 1760. In 1762 he published his Omicron, to which his letters, signed Vigil, were afterwards annexed. In 1764 appeared his Narrative. In 1767, a volume of Sermons, preached at Olney. In 1769 his Review of Ecclesiastical History: and in 1779, a volume of Hymns, of which some were composed by Mr. Cowper, and distinguished by a C. To these succeeded, in 1781, his valuable work, Cardiphonia; but more will be said of these in their place.

From Olney Mr. N. was removed to the rectory of the united parishes of St Mary Woolnoth, and St Mary Woolchurch Haw, Lombard Street, on the presentation of his friend Mr. Thornton.

It is remarkable, that these parishes had been favoured with two very eminent pastors, before Mr. N. appeared; namely, the Rev. Josias Shute, B.D., archdeacon of Colchester, and rector of St Mary Woolnoth who died 1643—and the Rev. Ralph Robinson, who died in 1655. There is a well written account of Mr. Shute in the Christian Observer of January 1804; from which it appears, that his piety, ministerial talents, and moderation in those difficult times, were very much distinguished during the thirty-three years he continued rector.\* Mr. Robinson died young, but has left a volume of truly evangelical discourses preached, at St Mary’s.

Some difficulty arose on Mr. N.’s being presented, by Mr. Thornton’s right of presentation being claimed by a nobleman; the question was, therefore, at length brought before the House of Lords, and determined in favour of Mr. Thornton. Mr. N. preached his first sermon in these parishes, Dec. 19, 1779, from Eph. iv. 15. “Speaking the truth in love.” It contained an affectionate address to his parishioners, and was directly published for their use.

Here a new and very distinct scene of action and usefulness was set before him. Placed in the centre of London—in an opulent neighbourhood—with connexions daily increasing, he had now a course of service to pursue, in several respects different from his former at Olney. Being, however, well acquainted with the word of God, and the heart of man, he proposed to himself no new weapons of warfare, for pulling down the strong holds of sin and Satan around him. He perceived, indeed, most of his parishioners too intent

---

\* Granger, in his Biographical History of England, says, that “His learning in divinity and ecclesiastical history was extensive, indeed almost universal.” And even Walker, in his Account of the Clergy, says, that, “In the beginning of the troubles, he was molested and harassed to death, and denied a funeral sermon to be preached for him by Dr. Holdsworth, as he desired—that he was a person of great piety, charity, and gravity, and of a most sweet and affable temper.” It farther appears, that, like his successor Mr. N., he preached twice on the Sunday, and had a lecture in his church every Wednesday.

upon their wealth and merchandise to pay much regard to their new minister; but, since they would not come to him, he was determined to go, as far as he could, to them; and, therefore, soon after his institution, he sent a printed address to his parishioners: he afterwards sent them another address, on the usual prejudices that are taken up against the gospel. What effects these attempts had then upon them does not appear; certain it is, that these, and other acts of his ministry, will be recollected by them, when the objects of their present pursuits are forgotten or lamented.

I have heard Mr. N. speak with great feeling on the circumstances of his last important station. “That one,” said he, “of the most ignorant, the most miserable, and the most abandoned of slaves, should be plucked from his forlorn state of exile on the coast of Africa, and at length be appointed minister of the parish of the first magistrate of the first city in the world—that he should there not only testify of such grace, but stand up as a singular instance and monument of it—that he should be enabled to record it in his history, preaching, and writings to the world at large—is a fact I can contemplate with admiration, but never sufficiently estimate.” This reflection, indeed, was so present to his mind on all occasions, and in all places, that he seldom passed a single day anywhere, but he was found referring to the strange event, in one way or other.

It may be necessary to add, that the latter part of these Memoirs leads me to speak so personally of my friend, that any farther inspection from his own eye was deemed improper.

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

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

“It grieves me,” said Mr. N., “to see so few of my wealthy parishioners come to church. I always consider the rich as under greater obligations to the preaching of the gospel than the poor. For at church, the rich must hear the whole truth as well as others. There they have no mode of escape. But let them once get home, you will be troubled to get at them; and, when you are admitted, you are so fettered with punctilio, so interrupted and damped with the frivolous conversation of their friends, that, as Archbishop Leighton says, ‘it is well if your visit does not prove a blank or a blot.’”

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

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

Soon after he came to St Mary’s, I remember to have heard him say, in a certain company, “Some have observed, that I preach shorter sermons on a Sunday morning, and with more caution: but this I do upon principle. I suppose I may have two or three of my bankers present, and some others of my parish, who have hitherto been strangers to my views of truth. I endeavour to imitate the apostle. ‘I became,’ says he, ‘all things to all men;’ but observe the end, it was in order to gain some. The fowler must go cautiously to meet shy birds, but he will not leave his powder and shot behind him. ‘I have fed you with milk,’ says the apostle; but there are some, that are not only for forcing strong meat, but bones too, down the throat of the child.—We must have patience with a single step in the case of an infant; and there are one-step books and sermons, which are good in their place. Christ taught his disciples as they were able to bear; and it was upon the same principle that the apostle accommodated himself to prejudice.—“Now,” continued he, “what I wish to remark on these considerations is, that this apostolical principle, steadily pursued, will render a minister apparently inconsistent—superficial hearers will think him a trimmer. On the other hand, a minister, destitute of the apostolical principle and intention, and directing his whole force to preserve the appearance of consistency, may thus seem to preserve it; but, let me tell you, here is only the form of faithfulness, without the spirit.”

I could not help observing one day, how much Mr. N. was grieved with the mistake of a minister, who appeared to pay too much attention to politics. “For my part,” said he, “I have no temptation to turn politician, and much less to inflame a party, in these times. When a ship is leaky, and a mutinous spirit divides the company on board, a wise man would say, ‘My good friends, while we are debating, the water is gaining on us—we had better leave the debate, and go to the pumps.’—I endeavour,” continued he, “to turn my people’s eyes from instruments to God. I am continually attempting to show them, how far they are from knowing either the matter of fact, or the matter of right. I inculcate our great privileges in this country, and advise a discontented man to take a lodging for a little while in Russia or Prussia.”

Though no great variety of anecdote is to be expected in a course so stationary as this part of Mr. N.’s life and ministry; for sometimes the course of a single day might give the account of a whole year; yet that day was so benevolently spent, that he was found in it “not only rejoicing with those that rejoiced,” but literally “weeping with those that wept.” The portrait which Goldsmith drew from imagination, Mr. N. realized in fact, insomuch that had Mr. N. sat for his picture to the poet, it could not have been more accurately delineated than by the following lines in his *Deserted Village*:—

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

I remember to have heard him say, when speaking of his continual interruptions, “I see in this world two heaps of human happiness and misery; now if I can take but the smallest bit from one heap and add to the other, I carry a point.—If, as I go home, a child has dropped a halfpenny, and if, by giving it another, I can wipe away its tears, I feel I have done something. I should be glad indeed to do greater things, but I will not neglect this. When I hear a knock at my study door, I hear a message from God; it may be a lesson of instruction, perhaps a lesson of patience; but, since it is his message, it must be interesting.”

But it was not merely under his own roof that his benevolent aims were

thus exerted; he was found ready to take an active part in relieving the miserable, directing the anxious, or recovering the wanderer, in whatever state or place he discovered such: of which, take the following instance:—

Mr. —, who is still living, and who holds a post of great importance abroad, was a youth of considerable talents, and who had had a respectable education. I am not informed of his original destination in point of profession; but certain it is, that he left his parents in Scotland, with a design of viewing the world at large, and that without those pecuniary resources, which could render such an undertaking convenient, or even practicable. Yet having the sanguine expectations of youth, together with its inexperience, he determinately pursued his plan. I have seen an account from his own hand, of the strange, but by no means dishonourable resources to which he was reduced in the pursuit of this scheme; nor can romance exceed the detail. But the particulars of his long journey, till he arrived in London, and those which have since occurred, would not be proper, at present, for anyone to record except himself; and I cannot but wish he would favour the world with them, on the principle which led Mr. N. to write his Narrative. To London, however, he came; and then he seemed to come to himself. He had heard Mr. N.'s character, and on a Sunday evening he came to St Mary Woolnoth, and stood in one of the aisles while Mr. N. preached. In the course of that week he wrote Mr. N. some account of his adventure, and state of mind. Such circumstances could be addressed to no man more properly. Mr. N.'s favourite maxim was often in his mouth, more often in his actions, and always in his heart:

“*Haud ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.*”

Mr. N. therefore gave notice from the pulpit on the following Sunday evening, that, if the person was present who had sent him such a letter, he would be glad to speak with him.

Mr. — gladly accepted the invitation, and came to Mr. N.'s house, where a friendship began, which continued till Mr. N.'s death. Mr. N. not only afforded this youth the instruction, which he, at this period, so deeply needed; but marking his fine abilities and corrected inclination, he introduced him to Henry Thornton, Esq.; who, inheriting his father's unbounded liberality and determined adherence to the cause of real religion, readily patronized the stranger. Mr. — was, by the munificence of this gentleman, supported through a university education, and was afterwards ordained to the curacy of —. It was, however, thought expedient, that his talents should be employed in an important station abroad, which he readily undertook, and in which he now maintains a very distinguished character.

It ought not to be concealed, that Mr. —, since his advancement, has not only returned his patron the whole expense of his university education,

but has also placed in his hands an equal sum, for the education of some pious youth, who might be deemed worthy of that assistance once afforded to himself!

Mr. N. used to spend a month or two, annually, at the house of some friend in the country; he always took an affectionate leave of his congregation before he departed, and spake of his leaving town as quite uncertain of returning to it, considering the variety of incidents which might prevent that return. Nothing was more remarkable than his constant habit of regarding the hand of God in every event, however trivial it might appear to others. On every occasion—in the concerns of every hour—in matters public or private, like Enoch, he “walked with God.” Take a single instance of his state of mind in this respect. In walking to his church he would say, “‘The way of man is not in himself,’ nor can he conceive what belongs to a single step. When I go to St Mary Woolnoth, it seems the same whether I turn down Lotlibury or go through the Old Jewry; but the going through one street and not another, may produce an effect of lasting consequences. A man cut down my hammock in sport, but had he cut it down half-an-hour later, I had not been here; as the exchange of crew was then making. A man made a smoke on the sea-shore at the time a ship passed, which was thereby brought to, and afterwards brought me to England.”

Mr. N. had experienced a severe blow soon after he came to St Mary’s, and while he resided in Charles’ Square, in the death of his niece, Miss Eliza Cunningham. He loved her with the affection of a parent, and she was, indeed, truly lovely. He had brought her up, and had observed, that, with the most amiable natural qualities, she possessed a real piety. With every possible attention from Mr. and Mrs. Newton and their friends, they saw her gradually sink into the arms of death; but fully prepared to meet him as a messenger sent from a yet kinder Father, to whom she departed, October 6th, 1785, aged fourteen years and eight months. On this occasion Mr. N. published some brief memoirs of her character and death.

In the year 1784 and 1785 Mr. N. preached a course of sermons, on an occasion, of which he gives the following account in his first discourse: “Conversation in almost every company, for some time past, has much turned upon the commemoration of Handel, and particularly on his Oratorio of the Messiah. I mean to lead your meditations to the language of the oratorio, and to consider, in their order (if the Lord, on whom our breath depends, shall be pleased to afford life, ability, and opportunity), the several sublime and interesting passages of Scripture, which are the basis of that admired composition.” In the year 1786 he published these discourses, in two volumes octavo. There is a passage so original, at the beginning of his fourth sermon, from Mal. iii. 1–3, “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come

to his temple,” &c. that I shall transcribe it for the use of such as have not seen these discourses; at the same time, it will, in a few words, convey Mr. N.’s idea of the usual performance of this oratorio, or attending its performance, in present circumstances.

