

THE
CHRISTIAN LEADERS
OF
The Last Century;
OR,
ENGLAND A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

By the
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"Enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of
their fathers."—JOB viii. 8.

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X.

Walker of Truro and his Ministry.

Born at Exeter, 1714—Educated at Exeter College, Oxford—Ordained, 1737—Curate of Truro, 1746—At First very ignorant of the Gospel—Mr. Conon's Influence—Effect of his Preaching—Opposition—Self-denial and Holy Life—Remarkable Effect on Soldiers—Private Unity Meetings—Died, 1761—Literary Remains—Preaching.

AN intelligent Christian needs not to be reminded that the Church of Christ has always recognized two classes of prophetic writers in the Old Testament. There are four who are called "the greater" prophets, and twelve who are called "the less." All wrote by direct and equal inspiration of God; "all spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" and yet we do not hesitate to assign a higher importance to one class than to the other.

A well-informed man knows well, that in the solar system some planets exceed others in size and glory. All are bright, and beautiful, and perfect. All proclaim to the student of the heavens that the Hand which made them was divine. Yet the glory of such bodies as Jupiter and Saturn is far greater than that of Mars, or Venus, or the Moon.

Thoughts such as these come across my mind as I turn from the seven leading champions of the revival of English religion in the 18th century to some of their lesser contemporaries. There were not a few eminent ministers in our country who were entirely of one mind with Whitefield and his fellow-workers, and yet never attained to their greatness. They sympathized with the great leaders in all matters of doctrine. They co-operated with them in the main, and rejoiced in their success. They cheerfully bore their share of the reproach cast on "Methodism" or evangelical religion. They shrank from no sacrifices, and spared no pains in setting forward Christ's gospel. But they did not possess the extraordinary public gifts of their seven brethren, and did not therefore leave so deep a mark on their generation. Like Silas and Timothy in St. Paul's days, they did good work in their own positions, but not work that attracted so much public attention as that of the mighty "masters of assemblies" whom I have described in preceding chapters.

But we must beware that we do not undervalue men merely because they do not occupy prominent positions in the Church of Christ. Various and manifold are the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and he divides them to every man severally as he thinks fit. One minister is called to preach to thousands, and shake the world like a "son of thunder;" while another is called to write hymns or compose books in an obscure corner of the earth. One man has gifts of voice, and delivery, and action, and fluency, and memory, and invention, which fit him to stand up before multitudes—like Paul on Mars' Hill, or Luther at Worms, or Whitefield in Moorfields—and to carry all before

him. Another is shy, and gentle, and retiring, and can only make his mind work in solitude, quiet, and silence. Yet each may be an instrument of mighty influence in God's hand. The last day, indeed, may prove that the work of him whose voice was never "heard in the street," and who dwelt among his own people, produced more permanent effect on souls than the most brilliant open-air sermons. I fear that we are all apt to exaggerate the value of public gifts, and to depreciate gifts which make no show before the world. Yet a time may come when the last shall be found first, and the first last.

Remembering these things, I wish to give some account of four men of the 18th century who are far less known than some of their contemporaries, and yet were eminently useful in their day and generation. The first whom I will introduce to my readers is Samuel Walker, the curate of Truro, in Cornwall.

Walker was born at Exeter in 1714, and died in 1761, at the early age of forty-seven. Partly from the circumstance that his ministerial life was entirely spent in one of the most remote corners of England, before railways were invented, and partly from his habits of mind, which made him entirely decline all public work of an aggressive and extra-parochial kind, he is a man whose name is scarcely known to many Christians. Yet he was one who, in his day, was most highly esteemed by such men as Wesley, Whitefield, Romaine, and Venn, for his eminent spirituality and soundness of judgment. Above all, he was one who cultivated his own corner of the Lord's vineyard with such singular success, that there were few places in England where such striking results could be shown from preaching the gospel as at Truro.

The facts of Walker's life of which any record remains are few, and soon told. His family resided at Exeter, and was well connected. He was lineally descended from the good Bishop Hall, who was for a time Bishop of Exeter, and whose grand-daughter married a Walker. His grandfather, Sir Thomas Walker, was member of Parliament for Exeter. John Walker, Rector of St. Mary the More, in Exeter, who wrote a well-known volume about the "Sufferings of the Ejected Clergy" under the Commonwealth, was also a relative of the subject of this chapter; in fact, the first edition of the work was published in the very year that Samuel Walker was born.

We know little of Walker's boyhood and youth, beyond the fact that he was educated at Exeter Grammar School, and was there for ten years—from the age of eight till he was eighteen. He went to Exeter College, Oxford, in 1732, and in due course of time took his degree of B.A. in that university. He seems to have made good use of his time while he was at college, and to have acquired much knowledge, which he found valuable in after-life. His biographer particularly mentions that "he cultivated logic with much success, and always considered his early devotion to that science as the foundation of the facility he afterwards attained in a clear and methodical arrangement of his

ideas. When complimented by his friends, who admired the lucid and argumentative mode in which he treated every subject, he always observed that logic had been his favourite pursuit in youth, and that he recommended it to young divines.” Beside being a reading man, he seems to have been thoroughly correct and moral in life; and though utterly destitute of spiritual light or religion, he was mercifully preserved from the excesses into which many young men plunge at college, to their own subsequent bitter sorrow. We know nothing more of Walker’s university life. We have no account of his companions, friends, or acquaintances. It is a curious fact, however, that it is clear, from a comparison of dates, that he must have been an undergraduate of Exeter College at the very time when the so-called Methodist movement began, and when Wesley, Whitefield, and Hervey were commencing their line of action as aggressive evangelists at Oxford. It is another curious fact that Lincoln College, of which John Wesley was a Resident Fellow, stands within fifty yards of Exeter College. Romaine also was at Christ Church at the same time. But there is not the slightest proof that Walker was acquainted with any of these good men.

Walker entered the ministry at the age of twenty-three, in the year 1737. He was first curate of Dodescomb Leigh, near Exeter, but only remained there one year. He then travelled on the Continent for two years, in the capacity of private tutor to the younger brother of Lord Rolle. On the termination of this engagement he became first curate, and immediately after vicar, of Lanlivery, near Lostwithiel, in Cornwall. He only held this living during the minority of a nephew of the patron, and finally resigned it in the year 1746. He then accepted the office of stipendiary curate of Truro, in Cornwall, and occupied that position for fifteen years, until the time of his death in 1761.

It is past all doubt that Walker was profoundly ignorant of spiritual religion at the time of his ordination. Like hundreds of clergymen, he undertook an office for which he was certainly not “inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost,” and professed himself a teacher of others while he himself knew nothing of the truth as it is in Jesus. He says, in a letter dated 1756: “The week before my ordination I spent with the other candidates—as dissolute, I fear, as myself—in a very light and unbecoming manner; dining, supping, drinking, and laughing together, when, God knows, we should all have been on our knees, and warning each other to fear for our souls in the view of what we were about to put our hands to. I cannot but attribute the many careless, ungodly years I spent in pleasure after that time to this profane introduction; and, believe me, the review shocks me. While I write, I tremble in the recollection of the wounds I then gave Jesus.”

In this painful and unsatisfactory state of mind Walker spent the first two years of his ministerial life. Throughout that time he was diligent and

conscientious in the discharge of the outward duties of his office. He preached, visited, catechised, reproved, exhorted, and rebuked, but did no good at all. Ignorant alike of his own heart's disease and of the glorious remedy provided by Christ's gospel, he laboured entirely in vain. In fact, he said himself, in after-years, "that though he was well thought of, and, indeed, esteemed beyond most of his brethren for regularity, decency, and endeavour to keep up external attendance, and even for his public addresses, yet he felt he ought to go sorrowing to the grave, upon a review of the years so mis-spent."