“Whereunto shall we liken the people of this generation, and to what are they like?’ I represent to myself a number of persons, of various characters, involved in one common charge of high treason. They are already in a state of confinement, but not yet brought to their trial. The facts, however, are so plain, and the evidence against them so strong and pointed, that there is not the least doubt of their guilt being fully proved, and that nothing but a pardon can preserve them from punishment. In this situation, it should seem their wisdom to avail themselves of every expedient in their power for obtaining mercy. But they are entirely regardless of their danger, and wholly taken up with contriving methods of amusing themselves, that they may pass away the term of their imprisonment with as much cheerfulness as possible. Among other resources, they call in the assistance of music. And amidst a great variety of subjects in this way, they are particularly pleased with one. They choose to make the solemnities of their impending trial, the character of their Judge, the methods of his procedure, and the awful sentence to which they are exposed, the groundwork of a musical entertainment. And, as if they were quite unconcerned in the event, their attention is chiefly fixed upon the skill of the composer, in adapting the style of his music to the very solemn language and subject with which they are trifling. The king, however, out of his great clemency and compassion towards those who have no pity for themselves, prevents them with his goodness. Undesired by them, he sends them a gracious message. He assures them, that he is unwilling they should suffer: he requires, yea, he entreats them to submit. He points out a way in which their confession and submission shall be certainly accepted; and in this way, which he condescends to prescribe, he offers them a free and a full pardon. But instead of taking a single step towards a compliance with his goodness, they set his message likewise to music: and this, together with a description of their present state, and of the fearful doom awaiting them, if they continue obstinate, is sung for their diversion; accompanied with the sound of cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of instruments. Surely, if such a case as I have supposed could be found in real life, though I might admire the musical taste of these people, I should commiserate their insensibility!”

But “clouds return after the rain:” a greater loss than that of Miss C. was to follow. Enough has been said in these Memoirs already, to show the more than ordinary affection Mr. N. felt for her who had been so long his idol, as he used to call her; of which I shall add but one more instance, out of many



that might easily be collected.

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

In such a continued habit of excessive attachment, it is evident how keenly Mr. N. must have felt, while he observed the progress of a threatening induration in her breast. This tumour seemed to have arisen from a blow she received before she left Liverpool. The pain it occasioned at the time soon wore off, but a small lump remained in the part affected. In October 1788, on the tumour's increasing, she applied to an eminent surgeon, who told her it was a cancer, and now too large for extraction, and that he could only recommend quiet. As the spring of 1789 advanced, her malady increased; and though she was able to bear a journey to Southampton, from which she returned, in other respects, tolerably well; she grew gradually worse with the cancer, till she expired, December 15, 1790.

Mr. N. made this remark on her death, "Just before Mrs N.'s disease became so formidable, I was preaching on the waters of Egypt being turned into blood. The Egyptians had idolized their river, and God made them loathe it. I was apprehensive it would soon be a similar case with me." During the very affecting season of Mrs. N.'s dissolution, Mr. N., like David, wept and prayed; but the desire of his eyes being taken away by the stroke, he too, like David, "arose from the earth, and came into the temple of the Lord, and worshipped," and that in a manner which surprised some of his friends.

I must own I was not one of those who saw anything that might not be expected from such a man, surrounded with such circumstances. I did not wonder at his undertaking to preach Mrs. N.'s funeral Sermon, on the following Sunday, at St Mary's: since I always considered him as an original, and his case quite an exception to general habits in many respects. There also could be no question as to the affection he had borne to the deceased: it had even prevailed, as he readily allowed, to an eccentric and blameable degree; and indeed after her removal, he used to observe an annual seclusion, for a special recollection of her, whom through the year he had never forgotten, and from which proceeded a sort of little elegies or sonnets to her memory. But he clearly recognized the will of God in the removal of his idol, and

reasoned as David did on the occasion: “While she was yet alive I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that she may live? But, now she is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring her back again? I shall go to her, but she shall not return to me.”

Besides which, Mr. N. had a favourite sentiment, which I have heard him express in different ways, long before he had so special an occasion for illustrating it in practice. “God in his providence,” he used to say, “is continually bringing about occasions to demonstrate characters.” He used to instance the case of Achan and Judas among bad men; and that of St Paul, Acts xxvii. among good ones. “If any one,” said he, “had asked the centurion, who Paul the prisoner was, that sailed with them on board the ship—it is probable he would have thus replied, ‘He is a troublesome enthusiast, who had lately joined himself to a certain sect. These people affirm, that a Jewish malefactor, who was crucified some years ago at Jerusalem, rose the third day from the dead; and this Paul is mad enough to assert, that Jesus, the leader of their sect, is not only now alive, but that he himself has seen him, and is resolved to live and die for him—Poor crazy creature!’ But God made use of this occasion to discover the real character of Paul, and taught the centurion, from the circumstances which followed, to whom it was he owed his direction in the storm, and for whose sake he received his preservation through it.”

In all trying occasions, therefore, Mr. N. was particularly impressed with the idea of a Christian, and especially of a Christian minister, being called to stand forward as an example to his flock—to feel himself placed in a post of honour—a post in which he may not only glorify God, but also forcibly demonstrate the peculiar supports of the gospel. More especially, when this could be done (as in his own case) from no doubtful motive; then it may be expedient to leave the path of ordinary custom, for the greater reason of exhibiting both the doctrines of truth, and the experience of their power.

Though I professedly publish none of Mr. N.’s letters, for reasons hereafter assigned, yet I shall take the liberty to insert part of one, with which I am favoured by J. F——, Esq. of Stanmore Hill, written to him while at Rome, and dated December 5th, 1796. It shows the interest which the writer took in the safety of his friend, and his address in attempting to break the enchantments with which men of taste are surrounded, when standing in the centre of the fine arts.

“The true Christian, in strict propriety of speech, has no home here; he is, and must be, a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth: his citizenship, treasure, and real home are in a better world; and every step he takes, whether to the east, or to the west, is a step nearer to his Father’s house. On the other hand, when in the path of duty, he is always at home; for the whole earth is the Lord’s: and as we see the same sun in England or Italy, in Europe or Asia,

so wherever he is, he equally sets the Lord always before him; and finds himself equally near the throne of grace at all times, and in all places. God is everywhere, and, by faith in the great Mediator, he dwells in God, and God in him; to him that line of Horace may be applied in the best sense,

“Coelum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt.”

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

“You are now at Rome, the centre of the fine arts; a place abounding with everything to gratify a person of your taste. Athens had the pre-eminence in the apostle Paul’s time; and I think it highly probable, from many passages in his writings, that he likewise had a taste capable of admiring and relishing the beauties of painting, sculpture, and architecture, which he could not but observe during his abode in that city: but then he had a higher, a spiritual, a divine taste, which was greatly shocked and grieved by the ignorance, idolatry, and wickedness, which surrounded him, insomuch that he could attend to nothing else. This taste, which cannot be acquired by any effort or study of ours, but is freely bestowed on all who sincerely ask it of the Lord, divests the vanities, which the world admire, of their glare; and enables us to judge of the most splendid and specious works of men, who know not God, according to the declaration of the prophet, ‘They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider’s web.’ Much ingenuity is displayed in the weaving of a cobweb, but when finished it is worthless and useless: incubation requires close diligence and attention; if the hen is too long from her nest, the egg is spoiled; but why should she sit at all upon the egg, and watch it, and warm it night and day, if it only produce a cockatrice at last? Thus vanity or mischief are the chief rulers of unsanctified genius; the artists spin webs, and the philosophers, by their learned speculations, hatch cockatrices, to poison themselves and their fellow-creatures: few of either sort have one serious thought of that awful eternity, upon the brink of which they stand for a while, and into the depth of which they successively fall.

“A part of the sentence denounced against the city, which once stood upon seven hills, is so pointed and graphical, that I must transcribe it: ‘And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee, and the light of a candle shall no more be seen in thee.’ Now, I am informed, that, upon certain occasions, the whole cupola of

St Peter's is covered with lamps, and affords a very magnificent spectacle: if I saw it, it would remind me of that time when there will not be the shining of a single candle in the city; for the sentence must be executed, and the hour may be approaching:—

Sic transit gloria mundi!

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

“Your affectionate friend,  
“JOHN NEWTON.”

But in proportion as Mr. N. felt the vanity of the pursuits he endeavoured to expose in the foregoing letter, he was as feelingly alive to whatever regarded eternal concerns. Take an instance of this, in a visit which he paid to another friend. This friend was a minister, who affected great accuracy in his discourses, and who, on that Sunday, had nearly occupied an hour in insisting on several laboured and nice distinctions made in his subject. As he had a high estimation of Mr. N.'s judgment, he inquired of him, as they walked home, whether he thought the distinctions just now insisted on were full and judicious? Mr. N. said he thought them not full, as a very important one had been omitted. “What can that be?” said the minister, “for I had taken more than ordinary care to enumerate them fully.” “I think not,” replied Mr. N.; “for when many of your congregation had travelled several miles for a meal, I think you should not have forgotten the important distinction which must ever exist between meat and bones.”

In the year 1790, Mr. N. had the honorary degree of D.D. conferred upon him by the University of New Jersey in America, and the diploma sent him. He also received a work in two volumes, dedicated to him with the above title annexed to his name. Mr. N. wrote the author a grateful acknowledgment for the work, but begged to decline an honour which he never intended to

accept. "I am (said he) as one born out of due time. I have neither the pretension nor wish to honours of this kind. However, therefore, the University may over-rate my attainments, and thus show their respect, I must not forget myself: It would be both vain and improper were I to concur in it."

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

He used to make excursions in the summer to different friends in the country, endeavouring to make these visits profitable to them and their neighbours, by his continual prayers, and the expositions he gave of the scriptures read at their morning and evening worship. I have heard of some, who were first brought to the knowledge of themselves and of God by attending his exhortations on these occasions; for, indeed, besides what he undertook in a more stated way at the church, he seldom entered a room, but something both profitable and entertaining fell from his lips. After the death of Miss Cunningham and Mrs. N., his companion in these summer excursions was his other niece, Miss Elizabeth Catlett. This young lady had also been brought up by Mr. and Mrs. N. with Miss Cunningham, and on the death of the two latter, she became the object of Mr. N.'s naturally affectionate disposition. She also became quite necessary to him by her administrations in his latter years; she watched him, walked with him, visited wherever he went; when his sight failed, she read to him, divided his food, and was unto him all that a dutiful daughter could be.

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

---

\* In a MS. note on a letter, dated 15th Dec. 1797, he writes, "Though I am not so sensibly affected as I could wish, I hope I am truly affected by the frequent reviews I make of my past life. Perhaps the annals of thy church scarcely afford an instance in all respects so singular. Perhaps thy grace may have recovered some from an equal degree of apostasy, infidelity, and profligacy; but few of them have been redeemed from such a state of misery and depression as I was in, upon the coast of Africa, when thy unsought mercy wrought for my deliverance: but that such a wretch should not only be spared and pardoned, but reserved to the honour of preaching thy gospel, which he had blasphemed and renounced, and at length be placed in a very public situation, and favoured with acceptance and usefulness, both from the pulpit and the press: so that my poor name is known in most parts of the world, where there are any who know thee—this is wonderful indeed! The more thou hast exalted me, the more I ought to abase myself."

on my undertaking these Memoirs, and subjoin them in a note.\* It may give the reader pleasure to be informed, that Miss Catlett returned home—gradually recovered—and afterwards married a worthy man of the name of Smith.