The circumstances under which a complete change came over Walker's heart, character, and ministerial life, were very remarkable. They supply a most instructive illustration of God's plan of leading people to Christ by ways "which they know not." Walker had come to Truro in 1746, with peculiar pleasure, on account of the notorious gaieties and festivities of the place, in which the young curate at that time took great delight. He entered the place a dancing, card-playing, partygoing clergyman, and was known only in that character for the first twelve months of his ministry. It is said that at this period "his only ambition was to be courted for his gaiety and admired for his eloquence, and to become the reformer of the vicious by the power of persuasion and example." Ignorant he was not altogether, for, like every well-read man, he had historical notions of the leading doctrines of the Christian religion. But, to use his own words, "what he knew notionally, he neither felt nor sought practically." He acknowledges that, even in the midst of all his official decorum, he "was actuated by two hidden principles, as contrary to God as darkness is to light—a desire of reputation and a love of pleasure." Such were the beginnings of Walker's ministry! Such was the unpromising material which God was pleased to take in hand, and mould and fashion into a goodly vessel of grace!

The manner of Walker's conversion is thus described by one of his biographers. "He had been at least a year in his curacy at Truro before he fell under any suspicion or uneasiness about himself or his preaching. The first impression that he was in error arose from a conversation between himself and a few of his parishioners on the subject of justifying and saving faith, to which he was judiciously led by a pious individual. This was a Mr. Conon, master of the Grammar School at Truro, who, he often said, was the first person he had ever met truly possessed of the mind of Christ, and by whose means he became sensible that all was wrong within and without." Mr. Conon was one of those rare servants of God who, like Job, are found in places where you would think no good thing could grow, and who serve to show that grace and not place makes the Christian. Intercourse between this good man and the curate of Truro gradually ripened into intimacy, and the result

was the total conversion of the minister through the pious instrumentality of one of his hearers.

The change that had come over the curate of Truro was soon apparent, both in his preaching and practice. It could not be hid. He ceased to take part in the frivolous worldly amusements which at one time absorbed his attention. He frankly acknowledges that he did not take up this new line of action without a mighty inward struggle, and that it was “long before he could bring himself to any reasonable measure of indifference about the esteem of the world, and then only with heart-felt pangs of fear and disquietude.” But he fought hard, and by God’s grace was more than conqueror. At the same time, says his biographer, “he began to preach as he felt, declared the alteration in his views, and faithfully pointed out the evil of the empty pleasures in which the inhabitants of his parish were absorbed, and the danger of resting on the mere formalities of Sabbath worship for salvation. Repentance, faith, and the new birth became the topics of his sermons—truths which, though treated with all the power of his highly cultivated mind, brought down on him hatred as an enthusiast, derision as a madman, and vehement opposition as the destroyer of harmless joys. An infidel went even so far as to insult him in the pulpit, an affront which he bore with singular patience and dignity.”

The effects of Walker’s new style of preaching seem to have been very deep and extraordinary. Astonishment and surprise were the first prevailing feelings in the minds of all. To hear their curate denouncing the very practices in which he had lately indulged himself, and pressing home the very doctrines which he had neglected or despised, was enough to make men’s hair stand on end! Anger and irritation were naturally excited in the hearts of hundreds who loved pleasure more than God, and were determined to cling to the world. But all alike seem to have been thoroughly aroused and impressed. His biographer says: “The earnestness of the preacher, and the striking alteration of his habits as well as of his sermons, stirred up the curiosity of the people, who, while they were enraged at the fidelity, were enchained by the eloquence and trembled at the sternness of their reprovcr. Even out of the pulpit they feared the presence of their minister. The Sabbath loiterers would retire at his approach, saying, ‘Let us go; here comes Walker.’ His manner is said to have been commanding and solemn in the extreme, and his life so truly consistent that at length he awed into silence those who were at first most clamorous against him. At last such crowds attended his ministry, that the thoroughfares of the town seemed to be deserted during the hours of service, so that it was said you might fire a cannon down every street of Truro in church time, without a chance of killing a single human being.”

No well-informed Christian will be surprised to hear that a man preaching and living as Walker did, was assailed by every kind of persecution. The great enemy of souls will never allow his kingdom to be pulled down without

a struggle to preserve it. If he cannot prevent a faithful minister working, he will labour in every way to hinder and impede his work. The worldly portion of the Truro people resolved to get rid of a man who pricked their consciences and made them uncomfortable. They first tried to injure the curate of Truro with the bishop of the diocese; but in this attempt, happily, they failed. They then endeavoured to prevail on the rector of Truro to dismiss him from his cure, a move which led to the following remarkable result. His biographer says: "Mr. Walker's enemies, being some of the wealthiest inhabitants of Truro, found the rector only too willing to listen to their complaints, and he promised that he would go to his curate and give him notice to quit his charge. He went; but like the Gaul who was sent to the Roman hero to despatch him in prison, he retired startled and abashed at his lofty tone and high bearing. On entering Walker's apartment, he was received with an elegance and dignity of manner which were natural to one who had long been the charm of society, and became so embarrassed as to be perfectly unable to advert to his errand. He at length made some remark which afforded an opportunity of speaking of the ministerial office and character, which Walker immediately embraced, and enlarged on the subject with such acuteness of reasoning and solemnity of appeal to his rector, as a fellow-labourer in the gospel, that he retreated overwhelmed with confusion, and unable to say a word about the intended dismissal. He was in consequence reproached with a breach of his promise, and went a second time to fulfil it. He again retreated without daring to allude to the object of his visit. He was pressed to go a third time by one of his principal parishioners, but replied, 'Do you go and dismiss him, if you can; I cannot. I feel in his presence as if he were a being of superior order, and I am so abashed that I am uneasy till I can retire? A short time after this the rector was taken ill, when he sent for Mr. Walker, entreated his prayers, acknowledged the propriety of his conduct, and promised him his hearty support if he recovered.'" From this time to the end of his ministry, no weapon formed against the curate of Truro seemed to prosper. He held on his way without let or hindrance, though not, of course, without much hatred, opposition, and petty persecution. But nothing that his opponents could do, or devise, was able to stop or silence him. So true is that word of Scripture: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. xvi. 7).

There can be no doubt that Walker's position at Truro was greatly strengthened by his eminent holiness, self-denial, and consistency of life. Whatever his enemies thought of his preaching, they could not deny that he was a singularly holy man. Like Daniel, they could find no fault in him except concerning the law of his God. Two remarkable instances of his self-denial and disinterestedness deserve special mention. One is his voluntary resignation of the vicarage of Tailand, to which he had been appointed about

the time of his coming to Truro, with the bishop's license of non-residence. On becoming a converted man, his conscience told him that he ought not to receive an income for which he discharged no ministerial duty. Acting on this principle, he cheerfully gave up the preferment unasked and unpersuaded, relinquished all his accustomed comforts, and went into humble lodgings of the plainest kind. The other instance is even more singular. He refused the opportunity of marrying a lady eminently suited to be his wife, who would have readily accepted his hand, on the sole ground that she had too much fortune. To a friend who seriously advised him to propose to her, he made the following remarkable reply: "I certainly never saw a woman whom I thought comparable to Miss ———, and I believe I should enjoy as much happiness in union with her as it is possible to enjoy in this world. I have reason also to think that she would not reject my suit. Still it must never be! What would the world say of me? Would not they imagine that the hope of obtaining such a prize influenced my profession of religion? It is easy, they would say, to preach self-denial and heavenly-mindedness, but has not the preacher taken care to get as much of this world's good as he could possibly obtain? It must never be! I can never suffer any temporal happiness or advantage to be a hindrance to my usefulness." Conscientiousness like this is certainly very rare, and to many persons may seem totally incomprehensible and absurd. Whether, also, in Walker's behaviour to the lady, there was not something of morbid scrupulosity, and whether a happy marriage might not have lengthened his life and usefulness, are questions which admit of doubt. But there is no denying that not a few evangelical ministers have withered their own usefulness by marrying wealthy wives. And one thing is *very* certain, that Walker's character for eminent disinterestedness and unworldliness became so thoroughly established, that in this material point the breath of slander never touched him to the very end of his days.