It was with a mixture of delight and surprise, that the friends and hearers of this eminent servant of God beheld him bringing forth such a measure of fruit in extreme age. Though then almost eighty years old, sight nearly gone, and incapable, through deafness, of joining in conversation, yet his public ministry was regularly continued, and maintained with a considerable degree of his former animation. His memory, indeed, was observed to fail, but his judgment in divine things still remained; and though some depression of spirits was observed, which he used to account for from his advanced age, his perception, taste, and zeal for the truths he had long received and taught, were evident. Like Simeon, having seen the salvation of the Lord, he now only waited and prayed to depart in peace.

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

---

\* “August 1, 1801. I now enter my 77th year. I have been exercised this year with a trying and unexpected change; but it is by thy appointment, my gracious Lord; and thou art unchangeably wise, good, and merciful. Thou gavest me my dear adopted child. Thou didst own my endeavours to bring her up for thee. I have no doubt that thou hast called her by thy grace. I thank thee for the many years comfort (ten) I have had in her, and for the attention and affection she has always shown me, exceeding that of most daughters to their own parents. Thou hast now tried me, as thou didst Abraham, in my old age; when my eyes are failing, and my strength declines. Thou hast called for my Isaac, who had so long been my chief stay and staff, but it was thy blessing that made her so. A nervous disorder has seized her, and I desire to leave her under thy care; and chiefly pray for myself, that I may be enabled to wait thy time and will, without betraying any signs of impatience or despondency unbecoming my profession and character. Hitherto thou hast helped me; and to thee I look for help in future. Let all issue in thy glory, that my friends and hearers may be encouraged by seeing how I am supported: let thy strength be manifested in my weakness, and thy grace be sufficient for me, and let all finally work together for our good. Amen. I aim to say from my heart, not my will, but thine be done. But though thou hast in a measure made my spirit willing, thou knowest, and I feel, that the flesh is weak. Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief. Lord, I submit, subdue every rebellious thought that dares arise against thy will. Spare my eyes, if it please thee; but, above all, strengthen my faith and love.”

In every future visit I perceived old age making rapid strides. At length his friends found some difficulty in making themselves known to him: his sight, his hearing, and his recollection exceedingly failed; but, being mercifully kept from pain, he generally appeared easy and cheerful. Whatever he uttered was perfectly consistent with the principles he had so long and so honourably maintained. Calling to see him a few days before he died, with one of his most intimate friends, we could not make him recollect either of us; but seeing him afterwards, when sitting up in his chair, I found so much intellect remaining as produced a short and affectionate reply, though he was utterly incapable of conversation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. N. seemed sensible to his last hour, but expressed nothing remarkable

after these words. He departed on the 21st, and was buried in the vault of his church the 31st of December 1807, having left the following injunction, in a letter for the direction of his executors.

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

JOHN NEWTON, CLERK,  
Once an infidel and libertine,  
A servant of slaves in Africa,  
Was by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour  
JESUS CHRIST,  
Preserved, restored, pardoned,  
And appointed to preach the faith he  
Had long laboured to destroy.  
Near 16 years at Olney in Bucks;  
And — years in this church.  
On Feb. 1, 1750, he married  
MARY,  
Daughter of the late George Catlett,  
Of Chatham, Kent.  
He resigned her to the Lord who gave her,  
On the 15th of December 1790.

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

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

“In the name of God, amen. I JOHN NEWTON, of Coleman Street Buildings, in the parish of St Stephen, Coleman Street, in the city of London, Clerk, being through mercy in good health and of sound and disposing mind, memory, and understanding, although in the seventy-eighth year of my age, do, for the settling of my temporal concerns, and for the disposal of all the worldly estate which it hath pleased the Lord in his good providence to give me, make this my last Will and Testament as follows. I commit my soul to my gracious God and Saviour, who mercifully spared and preserved me, when I was an apostate, a blasphemer, and an infidel, and delivered me from that state of misery on the coast of Africa into which my obstinate wickedness had plunged me; and who has been pleased to admit me (though most unworthy) to preach his glorious gospel. I rely with humble confidence upon the atonement and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, God and Man, which



I have often proposed to others as the only foundation whereon a sinner can build his hope; trusting that he will guard and guide me through the uncertain remainder of my life, and that he will then admit me into his presence in his heavenly kingdom. I would have my body deposited in the vault under the parish church of St Mary Woolnoth, close to the coffins of my late dear wife and my dear niece Elizabeth Cunningham; and it is my desire, that my funeral may be performed with as little expense as possible, consistent with decency.”——

REVIEW  
OF  
MR NEWTON'S CHARACTER.

---

THERE seems to be little need of giving a general character of Mr N. after the particulars which appear in the foregoing Memoirs. He unquestionably was the child of a peculiar providence, in every step of his progress; and his deep sense of the extraordinary dispensation through which he had passed, was the prominent topic in his conversation. Those who personally knew the man, could have no doubt of the probity with which his Narrative (singular as it may appear) was written. They, however, who could not view the subject of these Memoirs so nearly as his particular friends did, may wish to learn something farther of his character with respect to his LITERARY ATTAINMENTS—his MINISTRY—his FAMILY HABITS—his WRITINGS—and his FAMILIAR CONVERSATION.

Of his LITERATURE, we learn from his Narrative what he attained in the learned languages, and that by almost incredible efforts. Few men have undertaken such difficulties, under such disadvantages. It, therefore, seems more extraordinary that he should have attained so much, than that he should not have acquired more. Nor did he quit his pursuits of this kind, but in order to gain that knowledge which he deemed much more important. Whatever he conceived had a tendency to qualify him as “a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God, bringing out of his treasury things new and old”—I say, in pursuit of this point, he might have adopted the apostle’s expression, “One thing I do.” By a principle so simply and firmly directed, he furnished his mind with much information: he had consulted the best old divines; had read the moderns of reputation with avidity; and was continually watching whatever might serve for analogies or illustrations, in the service of religion. “A minister,” he used to say, “wherever he is, should be always in his study. He should look at every man, and at every thing, as capable of affording him some instruction.” His mind, therefore, was ever intent on his calling—ever extracting something, even from the basest materials, which he could turn into gold.

In consequence of this incessant attention to his object, while many, whose early advantages greatly exceeded his, were found excelling Mr N. in the knowledge and investigation of some curious abstract, but very unimportant points; he was found vastly excelling them in points of infinitely

higher importance to man. In the knowledge of God, of his word, and of the human heart, in its wants and resources, Newton would have stood among mere scholars as his name-sake the philosopher stood in science among ordinary men. I might say the same of some others who have set out late in the profession, but who, with a portion of Mr N.'s piety and ardour, have greatly outstripped those who have had every early advantage and encouragement. Men with specious titles and high connexions have received the rewards; while men, like Newton, without them, have done the work.

With respect to his MINISTRY, he appeared, perhaps, to least advantage in the pulpit; as he did not generally aim at accuracy in the composition of his sermons, nor at any address in the delivery of them. His utterance was far from clear, and his attitudes ungraceful. He possessed, however, so much affection for his people, and zeal for their best interests, that the defect of his manner was of little consideration with his constant hearers: at the same time, his capacity, and habit of entering into their trials and experience, gave the highest interest to his ministry among them. Besides which, he frequently interspersed the most brilliant allusions, and brought forward such happy illustration of his subject, and those with so much unction on his own heart, as melted and enlarged theirs. The parent-like tenderness and affection which accompanied his instruction, made them prefer him to preachers who, on other accounts, were much more generally popular. It ought also to be noted, that, amidst the extravagant notions and unscriptural positions, which have sometimes disgraced the religious world, Mr N. never departed, in any instance, from soundly and seriously promulgating the "faith once delivered to the saints," of which his writings will remain the best evidence. His doctrine was strictly that of the Church of England, urged on the consciences of men in the most practical and experimental manner. "I hope," said he one day to me, smiling, "I hope I am upon the whole a scriptural preacher: for I find I am considered as an Arminian among the high Calvinists, and as a Calvinist among the strenuous Arminians."

I never observed any thing like bigotry in his ministerial character, though he seemed at all times to appreciate the beauty of order, and its good effects in the ministry. He had formerly been intimately connected with some highly respectable ministers among the Dissenters, and retained a cordial regard for many to the last. He considered the strong prejudices which attach to both Churchmen and Dissenters, as arising more from education than from principle. But being himself both a clergyman and an incumbent in the Church of England, he wished to be consistent. In public, therefore, he felt he could not act with some ministers, whom he thought truly good men, and to whom he cordially wished success in their endeavours; and he patiently

met the consequence. They called him a bigot, and he in return prayed for them, that they might not be really such.

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

Mr N. regularly preached on the Sunday morning and evening at St Mary Woolnoth, and also on the Wednesday morning. After he was turned of seventy, he often undertook to assist other clergymen, sometimes even to the preaching six sermons in the space of a week. What was more extraordinary, he continued his usual course of preaching at his own church after he was fourscore years old, and that, when he could no longer see to read his text! His memory and voice sometimes failed him; but it was remarked, that, at this great age, he was nowhere more collected or lively than in the pulpit. He was punctual as to time with his congregation; and preached every first Sunday evening in the month on relative duties. Mr Alderman Lea regularly sent his carriage to convey him to the church, and Mr Bates sent his servant to attend him in the pulpit; which friendly assistance was continued till Mr N. could appear no longer in public.

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

Truth demands it should be said, that he did not always administer consolation, nor give an account of characters, with sufficient discrimination. His talent did not lie in “discerning of spirits.” I never saw him so much moved as when any friend endeavoured to correct his errors in this respect.

His credulity seemed to arise from the consciousness he had of his own integrity, and from that sort of parental fondness which he bore to all his friends, real or pretended. I knew one, since dead, whom he thus described, while living—"He is certainly an odd man, and has his failings; but he has great integrity, and I hope is going to heaven." Whereas almost all who knew him thought the man should go first into the pillory!

In his FAMILY Mr N. might be admired more safely than imitated. His excessive attachment to Mrs N. is so fully displayed in his Narrative, and confirmed in the two volumes he thought proper to publish, entitled, "Letters to a Wife," that the reader will need no information on this subject. Some of his friends wished this violent attachment had been cast more into the shade, as tending to furnish a spur, where human nature generally needs a curb. He used, indeed, to speak of such attachments, in the abstract, as idolatry; though his own was providentially ordered to be the main hinge on which his preservation and deliverance turned, while in his worst state. Good men, however, cannot be too cautious how they give sanction, by their expressions or example, to a passion, which, when not under sober regulation, has overwhelmed not only families, but states, with disgrace and ruin.