The direct visible effects of Walker's ministry at Truro were very remarkable and extensive. Worldliness and wickedness were checked to an extraordinary extent, and even those who loved sin were ashamed to commit it so openly as they had done in time past. Not long after he began to preach the real gospel and to call men to repentance, the theatre and cockpit in the town were both forsaken, and given up to other purposes; and similar reforms extended to places in the neighbourhood through his instrumentality. The influence of his ministry, in fact, was singularly felt by many who were never converted. He said himself that he had reason to think almost all his hearers at Truro were, at one time or other, awakened more or less, "although I fear many of them have rejected the counsel of God against themselves."

Of positive spiritual results in the saving of souls by any one's ministry, a wise man will always speak cautiously. We see through a glass darkly, and are easily deceived in such matters. Yet I see every reason to believe that

Walker's ministry at Truro was really the means of turning hundreds from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. It is a certain fact that in 1754, after he had preached the gospel only seven years at Truro, he recorded that no less than eight hundred persons had made particular application to him, from time to time, inquiring what they must do to be saved. Making every allowance for many of this number who doubtless drew back after their first convictions, and returned to their sins, this simple fact ought to fill our minds with astonishment. The parish of Truro, even at this day, does not contain more than ten thousand people. A hundred years ago it must have been a much smaller place. The ministry which in seven years could arrest the attention of eight hundred persons in such a parish, must have been one of singular power, and singularly blessed of God.

One of the most interesting examples of his ministerial success was the extraordinary effect that he produced on a regiment of soldiers which was quartered in Truro in 1756. As soon as they arrived, Walker set up a sermon for their special benefit on Sunday afternoon, which was called "the soldiers' sermon." After a little time the number of attendants became very large; and the mere fact that it was a voluntary service, specially intended for soldiers, no doubt helped greatly to bring hearers. The attention of the men was thoroughly arrested, and within three weeks no less than a hundred of them came to Walker's house, asking what they must do to be saved. He himself says to a correspondent: "The effects of the soldiers' sermon have been very striking. You would have seen their countenances changing, tears often bursting from their eyes, and confessions of their exceeding sinfulness and danger breaking from their mouths. I have scarcely heard such a thing as self-excusing from any of them; while the desire to be instructed, and uncommon thankfulness for any pains for them used by any of us, have been very remarkable."

His biographer says: "Mr. Walker's exertions in the regiment at first met with great opposition. The commander publicly forbade his men to go to him for private instruction, though, at last, no less than two hundred and fifty of them sought the persevering servant of Christ for that purpose. Those also whom religion had separated from the sinful habits and company of their unawakened comrades, were much derided; but grace enabled them to stand. A great alteration, however, soon took place. Punishment diminished, and order prevailed in the regiment, to a degree never before witnessed; and at length the commander discovered the excellent cause of this salutary change. Genuine zeal had now its full triumph and rich reward. The officers waited on Mr. Walker in a body, to acknowledge the good effects of his wise and sedulous exertions, and to thank him for the reformation he had produced in their ranks."

“These interesting men left Truro after nine weeks’ stay. The parting scene was indescribably affecting. They assembled the last evening in the society-room, to hear their beloved minister’s farewell prayer and exhortation. ‘Had you,’ said Walker to a friend, ‘but seen their countenances, what thankfulness, love, sorrow, and joy sat upon them! They hoped they might bring forth some fruit; they hoped to meet us again at the right hand of Jesus at the great day.’ It was an hour of mingled distress and comfort; the hearts of many were so full, that they clasped the hand of the beloved instrument of their conversion, and turned away without a word. They began their morning march praising God for having brought them under the sound of the gospel; and as they slowly passed along, turned round to catch occasional glimpses of the town, as it gradually receded from their sight, exclaiming, ‘God bless Truro!’ They saw their spiritual leader no more upon earth, but were consoled by the hope of a triumphant meeting amongst the armies of heaven.”

One grand peculiarity of Walker’s ministry at Truro was the system of private meetings for mutual edification among the spiritual members of his congregation, which he succeeded in instituting. He seems to have been deeply impressed with the necessity of following up the work done in the pulpit, and with the desirableness of stirring up real Christians to be useful to one another. There can be no doubt that he was right. ‘Edify one another,’ is an apostolic principle far too much overlooked (1 Thess. v. 11.) Most Christians are far too ready to leave everything to be done by their minister, and forget that a minister has only one body and one tongue, and cannot be everywhere, and do everything. Above all, most Christians forget that the mutual conference of believers is a valuable means of grace, and that in trying to water others we are likely to be watered ourselves. But the best and wisest manner of conducting these meetings for mutual edification is a subject of vast difficulty, and one on which good men differ widely. Scores of excellent ministers have attempted to do something in this direction, and have completely failed. It was precisely here that Walker seems to have been eminently gifted, and to have obtained extraordinary success.

My limited space makes it quite impossible to give a full account of all the plans and arrangements that Walker made for the conduct of these religious societies. Those who wish to know more about them will find them fully described in Sidney’s “Life of Walker.” One leading feature of his system deserves, however, to be specially noticed: I mean his careful classification of the members of his societies. He always formed them into two divisions, one composed entirely of men, into which no female was admitted; the other of married men, their wives, and unmarried women, from which all single men were excluded. The wisdom and good sense of this classification will be obvious to every reflecting Christian. It is the very neglect of it, however simple it may appear, which has been the ruin of many similar private

movements among religious people. The rules drawn up for the management of meetings are marked throughout by like soundness of judgment. The objects to be kept steadily in view—the admission of members, the hours to be kept, the mode of proceeding, the things to be habitually avoided by members—are all most carefully defined, and give one a most favourable idea of Walker's rare Christian good sense. I have only room to quote two rules, which are a good specimen of the tone and spirit running through all the regulations.

One rule is: "That every' member of this Society do esteem himself peculiarly obliged to live in an inoffensive and orderly manner, to the glory of God and the edification of his neighbours; that he study to advance, in himself and others, humility and meekness, faith in Christ, love to God, gospel repentance, and new obedience, in which things Christian edification consists, and not in vain janglings. And that in all his conversation and articles of faith he stick close to the plain and divine meaning of Holy Scripture, carefully avoiding all intricate niceties and refinements upon it."

The other rule, or rather explanatory definition, is: "By a disorderly carriage we mean not only the commission of gross and scandalous sins, but also what are esteemed matters of little moment in the eyes of the world, such as the light use of the words, *Lord, God, Jesus, &c.*, in ordinary conversation, which we cannot but interpret as an evidence of the want of God's presence in the heart; the buying and selling of goods which have not paid custom; the doing needless work on the Lord's day; the frequenting ale-houses or taverns without necessary business. And considering the consequence of vain amusements so generally practised, we do, in charity to the souls of others, as well as to avoid the danger of such things ourselves, think ourselves obliged to use particular caution about many of them, however innocent they may be in themselves, such as cards, dancings, clubs for entertainments, play-houses, sports at festivals and parish feasts, and as much as may be parish feasts themselves, lest by joining therein we are a hindrance to ourselves and others." This is sound speech that cannot be condemned. Regulations such as these need no comment. Whatever objections may be made against private societies such as Walker formed at Truro, as tending to create a church within a church, one thing at least is sure—A system which produced such a high standard of life and practice in the members of the Society, deserves serious consideration.

Walker's most useful career was brought to a termination in the year 1761. He died at the early age of forty-seven, of pulmonary consumption, accelerated, if not brought on, by his over-abundant labours in the cause of Christ at Truro. It is impossible to wonder at his breaking down at a comparatively early age, when we consider the immense amount of ministerial labour which he regularly carried on, single-handed and unassisted, for nearly

fourteen years, in his large Cornish parish. He says himself, in a letter dated 1755: "My stated business (beside the Sunday duty, prayers Wednesdays and Fridays, burials, baptisms, and attendance on the sick) is, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, to talk with such as apply to me in private from six to ten in the evening; Tuesday, to attend the society; and Thursday, a lecture in church in the evening. Saturday, and as much of Friday as I can give, is bestowed in preparing the Sunday's sermons. To all this must be added what I may well call the care of the church, that is, of above a hundred people, who, on one account and another, continually need my direction. You will not wonder if my strength proves unequal to this labour, and I find myself debilitated, and under necessity of making my time shorter by lying in bed longer than formerly. In short, what I am going through seems evidently to be hastening my end, though there be no immediate danger." The plain truth is, that so far from wondering that such a man died so soon, we should rather wonder that he worked and lived so long.