With his unusual degree of benevolence and affection, it was not extraordinary that the spiritual interests of his servants were brought forward, and examined severally every Sunday afternoon; and that, being treated like children, they should grow old in his service. In short, Mr N could live no longer than he could love; it is no wonder, therefore, if his nieces had more of his heart than is generally afforded to their own children by the fondest parents. It has already been mentioned, that his house was an asylum for the perplexed or afflicted. Young ministers were peculiarly the objects of his attention: he instructed them, he encouraged them, he warned them; and might truly be said to be a father in Christ, "spending and being spent" for the interest of his church. In order thus to execute the various avocations of the day, he used to rise early; he seldom was found abroad in the evening, and was exact in his appointments.

Of his WRITINGS, I think little need be said here; they are in wide circulation, and best speak for themselves. What I shall observe upon them, therefore, will be general and cursory.

The Sermons Mr N. published at Liverpool, after being refused on his first application for Orders, were intended to show what he would have preached, had he been admitted; they are highly creditable to his understanding and to his heart. The facility with which he attained so much of the learned languages, seems partly accounted for, from his being able to acquire, so early, a neat and natural style in his own language, and that under such evident disadvantages. His Review of Ecclesiastical History, so far as

it is proceeded, has been much esteemed, and, if it had done no more than excite the Rev. J. Milner (as that most valuable and instructive author informs us it did) to pursue Mr N.'s idea more largely, it was sufficient success. Before this, the world seems to have lost sight of a history of real Christianity, and to have been content with what, for the most part, was but an account of the ambition and politics of secular men, assuming the Christian name.

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

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

His chief excellence seemed to lie in the easy and natural style of his epistolary correspondence. His letters will be read while real religion exists; and they are the best draught of his own mind.

He had so largely communicated to his friends in this way, that I have heard him say, "he thought, if his letters were collected, they would make several folios." He selected many of these for publication, and expressed a hope, that no other person would take that liberty with the rest, which were so widely spread abroad. In this, however, he was disappointed and grieved, as he once remarked to me; and for which reason I do not annex any letters that I received from him. He esteemed that collection published under the title of "Cardiphonia" as the most useful of his writings, and mentioned various instances of the benefits which he heard they had conveyed to many.

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

John Cowper (brother to the poet), and those of the Rev. Mr Grimshaw of Yorkshire, together with his single sermons and tracts, have been well received, and will remain a public benefit.

I recollect reading a MS. which Mr N. lent me, containing a correspondence that had passed between himself and the Rev. Dr Dixon, principal of St Edmund Hall, Oxford; and another MS. of a correspondence between him and the late Rev. Martin Madan. They would have been very interesting to the public, particularly the latter, and were striking evidences of Mr N.'s humility, piety, and faithfulness; but reasons of delicacy led him to commit the whole to the flames.

To speak of his writings in the mass, they certainly possess what many have aimed at, but very few attained, namely, originality. They are the language of the heart; they show a deep experience of its religious feelings, a continual anxiety to sympathize with man in his wants, and to direct him to his only resources.

His CONVERSATION, and familiar habits with his friends, were more peculiar, amusing, and instructive, than any I ever witnessed. It is difficult to convey a clear idea of them by description. I venture, therefore, to add a few pages of what I may call his table-talk, which I took down at different times, both in company and in private, from his lips. Such a collection of printed remarks will not have so much point as when spoken in connexion with the occasion that produced them: they must appear to considerable disadvantage thus detached, and candid allowance should be made by the reader on this account. They, however, who had the privilege of Mr N.'s conversation when living, cannot but recognize the speaker in most of them, and derive both profit and pleasure from these remains of their late valuable friend; and such as had not, will (if I do not mistake) think them the most valuable part of this book.

# REMARKS

MADE BY MR NEWTON

IN FAMILIAR CONVERSATION

---

WHILE the mariner uses the loadstone, the philosopher may attempt to investigate the cause; but after all, in steering through the ocean, he can make no other use of it than the mariner.

If an angel were sent to find the most perfect man, he would probably not find him composing a body of divinity, but perhaps a cripple in a poor-house, whom the parish wish dead, and humbled before God with far lower thoughts of himself than others think of him.

When a Christian goes into the world, because he sees it is his call, yet, while he feels it also his cross, it will not hurt him.

Satan will seldom come to a Christian with a gross temptation: a green log and a candle may be safely left together; but bring a few shavings, then some small sticks, and then larger, and you may soon bring the green log to ashes.

If two angels came down from heaven to execute a divine command, and one was appointed to conduct an empire, and the other to sweep a street in it, they would feel no inclination to choose employments.

The post of honour in an army is not with the baggage, nor with the women.

What some call providential openings are often powerful temptations; the heart, in wandering, cries, Here is a way opened before me; but, perhaps, not to be trodden, but rejected.

Young people marry as others study navigation, by the fire-side. If they marry unsuitably, they can scarcely bring things to rule, but, like sailors, they must sail as near the wind as they can. I feel myself like a traveller with his wife in his chaise and one; if the ground is smooth, and she keep the right pace, and is willing to deliver the reins when I ask for them, I am always willing to let her drive.

I should have thought mowers very idle people; but they work while they whet their scythes. Now devotedness to God, whether it mows or whets the scythe, still goes on with the work.

A Christian should never plead spirituality for being a sloven; if he be but a shoe-cleaner, he should be the best in the parish.



In choosing my text, I feel myself like a servant to whom a key has been given, which opens a particular drawer, but who has not the bunch of keys, which open all the drawers. I therefore expect to be helped to only one text at a time.

My course of study, like that of a surgeon, has principally consisted in walking the hospital.

In divinity, as well as in other professions, there are the little artists. A man may be able to execute the buttons of a statue very neatly, but I could not call him an able artist. There is an air, there is a taste, to which his narrow capacity cannot reach. Now in the church, there are your dexterous button-makers.

My principal method for defeating heresy, is by establishing truth. One proposes to fill a bushel with tares; now if I can fill it first with wheat, I shall defy his attempts.

When some people talk of religion, they mean they have heard so many sermons, and performed so many devotions, and thus mistake the means for the end. But true religion is an habitual recollection of God and intention to serve him, and thus turns every thing into gold. We are apt to suppose that we need something splendid to evince our devotion, but true devotion equals things—washing plates, and cleaning shoes, is a high office, if performed in a right spirit. If three angels were sent to earth, they would feel perfect indifference who should perform the part of prime-minister, parish-minister, or watchman.

When a ship goes to sea, among a vast variety of its articles and circumstances, there is but one object regarded, namely, doing the business of the voyage: every bucket is employed with respect to that.

Many have puzzled themselves about the origin of evil; I observe there is evil, and that there is a way to escape it, and with this I begin and end.

Consecrated things under the law were first sprinkled with blood, and then anointed with oil, and thenceforward were no more common. Thus under the gospel, every Christian has been a common vessel for profane purposes; but, when sprinkled and anointed, he becomes separated and consecrated to God.

I would not give a straw for that assurance, which sin will not damp. If David had come from his adultery, and had talked of his assurance at that time, I should have despised his speech.

A spirit of adoption is the spirit of a child; he may disoblige his father, yet he is not afraid of being turned out of doors. The union is not dissolved, though the communion is. He is not well with his father, therefore must be unhappy, as their interests are inseparable.

We often seek to apply cordials when the patient is not prepared for them, and it is the patient's advantage, that he cannot take a medicine when prematurely offered. When a man comes to me, and says, "I am quite happy," I am not sorry to find him come again with some fears. I never saw a work stand well without a check. "I only want," says one, "to be sure of being safe, and then I will go on." No; perhaps, then you will go off.

For an old Christian to say to a young one, "Stand in my evidence," is like a man, who has with difficulty climbed by a ladder or scaffolding to the top of the house, and cries to one at the bottom, "This is the place for a prospect—come up at a step."

A Christian, like a miser, will ask the price of his pleasures: the miser has no objection to go to Brighton, but always asks what it will cost? The miser, indeed, has this advantage, that he is always in the same frame.

A Christian in the world is like a man, who has had a long intimacy with one, whom at length he finds out was the murderer of a kind father; the intimacy, after this, will surely be broken.

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." A man may live in a deep mine in Hungary, never having seen the light of the sun; he may have received accounts of prospects, and by the help of a candle, may have examined a few engravings of them but let him be brought out of the mine, and set on the mountain, what a difference appears!

In our fallen state, we are a sort of solecism in the universe: other animals are faithful to their instincts; lambs do not wish to swim, nor fish to feed in a meadow. If the sun were a rational creature he would delight to shine, otherwise he ought to be extinguished.

Candour will always allow much for inexperience. I have been thirty years forming my own views, and in the course of this time some of my hills have been sinking, and some of my valleys have risen; but how unreasonable would it be to expect all this should take place in another person, and that in the course of a year or two.

Candour forbids us to estimate a character from its accidental blots. Yet it is thus that David, and others have been treated.

Apollos met with two candid people in the church: they neither ran away because he was legal, nor were carried away because he was eloquent.

There is the analogy of faith; it is a master-key, which not only opens particular doors, but carries you through the whole house; but an attachment to a rigid system is dangerous. Luther once turned out the epistle of St James, because it disturbed his system. Dr Owen will be ashamed of his wisdom and clearness, five minutes after he has been in heaven. I shall preach, perhaps, very usefully upon two opposite texts, while kept apart; but if I attempt nicely to reconcile them, it is ten to one if I don't begin to bungle.

I can conceive a living man without an arm or a leg, but not without a head or a heart: so there are some truths essential to vital religion, and which all awakened souls are taught.

Apostacy, in all its branches, takes its rise from atheism. "I have set the Lord always before me," &c. The doctrine of omnipresence is universally allowed.

We are surprised at the fall of a famous professor; but, in the sight of God, the man was gone before; it is only we that have now first discovered it. "He that despiseth small things, shall fall by little and little."

There are critical times of danger. After great services, honours, and consolations, we should stand upon our guard. Noah, Lot, David, and Solomon, fell in these circumstances. Satan is a footpad: a footpad will not attack a man in going to the bank, but in returning with his pocket full of money.

A Christian is like a young nobleman, who, on going to receive his estate, is at first enchanted by its prospects; this in a course of time may wear off, but a sense of the value of the estate grows daily.

When we first enter into the divine life, we propose to grow rich; God's plan is to make us feel poor.

Good men have need to take heed of building upon groundless impressions. Mr Whitefield had a son, which he imagined was born to be a very extraordinary man: but the son soon died, and the father was cured of his mistake.

I remember, in going to undertake the care of a congregation, I was reading, as I walked in a green lane, "Fear not, Paul, I have much people in this city;" but I soon afterwards was disappointed in finding that Paul was not John, and that Corinth was not Warwick.

Christ has taken our nature into heaven to represent us; and has left us on earth, with his nature, to represent him.

Worldly men will be true to their principles; and if we were as true to ours, the visits between the two parties would be short and seldom.

A Christian in the world is like a man transacting his affairs in the rain. He will not suddenly leave his client, because it rains; but the moment the business is done, he is off: as it is said in the Acts, "Being let go, they went to their own company."

When a man is joined to Christ, Christ says to him, as it was once said to the Levite, "Let all thy wants lie upon me, only abide not in the street."

God's word is certainly a restraint; but it is such a restraint as the irons which prevent children from getting into the fire.

The scriptures are so full, that every case may be found in them. A rake went into a church, and tried to decoy a girl by saying, "Why do you attend

to such stuff as these scriptures?" "Because," said she, "they tell me, that in the last days there shall come such scoffers as you."

God deals with us as we do with our children: he first speaks, then gives a gentle stroke, at last a blow.

The religion of a sinner stands on two pillars; namely, what Christ did for us in his flesh, and what he performs in us by his Spirit. Most errors arise from an attempt to separate these two.

We blame an Arminian for his want of submission to divine sovereignty; yet let a shower of rain fall on a suit of new clothes, and we cannot submit ourselves.

Man is not taught any thing to purpose till God becomes his teacher, and then the glare of the world is put out, and the value of the soul rises in full view. A man's present sentiments may not be accurate, but we make too much of sentiments. We pass a field with a few blades, we call it a field of wheat; but here is no wheat; no, not in perfection, but wheat is sown, and full ears may be expected.

The word temperance, in the New Testament, signifies self-possession; it is a disposition suitable to one who has a race to run, and therefore will not load his pockets with lead.

One reason why we must not attempt to pull up the tares which grow among the wheat is, that we have not skill for the work; like a weeder, whom Mrs N. employed in my garden at Olney, who for weeds pulled up some of her favourite flowers.

Contrivers of systems on earth are like contrivers of systems in the heavens; where the sun and moon keep the same course, in spite of the philosophers.

I endeavour to walk through the world as a physician goes through Bedlam: the patients make a noise, pester him with impertinence, and hinder him in his business; but he does the best he can, and so gets through.

A man always in society, is one always on the spend: on the other hand, a mere solitary is, at his best, but a candle in an empty room.

If we were upon the watch for improvement, the common news of the day would furnish it: the falling of the tower of Siloam, and the slaughter of the Galileans, were the news of the day, which our Lord improved.

The generality make out their righteousness by comparing themselves with some others whom they think worse: thus, a woman of the town, who was rotting in the Lock Hospital, was offended at a minister speaking to her as a sinner, because she had never picked a pocket.

Take away a toy from a child, and give him another, and he is satisfied; but if he be hungry, no toy will do. Thus, as new-born babes, true believers

desire the sincere milk of the word; and the desire of grace, in this way, is grace.

One said, that the great saints in the calendar were many of them poor sinners; Mr N. replied, they were poor saints indeed, if they did not feel that they were great sinners.

A wise man looks upon men as he does upon horses; and considers their caparisons of title, wealth, and place, but as harness.

The force of what we deliver from the pulpit is often lost by a starched, and what is often called a correct style, and especially by adding meretricious ornaments. I called upon a lady who had been robbed, and she gave me a striking account of the fact; but had she put it in heroics, I should neither so well have understood her, nor been so well convinced that she was robbed.

When a man says he received a blessing under a sermon, I begin to inquire who this man is, that speaks of the help he has received. The Roman people proved the effect they received under a sermon of Antony when they flew to avenge the death of Cæsar.

The Lord has reasons, far beyond our ken, for opening a wide door, while he stops the mouth of a useful preacher. John Bunyan would not have done half the good he did, if he had remained preaching in Bedford, instead of being shut up in Bedford prison.

If I could go to France, and give every man in it a right and peaceable mind by my labour, I should have a statue; but to produce such an effect in the conversion of one soul would be a far greater achievement.

Ministers would over-rate their labours, if they did not think it worth while to be born and spend ten thousand years in labour and contempt, to recover one soul.

Don't tell me of your feelings. A traveller would be glad of fine weather, but, if he be a man of business, he will go on. Bunyan says, You must not judge of a man's haste by his horse; for when the horse can hardly move, you may see by the rider's urging him, what a hurry he is in.

A man and a beast may stand upon the same mountain, and even touch one another; yet they are in two different worlds: the beast perceives nothing but the grass; but the man contemplates the prospect, and thinks of a thousand remote things. Thus a Christian may be solitary at a full Exchange; he can converse with the people there upon trade, politics, and the stocks; but they cannot talk with him upon the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.

Love and fear are like the sun and moon, seldom seen together.

Two men go into a wood with their guns, and one fires as often as the other: but one kills a great quantity of game, because he fires with shot.

Some, like Zaccheus, think they sit very snug in a corner, and are brought down much before they expect it.

I dreamt one night that I saw Matthew Henry lay open at this text, "Let your women keep silence in the churches," and thought I read the following note at bottom: "Note—We see the reason why women are forbid to preach the gospel, for they would persuade without argument, and reprove without giving offence."

It is a mere fallacy to talk of the sins of a short life. The sinner is always a sinner. Put a pump into a river, you may throw out some water, but the river remains.

Professors, who own the doctrines of free grace, often act inconsistently with their own principles, when they are angry at the defects of others. A company of travellers fall into a pit, one of them gets a passenger to draw him out: now he should not be angry with the rest for falling in, nor because they are not yet out, as he is. He did not pull himself out; instead, therefore, of reproaching them, he should show them pity; he should avoid at any rate going down upon their ground again, and show how much better and happier he is upon his own. We should take care that we do not make our profession of religion a receipt in full for all other obligations. A man, truly illuminated, will no more despise others, than Bartimeus, after his own eyes were opened, would take a stick, and beat every blind man he met.

We are much mistaken in supposing, that the removal of a particular obstruction would satisfy the objector. Suppose I am in bed, and want to know whether it be light, it is not enough if I draw the curtain; for if there be light, I must have eyes to see it.

Too deep a consideration of eternal realities might unfit a man for his present circumstances. Walking through St Bartholomew's Hospital or Bedlam must deeply affect a feeling mind, but in reality this world is a far worse scene; it has but two wards, in the one, men are miserable, in the other mad.

Some preachers near Olney dwelt on the doctrine of predestination; an old woman said—"Ah! I have long settled that point; for if God had not chosen me before I was born, I am sure he would have seen nothing in me to have chosen me for afterwards."

Law has swept away Warburton's cobweb, with a single brush. Abel pleased God, but Cain killed him; therefore, it was a dangerous thing to please God, if there were no future state.

I see the unprofitableness of controversy in the case of Job and his friends; for if God had not interposed, and they had lived to this day, they would have continued the dispute.

It is pure mercy that negatives a particular request. A miser would pray very earnestly for gold, if he believed prayer would gain it; whereas, if Christ had any favour to him, he would take his gold away.

A child walks in the garden in spring, and sees cherries; he knows they are good fruit, and therefore asks for them. "No, my dear," says the father, "they are not yet ripe: stay till the season."

If I cannot take pleasure in infirmities, I can sometimes feel the profit of them. I can conceive a king to pardon a rebel, and take him into his family, and then say, "I appoint you for a season to wear a fetter. At a certain season I will send a messenger to knock it off. In the mean time this fetter will serve to remind you of your state; it may humble you, and restrain you from rambling."

Some Christians, at a glance, seem of a superior order, and are not; they want a certain quality. At a florist's feast the other day, a certain flower was determined to bear the bell, but it was found to be an artificial flower; there is a quality called growth, which it had not.

Doctor Taylor of Norwich said to me, "Sir, I have collated every word in the Hebrew Scriptures seventeen times; and it is very strange, if the doctrine of atonement you hold should not have been found by me." I am not surprised at this: I once went to light my candle with the extinguisher on it. Now, prejudices from education, learning, &c. often form an extinguisher. It is not enough that you bring the candle, you must remove the extinguisher.

I measure ministers by square measure. I have no idea of the size of a table, if you only tell me how long it is; but if you also say how broad, I can tell its dimensions. So when you tell me what a man is in the pulpit, you must also tell me what he is out of it, or I shall not know his size.

If Nebuchadnezzar's image was of solid gold, and every worshipper was to have a bit of it, I fear our nation, as well as his, would be ready to fall down before it.

There were two sorts of Calvinists at Olney, and they always reminded me of the two baskets of Jeremiah's figs.

A man should be born to high things not to lose himself in them. Slaters will walk on the ridge of a house with ease, which would turn our heads.

Much depends on the way we come into trouble. Paul and Jonah were both in a storm, but in very different circumstances.

I have read of many wicked Popes, but the worst Pope I ever met with is Pope SELF.

The men of this world are children. Offer a child an apple and a bank-note, he will doubtless choose the apple.

A pious gentlewoman told me of her pottery being burnt. "I congratulate you, madam," said I, "in possessing something you cannot lose."

The heir of a great estate, while a child, thinks more of a few shillings in his pocket, than of his inheritance. So a Christian is often more elated by some frame of heart, than by his title to glory.

A dutiful child is ever looking forward to the holidays, when he shall return to his father; but he does not think of running from school before.

The gospel is a proclamation of free mercy to guilty creatures—an act of grace to rebels. Now, though a rebel should throw away his pistols, and determine to go into the woods, and make his mind better before he goes to court and pleads the act; he may indeed not be found in arms, yet, being taken in his reforming scheme, he will be hanged.

The devil told a lie when he said, “All these things are mine, and to whomsoever I will I give them:” for if he had the disposal of preferments, since he knows the effect of them, you and I, brother C—, should soon be dignitaries.

Man is made capable of three births—by nature he enters the present world—by grace into spiritual light and life—by death into glory.

In my imagination, I sometimes fancy I could make a perfect minister. I take the eloquence of —, the knowledge of —, the zeal of —, and the pastoral meekness, tenderness, and piety of —; then putting them all together into one man, I say to myself, this would be a perfect minister. Now, there is One who, if he chose it, could actually do this, but he never did; he has seen fit to do otherwise, and to divide these gifts to every man severally as he will.

I feel like a man, who has no money in his pocket, but is allowed to draw for all he wants upon one infinitely rich: I am, therefore, at once both a beggar and a rich man.

I went one day to Mrs G—’s, just after she had lost all her fortune; I could not be surprised to find her in tears, but she said, “I suppose you think I am crying for my loss: but that is not the case— I am now weeping to think I should feel so much uneasiness on the account.” After that, I never heard her speak again upon the subject as long as she lived.—Why, now, this is just as it should be.—Suppose a man was going to York to take possession of a large estate, and his chaise should break down a mile before he got to the city, which obliged him to walk the rest of the way; what a fool we should think him if we saw him wringing his hands, and blubbering out all the remaining mile, “My chaise is broken! my chaise is broken!”

I have many books that I cannot sit down to read; they are, indeed, good and sound; but, like halfpence, there goes a great quantity to a little amount. There are silver books, and a very few golden books; but I have one book worth more than all, called the Bible, and that is a book of bank-notes.



I conclude these remarks, not because my memorandum-book is exhausted, but lest the reader should think I forget the old maxim, *ne quid nimis*. No undue liberty, however, has been taken in publishing Mr N.'s private conversation; since all the above remarks were submitted to him, as intended for this publication, and were approved.

---

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE difference of mental improvement, among men, seems very much to depend on their capacity and habit of gathering instruction from the objects which are continually presented to their observation. Two men behold the same fact: one of them is in the habit of drawing such remarks and inferences as the fact affords, and learns something from every thing he sees; while the other sees the same fact, and perhaps with a momentary admiration, but lets it pass without making so much as one profitable reflection on the occasion. The excursions of the bee and the butterfly present an exact emblem of these two characters.

I have present to my mind an acquaintance, who has seen more of the outside of the world than most men: he has lived in most countries of the civilized world; yet I scarcely know a man of a less improved mind. With every external advantage, he has learned nothing to any useful purpose. He seems to have passed from flower to flower without extracting a drop of honey; and now he tires all his friends with the frivolous garrulity of a capricious, vacant, and petulant old age.

I wish the reader of these Memoirs may avoid such an error in passing over the history here laid before him. An extraordinary train of facts is presented to his observation; and if “the proper study of mankind is man,” the history before us will surely furnish important matter of the kind, to the eye of every wise moral traveller.

I would here call the attention of three classes of men to a single point of prime importance; namely, to the efficacy and excellency of real Christianity, as exhibited in the principles and practice of the subject of these Memoirs.

I. Suppose the reader to be so unhappy (though his misfortune may be least perceived by himself) as to be led astray by bad society, in conjunction with “an evil heart of unbelief.” I will suppose him to be now in the state in which Mr N. describes himself formerly to have been, and in which also the writer of these Memoirs once was. I will suppose him to be given up to “believe his own lie;” and that he may be in the habit of thinking, that God, when he made man, left him to find his way, without any express revelation of the mind and will of his Maker and Governor; or, at most, that he is left to the only rule in morals, which nature may be supposed to present. What that way is, which such a thinker will take, is sufficiently evident from the general course and habits of unbelievers.—But there is a conscience in man. Conscience, in sober moments, often alarms the most stouthearted. When such an unbeliever meets an overwhelming providence, or lies on a death-bed, he

will probably awake to a strong sense of his real condition. He will feel, if not very hardened indeed, in what a forlorn, unprovided, and dangerous state he exists. Life is the moment in which only this sceptical presumption can continue; and, when it is terminating, where is he to set the sole of his foot? He wildly contemplates the book of nature, in which he may have been persuaded, that man may read all he needs to know; but the forlorn outcast sees nothing there to meet his case as a sinner. Infinite power, wisdom, contrivance, general provision alone appear; but nothing of that further and distinct information, which a dying offender needs. He wants footing, and finds none. He needs the hand of a friend to grasp, but none is seen. Possibilities shock his apprehension. He may, perhaps, discern, that the present system has a moral government, which frowns upon guilt; and, for aught he knows to the contrary, the next scene may present a Judge upon his throne of justice—this world, his present idol, vanished like smoke—and quick and dead called to give their account. Where then is he?—an atom of guilt and wretchedness! All this, I say, may be, for aught he knows to the contrary. But the express and well-authenticated revelation, which that Judge hath sent to man, tells us plainly that all this shall be, and that every eye shall behold it!

“Be it so,” such a reader may reply, “still I am what I am. My habits of thinking are fixed; and I perceive my habits of life can only be decently borne out by my profession of unbelief. Both are now inveterate. Nor do I see, all things considered, what can be done in my case. How can I adopt the Christian revelation? and what could it do for me if I could?” I answer by calling your attention to the fact before us. What was the case of John Newton?

Could any one be more deeply sunk in depravity, in profligacy, in infidelity, than he? Can you even conceive, a rational creature more degraded, or more hardened in his evil habits? Would you attempt to recover such a mind by arguments, drawn from the advantage which virtue has over vice? or by rousing his attention to the duties of natural religion? or the possible consequences of a future retribution? He would have gone on thinking he had made the most of his circumstances, in his practice of catching fish, and eating them almost raw—He would sullenly have proceeded to sleep through the drying of his one shirt, which he had just washed on the rock, and put on wet—He would, with a savage ferocity, have watched an opportunity for murdering his master—He would have drowned all reflection in a drunken revel, and overwhelmed all remonstrance by belching out newly-invented blasphemies; and then sought to rush headlong, in a drunken paroxysm, into the ocean.

Here is certainly presented the utmost pitch of a depraved and a degraded nature, nor does it seem possible for Satan to carry his point farther with a

man—except in one single instance, namely, by the final disbelief of a remedy.

Now, by God's help, this divine remedy was applied, and its efficacy demonstrated, of which there are thousands of living witnesses. A plain matter of fact is before us. It pleased God, by a train of dispensations, that this prodigal should "come to himself." He is made to feel his wants and misery. He follows the "light shining in a dark place." He calls for help. He is made willing to follow his guide. He proceeds with implicit confidence: and now let us examine to what, at length, he is brought; and also by what means.

I speak of a matter of fact—whither is he brought? He is brought from the basest, meanest, under-trodden state of slavery—from a state of mind still more degraded, being "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating"—wanting nothing of a complete devil but his powers. This man is brought, I say, to be a faithful and zealous servant of his God; an able and laborious minister of Christ; a useful and benevolent friend to his neighbour; wise to secure the salvation of his own soul, and wise to win the souls of others.

Consider also the means by which he was brought. It was not by the arguments of philosophers, or the rational considerations of what is called natural religion. Mr N.'s own account informs us, that the peculiar discoveries of revealed truth gradually broke in upon his mind; till, at length, he was made sensible that there was a remedy provided in the gospel, and which was fully sufficient to meet even his case, and he found that, and that only, to be "the power of God unto salvation."

The result, therefore, which should be drawn from these premises is the following:—There exists a desperate disorder in the world, called sin. Heathens as well as Christians have marked its malignant influence; they have tried various expedients, which have been prescribed for its cure, or at least its mitigation; but no means, except God's own appointed means, have been discovered, that have been able to relieve so much as a single individual. Yet, strange to say, this *medicina mentis* of God's own appointment, to which only he has promised a peculiar blessing, and by which he is daily recovering men in the most desperate circumstances, who actually employ it: strange to say, this remedy still remains a stumbling block—is counted foolishness—insomuch, that many will rather dash this cup of salvation from the lips of a profligate, like Newton, when disposed to receive it, than he should obtain relief that way. Their conduct seems to say, "Rather let such a wretch go on in his profligacy, than the gospel be acknowledged to be the wisdom and the power of God."

Not that the case of Mr N., here presented to the consideration of an unbeliever, is brought forward as if the gospel needed any farther evidence, or

has occasion for facts of our own time to give it additional authenticity; but we are directed to regard the “cloud of witnesses,” among which our departed brother was distinguished; “and though now dead, yet speaketh.” May the reader have ears to hear the important report!

Does the question return, therefore, as to what the unbeliever should do? Let him, after seriously considering what is here advanced, consider also what conduct is becoming a responsible, or at least a rational creature? Surely it becomes such a one to avoid all means of stifling the voice of conscience whenever it begins to speak; to regard the voice of God yet speaking to him in the revelation of his grace, and that much more humbly and seriously than such persons are wont to do. It becomes him, if he have any regard to the interest of his own soul, or the souls of his fellow-creatures, to give no countenance, by his declarations or example, to the senseless cavils, and indecent scoffs, by which the profligate aim to cloak the disorders of their hearts; by which vanity aims at distinction, and half-thinkers affect depth. The person I am now speaking to cannot but observe how much the judgment becomes the dupe of the passions. “If the veil be upon the heart, it will be upon every thing.” We need not only an object presented, but an organ to discern it. Now the gospel, only, affords both these. Mr N. becomes an instructive example in this respect to the unbeliever. “One of the first helps,” says he, “I received (in consequence of a determination to examine the New Testament more carefully) was from Luke vi. 13, ‘If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?’ I had been sensible, that to profess faith in Jesus Christ, when, in reality, I did not believe his history, was no better than a mockery of the heart-searching God; but here I found a Spirit spoken of, which was to be communicated to those who ask it. Upon this I reasoned thus: if this book be true, the promise in this passage must be true likewise. I have need of that very Spirit by which the whole was written, in order to understand it aright. He has engaged here, to give that Spirit to those who ask; and if it be of God, he will make good his own word.”

A man, therefore, who is found in this unhappy state, but not judicially hardened in it, should mark this stage of Mr N.’s recovery, and attend to the facts and evidences of the power and excellency of real religion, such as this before him. He should appreciate that gospel, which it has pleased God to employ as his instrument for displaying the wonders of his might in the moral world. He should pray that he may experience the power of it in his own heart, and thus not lose the additional benefit of the cases presented to him in Memoirs like these; a case probably far exceeding his own in the malignity of its symptoms. Let him also consider, that, while such convictions can produce no real loss to him, they may secure advantages beyond calculation. He

may not be able at present to comprehend how “godliness is profitable for all things, in having not only the promise of the life that now is, but that which is to come;” but he may see, as a rational creature, that, at the very lowest estimation, he has taken a safe side, by embracing the only hope set before him: and on this ground it is clearly demonstrable, that not only the grossest folly must attach to the rejector of a revelation attended with such accumulated evidences, but also actual guilt, and the highest ingratitude and presumption.

II. But there is another class of men, to whom I would recommend a serious consideration of Mr N.’s religious character and principles. The persons whom I am now addressing are convinced of the truth of revelation, and some of them ably contend for it against unbelievers. They are also conscientious—they are often useful in society—and are sometimes found amiable and benevolent: they are even religious, according to their views of religion; and some of them are exact in their devotions. Yet from certain morbid symptoms, they appear not to receive the grace of God in truth, nor to be cordially disposed to the spirit of the gospel. So much apparent right intention and exemplary conduct seems, indeed, to demand respect; and a respect which some, who possess more zeal than judgment, do not duly pay them.

ARDELIO despises his neighbour EUSEBIUS’S religious views and habits; and not only deems him a blind Pharisee, but has sometimes expressed the sentiment in the rudest terms. This reminds me of the old story of Diogenes’ walking on the costly carpet of his brother philosopher, saying, “I trample on the pride of Plato.” “Yes,” said Plato, “but with greater pride, Diogenes.”

If it be asked, Why should any one judge unfavourably of such a character as Eusebius? I answer, we may charitably seek to convince one whom we have reason to think under fatal mistakes, without any disposition to judge or condemn him. I meet a traveller who is confidently pursuing a path, which I have reason to believe is both wide of his mark, and dangerous to his person: I may charitably attempt to direct his steps, without thinking ill of his intention. It is recorded of our Lord, that he even loved a young man, who went away sorrowful on having his grand idol exposed. But why, it is asked, should you suspect any thing essentially wrong in such characters as you describe? I reply, for the following reasons:—

I have observed with much concern, when God hath wrought such a mighty operation of grace in the heart of a man, like Newton, that this man has not, upon such a saving change being wrought, suited the religious taste of the persons just mentioned. They will, indeed, commend his external change of conduct; but by no means relish his broken and contrite spirit, or his ascribing the change to free and unmerited favour, and his “counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus,” as that

Lord who has thus called him “from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.” They will not relish the zeal and evangelical strain of his preaching, his endeavouring to alarm a stupid sleeping conscience, to probe a deceitful heart, to expose the wretchedness of the world, and to rend the veil from formality and hypocrisy; nay, they will rather prefer some dry moralist, or mere formalist, who, instead of having experienced any such change of heart, will rather revile it.

Again, I have observed a lamentable disposition of mind in such persons to form false and unfavourable associations. They will pay too much attention to injurious representations, true or false, of a religious class of mankind, whom the world has branded with some general term of reproach. Two or three ignorant or extravagant fanatics shall be admitted to represent the religious world at large, not considering how much such offensive characters are actually grieving those whose cause I am pleading. No one, indeed, can have lived long in society, but he must needs have met the counterfeit of every excellence. In the article of property, for instance, who is not on the watch lest he should be imposed on? And, while the love of property is so general, who is not studious to discover the difference between the true and the false? It will be so in religion, wherever there is the attention which its worth so imperiously demands. Love has a piercing eye, which will discover its object in a crowd. But, if there be this disposition to confound in the lump the precious with the vile, it is symptomatic of something morbid in the heart. We have reason to fear a latent aversion from vital and spiritual religion, notwithstanding all the allowance that can be made for the prevailing prejudices of their education and circumstances, in the persons offended. And here, also, we cannot but lament the effect of such a disposition in those perverse conclusions these persons are often observed to draw from a sermon. Of the two handles which attach to every thing, what must we think of that mind which is ever choosing the wrong? Jesus Christ, for instance, shows how much the farm, the oxen, and the wife became impediments in the way of those who refused his invitation. But a perverse conclusion would infer that he was, therefore, an enemy to lawful engagements. Candour, however, sees at a glance, that this was not his design in speaking the parable. His drift was evidently to mark the state and spirit of the recusants, and not to discountenance their lawful occupations. He meant to show, that even lawful pursuits may be unlawfully pursued, when they become sole objects, and are thus preferred to his inestimable proposal. It is thus the well-disposed hearer will mark the design of his minister, and draw wholesome nourishment from that discourse, which another will turn to poison, by stopping to cavil at the letter.

Another objection arises from the affinity which characters of this class have with a “world which lieth in wickedness.” In this instance of their worldly attachments, their charity will readily “cover a multitude of sins,” and form excuses for serious breaches of both tables of the law, in their worldly friends. They appear in their element while in the society of these friends, especially if wealthy and accomplished. If any person’s ear is wounded with a profane expression from one of their rich or fashionable acquaintance, they are ready to whisper, that, “notwithstanding his unguarded language, he has yet upon the whole one of the best of hearts.”

Yet an infallible monitor has said, “Know ye not, that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” If the old maxim does not always hold good, that, “A man is known by the company he keeps,” it will infallibly stand good if we add one word to it, namely, “that a man is known by the company he chooses to keep.” The physician may be detained in an infectious chamber, and the lawyer be found conversing with his client in a shower of rain; but nobody will infer from thence, that the one chooses to breathe foul air; or that the other chooses to be wet to the skin. While the true Christian, therefore, will avoid inurbanity, fanaticism, or becoming the dupe of any religious party, he will also join the Psalmist in declaring, “I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.”

Again, these moral and religious characters, whom I am labouring to convince of their errors, have been observed to be more disposed to nurse, than to examine their prejudices against a minister of Mr N.’s principles. “His teaching,” say they, “tends to divide a parish, or a family.” But why do they not examine the reason? Why do they not consider, that introducing good has ever been the occasion of disturbing evil? I recollect a great family, whose servants were in a ferment, because one truly conscientious man was found among them. “He will spoil the place,” was their term, because he would not connive at their iniquity. But let me ask, what was to be blamed in this affair? His integrity or their corruption? The master understood the case, and valued his servant in proportion as he marked the division. And thus it is in religion, while moving in a blind and corrupt world. Christ, though the Prince of Peace, expressly declared, that his doctrine would be the occasion of much division in the world; that “he came not to send peace, but a sword;” that he should be the occasion of family variance, &c. Matt. x. 34, 35; and warns his disciples of what they must expect while they endeavour faithfully to conduct his interests. Plain matter of fact declares, that to maintain truth has been the occasion of the suffering state of the true church in all ages, and that often unto the death of its innumerable martyrs. But, should a man who reads his Bible, or has any regard for the interests of truth, need to have this explained?



Another mistake might be exposed in the stale objection, that such principles as Mr N.'s tend to injure the interests of morality, from his strictly adhering to the doctrine of our eleventh article, on justification by faith. I would hope that this objection, in many, arises from a very slight acquaintance with the subject. It requires, indeed, but little attention to mark how expressly the Scriptures maintain our justification on the sole merit of our Redeemer, while they as fully maintain the necessity of our sanctification, or holiness, by his Spirit. It has been proved over and over, by sound and incontestable arguments, that these two grand fundamentals of our religion are so far from opposing each other, either in Scripture or experience, that, when real, they are found inseparable. But, because this is not the place to either state or defend this doctrine at large, it may help such as have hitherto stumbled respecting it, to observe an illustration and proof of this position, in the matter of fact just now presented to our view.

To one willing to learn, I would say, what proof would you require of the practical tendency of principles like Mr N.'s? We bring you, in his history, a most deplorable instance of human depravity and deep moral disorder. What experiment shall be tried to recover this wretched creature to God and to himself? Regard, I say, the fact in this man's history. You will find, that his recovery was not brought about by such considerations as are urged in what are termed moral or rational discourses; but, on the contrary, by such truths as he laboured throughout his ministry to establish, not only from the Scriptures, but from his own experience of their efficacy. He dwelt on truths, which are essential and peculiar to Christianity; such as the guilt and utter depravity of our fallen nature, whereby man is become an alien and apostate from his God; his inability to recover himself without the grace of the Holy Spirit; the necessity of regeneration by the same Spirit, and of faith in the Redeemer, not only as the only ground of his justification before God, but as the root and motive of all acceptable obedience and good works. "If I wanted a man to fly," said Mr N., "I must contrive to find him wings; and thus, if I would successfully enforce moral duties, I must advance evangelical motives." He preached truths like these constantly and fervently, and he lived a consistent example of them.

Thus in all things approving himself a true disciple and minister of Christ, those who knew him, know, without making any odious comparison, it might be literally affirmed of Mr N., that "by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," his mouth was opened and his heart enlarged towards men.

I trust it is from a pure motive that I am endeavouring to convince persons of the class I am addressing of their mistake. And I am the more induced to bring a case in point before them, because I think it cannot be paralleled as an instance of the power of religion among those who labour to keep up prejudices against ministers of Mr N.'s character; or who, by unfair or partial statements, strive to subvert the doctrines he preached, and the great end to which all his labours were directed, namely, the life of God in the soul of man.

If indeed any one "is willing to be deceived, let him be deceived." At least such a one will not be addressed here. But if a man has any serious sense of the value of his soul—of its lost condition by sin, and of recovering the friendship of his God—if he feel the express declaration in the Scriptures of an eternity of happiness or misery to be of infinite importance, and to which the weightiest concern in this perishing world is but as the "dust on the balance"—let such a one consider these things. Let him inquire, whether those who object to the character and views of such a minister as Mr N. labour first to probe the state of their own hearts deeply, as he did? When he was no longer an infidel, had renounced his grosser habits, and was to all appearance a new man; "Yet," says he, "though I cannot doubt that this change, so far as it prevailed, was wrought by the Spirit and power of God, still I was greatly deficient in many respects. I was in some degree affected with a sense of my more enormous sins, but I was little aware of the innate evils of my heart. I had no apprehension of the spirituality and extent of the law of God. The hidden life of a Christian, as it consists in communion with God by Jesus Christ, and a continual dependence upon him for hourly supplies of wisdom, strength, and comfort, was a mystery of which I had as yet no knowledge. I acknowledged the Lord's mercy in pardoning what was past, but depended chiefly upon my own resolution to do better for the time to come."

Let the honest inquirer also consider, whether the objectors just spoken of are observed to be as anxious in their pursuits to serve God and propagate his will, to glorify his Son, and to save the souls of men? Whether they have experienced the force of truth in the conversion of their own hearts and lives? "Conformed to the world," as he once was, have they been since "transformed by the renewing of their minds," as he at length became? A few such questions as these, well considered, would lead to important discoveries. Such an inquiry would show, that, however some persons may be able to treat of the outworks of revelation, as they may of any other science they have studied; yet for such to dogmatize on religion, as it consists in a vital, spiritual, and experimental principle, would be as absurd as for a man originally deprived of one of the five senses, to deny the perceptions of those who possess them all. In short, it is as ridiculous as it is profane, for men rashly

to assert on religious points, who evidently appear to have nothing so little at heart as the real influence and actual interests of religion.

Lastly, let nominal Christians seriously consider whether our immortal interests are not much too important to be staked upon a mere prejudice of education—an old unrevised habit of thinking—a taking it for granted that they are right, when the event may awfully prove the reverse; and that too, when such errors can never be rectified? The persons with whom I have been pleading would pity the Jew or the Pagan in such an error: I earnestly pray that they may be enabled to see as clearly their own mistake, and not resent the admonition of a real friend now seeking to prevent it.

III. But there yet remains a class of persons, found in the religious world, who entertain a high regard for Mr N.'s character, and who should gather that instruction from it of which they appear to stand in great need. "They should all take care," as he expresses it, "that they do not make their profession of religion a receipt in full for all other obligations." I do not regard this class as hypocrites, so much as self-deceivers. They have a zeal for the gospel; but without a comprehensive view of its nature. They do not consider, that, in avoiding error on the one hand, they are plunging into a contrary mistake. Like a child crossing a bridge, they tremblingly avoid the deep water which they perceive is roaring on one side; and recede from it till they are ready to perish, from not perceiving the danger of that which lies on the other side.

The class of which I am here speaking are defective in the grand article of a humble and contrite spirit. I remember Mr N. used to remark, that "if any one criterion could be given of a real work of grace begun in the heart of a sinner, it would be found in his contrite spirit." Nothing is more insisted on in Scripture, as essential to real religion. I never knew any truly serious Christian but would readily join in acknowledging, that "the religion of a sinner," as Mr N. expresses it, "stands on two pillars; namely, what Christ did for us in his flesh, and what he performs in us by his Spirit. Most errors," says he, "arise from an attempt to separate these two." But as it was in the beginning, so it is now; the enemy comes and sows tares among the wheat; and a sort of loose profession has obtained, which has brought much reproach on religion, and become a cause of stumbling to many, who perceive a class of Christians contending for only a part of Christianity.

You can prevail little with a professor of this description, in exhorting him by "the meekness and gentleness of Christ," to self-denying, patient, or forbearing habits. If you state the genius of Christ's religion as it relates to the returning good for evil; in blessing them that curse, and praying for such as revile and persecute; in showing, out of a good conversation, their works with meekness of wisdom; or in having a fervent charity towards all men,

&c. he is ready to kindle, and to cover his conduct by a crude system of mere doctrinal points, ill understood. It is well if your charitable remonstrance does not lead him to ask, Whether you mean to bring him back to the Whole Duty of Man, or to Nelson's Festivals and Fasts? He laments that you yourself are not clear in the gospel, because you maintain the whole of it; and that you are not faithful, if you maintain the whole of it in a patient, forbearing spirit.

The views of such persons, and the evil tempers to which they give place in their spiritual warfare, have often reminded me of the shrewd answer which our Richard I. sent the Pope; who was angry because a certain warlike bishop had fallen by Richard in battle, and whom, being an ecclesiastic, the Pope called his son. Richard sent the bishop's armour to the Pope, with the words of Joseph's brethren, "Know now, whether this be thy son's coat or not."

Nothing, however, could be more opposed to the spirit and character of our departed friend than the temper that has just been described. His zeal in propagating the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, was not more conspicuous than the tenderness of his spirit as to the manner of his maintaining and delivering it. He was found constantly "speaking the truth in love, and in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure would give them repentance to the acknowledging the truth." There was a gentleness, a candour, and a forbearance in him, that I do not recollect to have seen in an equal degree among his brethren; and which had so conciliating an effect, that even the enemies of truth often spoke loudly in praise of his character. On the other hand, it generated such an affection in his friends, that, had he attempted to preach longer than he did, a great part of his congregation would have gathered, were it only for the pleasure they had in seeing his person.

That this account is not panegyric, is clear to all who personally knew Mr N. But as many who may read these Memoirs had not that pleasure, I will add the testimony of one, whose nice discernment of character will admit of no question:—

"A people will love a minister, if a minister seems to love his people; the old maxim, *simile agit in simile*, is in no case more exactly verified; therefore you were beloved at Olney; and, if you preached to the Chickesaws and Chactaws, would be equally beloved by them."\*

As this spirit of Christian benevolence and charity seems not to have been sufficiently cultivated among us, while a furious and often abusive zeal for certain points, as Cowper remarks, has been substituted for the whole truth,

---

\* Hayley's Life of Cowper, Letter xxvii.

I am led to dwell longer than I intended in enforcing this amiable feature of Mr N.'s character; especially on account of those Christians, who have imbibed a false taste in their religion, from such teachers, or books, as have fallen in their way. I therefore earnestly request those persons to weigh well the inquiries which follow:—

Have you ever sufficiently considered the evil of divisions and heartburnings in a church; and what interest that enemy, who comes to sow tares among the wheat, takes in promoting them? Do you reflect, that another Christian may be doing God's work, though his mode of doing it may not meet your taste, any more than your taste meets his? Do you consider how much greater evil a wrong spirit and temper produce than the things you object against? Do you weigh the consequences of your haste in weakening the hands and grieving the heart of any godly minister, whom you constantly or occasionally attend, and in actually laying a stumbling-block in the way of the ungodly, while you depreciate him and his services? Nothing affected that eminent character, Mr Cadogan, like what he met from some religious persons of this kind, as I have related from his own lips, in his Memoirs.\*

Let me farther exhort such as are in danger from this unchastised spirit to consider, how much corrupt nature is at the bottom of this error. Corrupt nature frets and rages at any supposed contradiction or restraint; it would substitute the work of the tongue for that of the heart: in the mean time, real religion is scorned by the world, which cannot distinguish between a thing so deformed, and the thing as it ought to appear.

Consider, also, whether there needs any grace at all in order to maintain such a sort of profession. We require only to christen the evil passions of corrupt nature, and then may call names, hate, boast, and give ourselves the preference, as much as any ungodly man whatever! A zealot at an election can fight and strive for his favourite candidate; with inflamed zeal he can cause divisions, exhibit pride, self-will, and impatience of subordination: but, let me ask, will the same evil tempers change their nature because they are employed about spiritual objects?

Much blame attaches, too, respecting certain disputable points for which such persons strive. It seems as if some, who are otherwise good men, did not relish the Bible till they had garbled and selected it; and that, if the whole were not of acknowledged authority, they would condemn it as it now stands. They speak as if it were not accurate in its terms, or sufficiently express or decisive in confirming their fond opinions. This leads them to be shy of some parts of revelation, and to distort others, in order to fit them for their system; and while contending for that system, they appear to forget the stress which

---

\* See Memoirs of Cadogan, p. 39.

the apostle lays upon the holy, humble, self-denying, affectionate spirit of Christianity, in 1 Cor. xiii; how gentle it is, how easy to be entreated, how it hopeth and endureth all things, &c. While, on the contrary, they who can speak with the tongues of men and of angels, who have all knowledge, who can work miracles, and even die martyrs, would, without this distinguishing characteristic of Christianity, be considered of God as nothing. The Old Testament dispensation, it is granted, had a severe aspect, and special occasions may be pleaded for special expressions of holy indignation under any dispensation; but when the prophet describes the brighter day, he foretells, that then “the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,” &c., as emblematical of the prevalence of that grace described by the apostle, in the chapter just quoted. Hold, therefore, the faith once delivered to the saints as firmly as possible, but hold it in love. “Buy the truth and sell it not;” rather die for it, than part with it; but “speak it in love;” and walk in it “as Christ also walked,” ever remembering, that “the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

I feel conscious that it is simply with a view to convince many well-meaning Christians of their error (and I have found more or less of this class in almost every place where I have been), that I thus speak. If a gross superstition, arising in the church, perverted the Christianity of former ages; I wish I may mistake in supposing, that a loose and unscriptural profession is widely spreading as the bane of our age. Against such a departure from the true genius of Christianity, I certainly, as a minister of Christ, ought to bear my feeble testimony. Consider, therefore, that what is said is with a single view to your best interests; and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

As I referred the Christians who were last addressed, to the character of Mr N. as an example, so I never knew a more perfect one to my purpose. When any person depreciated the ministry of a good man, who, by advancing important truths, was opposing the reigning errors of the times; but who, from timidity or prejudice, was shy of Mr N., he would imitate his Divine Master by saying, “Let him alone; he that is not against us is on our side. Make no man an offender for a word. He is doing good, according to his views. Let us pray for him, and by no means weaken his hands. Who knows but God may one day put him far above our heads, both in knowledge and usefulness?”

His grand point, in a few words, as he used to express it, was, “TO BREAK A HARD HEART, AND TO HEAL A BROKEN HEART.” To implant the life of God in the soul of man, he would sacrifice every subordinate consideration. He felt every other consideration comparatively insignificant. He saw the spirit of ancient Pharisaeism working among those who cry out the most against it; who exact to a scruple, in the tythe of mint, anise, and cummin of their own peculiarities, while they pass over the weightier matters of unity and love;

straining at the gnat of a private opinion, and swallowing the camel of a deadly discord. On the contrary, as far as order and circumstances would admit, Mr N. clave to every good man, and endeavoured to strengthen his hands, in whatever denomination of Christians he was found. His character well illustrated the Scripture, that though “scarcely for a righteous (or just) man would one die, yet for a good man (i. e. one eminent for his candour and benevolence) some would even dare to die.” However they admired some ministers, they all loved him; and saw exemplified in him that “wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

I conclude these Memoirs with a word to such as are endeavouring to follow the steps of their late faithful friend, as he followed Christ. We cannot but lament the errors just described. We cannot, if we have any zeal for the gospel, but protest against them. But let us recollect, that they are not the only errors, which are found in the church; and therefore let us watch, lest any other “root of bitterness spring up to trouble us, and defile many.” While you lament with me the removal of ministers like Mr N., let us recollect that Eternal Friend, who will never leave his church without witnesses to the truth; and who, among other reasons for removing earthly helps, teaches us thereby to rest only upon that help which cannot be removed. Let us take comfort too in recollecting, that, spotted as the church may appear from the inconsistencies of many of its members, yet all the real good that is to be found in this corrupt world, is to be found in that church. God saw seven thousand true believers in Israel while his prophet could see but one. Where some Jehu is sounding a trumpet before him, many are quietly passing to heaven without any such clamour. As a great writer remarks, “Because half a dozen grass hoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, while thousands of great cattle chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those, who make the noise, are ‘the only inhabitants of the field.’”

But I must remark, that nothing has been more profitable to myself in considering Mr N.’s life, than the exhibition it makes of a particular providence. If the church be not conducted by such visible signs now, as formerly, it is found to be as actually conducted. We read of a Divine hand concerned in the fall of sparrows, in numbering the hairs of our head, and in raising our dust to life; but with what little interest we read this, appears by our distrust in the first trial we meet. If we do not dare to join the sentiments of some, who regard such expressions as purely figurative and hyperbolic, yet our imagination is so overwhelmed with the difficulty of the performance, that we are apt to turn from the subject with some general hope, but with a very

indistinct and vague idea of “a God at hand,” faithful to his promise, and almighty to deliver. Yet how many cases occur in the history of every one of us, where nothing short of an Almighty arm could prove “a present help in the time of trouble.”

Now, this short history before us is admirably calculated to encourage our faith and hope, when we are called to pass through those deep waters, that seem to bid defiance to human strength and contrivance. What, for instance, but a Divine interference caused Mr N. to be roused from sleep on board the Harwich at the moment of exchanging men, and thereby effected his removal? What placed him in a situation so remarkably suited to his recovering the ship, which had already passed the place of his station in Africa, and brought him back to his country? What kept him from returning in the boat, that was lost at Rio Cestors? or from the ship that was blown up near Liverpool? not to mention many other of his special deliverances.

“I am a wonder unto many,” says he, in the motto of his Narrative; and if we as distinctly considered the strange methods of mercy which have occurred in our own cases, we should at least be a wonder to ourselves. But my aim is to point out the use we should make of these Memoirs in this respect. We should, as Christians, mark the error of despair. We should see, that the case of a praying man cannot be desperate; that if a man be out of the pit of hell, he is on the ground of mercy. We should recollect, that God sees a way of escape when we see none; that nothing is too hard for him; that he warrants our dependence, and invites us to call on him in the day of trouble, and gives a promise of deliverance. We should, therefore, in every trial, adopt the language of Mr N.’s favourite Herbert:

“Away, despair; my gracious Lord doth hear:  
Though winds and waves assault my keel,  
He doth preserve it; he doth steer,  
Ev’n when the boat seems most to reel.  
Storms are the triumph of his art:  
Well may he close his eyes, but not his heart.”

From these facts we should see, that Christ is able, not only “to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him but also that he is able to bring the most hardened blasphemer and abject slave from his chains of sin and misery, to stand in the most honourable and useful station, and proclaim to the wretched and to the ruined the exceeding riches of his grace. I have observed, from my own experience as well as from that of others, how strong a hold Satan builds by despair. The pressing fascinations of the world, the secret invitations of sensuality, and the distant prospect of eternal things, form a powerful current against vital religion. The heart of a Christian is ready to sink whenever these proud waters rise. Let him, therefore, recollect,



that his hope, his only hope, is in pressing right onward through a world of lies and vanity; that his present dispensation is the walk of faith and not of sight; and that “by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, he has given strong consolation to such as flee for refuge to the hope set before them.”

One could, indeed, scarcely conjecture, that cases like Mr N.’s should be so perverted by any of our children, as that they should take confidence in their sins from his former course of life, but, because such facts, as I am credibly informed, do exist, let us be upon the watch to counteract this deep device of the great enemy.

My dear young friends, who may have read these Memoirs, perhaps merely for your amusement, consider with what a contrary design St Paul states his former unrenewed condition: “I was,” says he, “before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious; but for this cause I obtained mercy.” For what cause? Was it that men should continue in sin, because a miracle of special grace had been wrought? To “do evil that good may come” is the black mark of a reprobate mind. But “for this cause,” saith the apostle, “I obtained mercy; that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe in him to life everlasting.” The same caution is necessary whenever you may be tempted to hope for such a recovery as Mr N.’s, after erring like him. To proceed upon such a hope, is a gross presumption. Thousands perish in wrong courses, for one who escapes from their natural consequences. Pray, therefore, that you may be enabled to resist the temptation of perverting such extraordinary cases. God affords them to be “a savour of life unto life,” while Satan would employ them to be “a savour of death unto death.” One almighty to save affords you here, indeed, an instance of special mercy, which gives you the strongest encouragement in setting your faces towards his kingdom; and this is the proper use to be made of such a case.

Your parents, your most disinterested friends, are anxiously watching for your good: and they, perhaps, have put this book into your hand with a view of promoting it. The author has cause to thank God, who put it into the heart of his pious parent to make a similar attempt, and bless it with success; and he could tell of more such instances. May it please God that you may be added to the number! Worldly prosperity would rather hurt than help you before your minds become rightly directed. Mr N. shows us, that his firmest friend could not have served him effectually had not God first prepared his mind for the advancement. An enemy would occupy your minds with perishing objects; but God calls you to cultivate nobler views. He proposes glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life by the gospel. “Seek,” therefore,

“first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added to you.”

THE END OF THE MEMOIRS.