He died at Blackheath, near London, after a long and suffering illness of more than a year's duration, in which he received every attention that could be bestowed on his poor earthly tabernacle from the kindness of Lord Dartmouth. He died in the full enjoyment of the peace he had so faithfully preached to others, and his death-bed was without a cloud. He had never married, and, like Berridge, had neither brother, sister, nor near relative to stand by him as he went down into the river. But he had that which is far better than earthly relatives, the strong consolation of a lively hope, and the presence of that Saviour who "sticketh closer than a brother," and who has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

The following letter, written on his death-bed to his beloved friend Mr. Conon, only a fortnight before he died, gives a most pleasing impression of Walker's happy frame of mind in the prospect of eternity. He says:—

"My dearest, most faithful friend,—My disorder, though by no means affording the least prospect of recovery, yet seems to affect me at present more with weakness than with that violent heat which rendered me incapable of thought. I can now, blessed be God, think a little; and with what comfort do I both receive your thoughts and communicate mine to you! Oh, my dear friend, what do we owe to the Lord for one another! More than I could have conceived, had not God sent me to die elsewhere. We shall have time to praise the Lord, when we meet in the other world. I stand and look upon that world with an established heart. I see the way prepared, opened, and assured unto me in Jesus Christ. For ever blessed be the name of God, that I can look upon death, that introduces that glorious scene, without any kind of fear. I find my grand duty still is submission, both as to time and circumstances. Why should I not say to you that I find nothing come so near my heart, as the fear lest my will should thwart God's will in any circumstances? Thus, I

think, I am enabled to watch and pray in some poor measure. Well, my dear friend, I am but stepping a little before you. You will soon also get your release, and then we shall triumph for ever in the name, love, and power of the Lamb. Adieu! Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.”

The above touching letter was probably the last that Walker wrote. One week later, Mr. Burnet, a dear and valued friend both of Walker’s and Venn’s, gave the following account of him in a letter to a friend. He says: “On Saturday, the 11th July, I reached Mr. Walker’s lodging at Blackheath. There I saw the dear man lying on his bed of sickness, pining away in the last stage of consumption, burnt up with raging fever, and wasted almost to a skeleton. He was perfectly sensible, and so was able to express himself much to our satisfaction. The first thing which struck me exceedingly was his patient submission under God’s hand, and his thankful tender concern for all those who were near to him. So little was his mind engaged with things merely pertaining to himself, that in the smallest things concerning my own convenience and comfort he behaved as if I had been the sick person. He said he had been uneasy, at the beginning of his sickness, at the want of sensible frames of feeling, but was relieved by that Scripture, ‘They that worship God must worship him in spirit,’ with the noble powers of the soul; and that he now found experimentally the worship of God’s Spirit on his heart in a degree he had never before experienced. ‘I am now enabled,’ he said, ‘to see when it was that the Lord Jesus first laid effectual hold of my heart, which I was never able to discover before. I have a perfect satisfaction in the principles I have preached, and the methods I have generally taken. I have no doubt respecting my state in Christ, or my future glory. Behold, I am going down to the gates of the grave, and holy angels wait for me. Why do you trouble yourselves, and weep? Cannot you rejoice with me? I am going to heaven. Christ died: my Lord! Oh, had I strength to express myself, I could tell you enough to make your hearts weep for joy. God is all love to me, and my trials are very slight.’”

On Tuesday, July the 14th, Walker dictated the following words to Mr. Conon: “My dearest Friend,—With great confusion of thought, I have no doubts, great confidence, great submission, no complaining. As to actual views of the joys that are coming, I have none; but a steadfast belief of them in Christ.” The same day, when one sitting by his bedside observed that his soul was ripe for heaven and eternity, he interrupted him by saying, “that the body of sin was not yet done away, but that he should continue a sinner to the last gasp, and desired that he would pray for him as such.”

On Sunday, July the 19th, in the same happy and peaceful frame of mind, the holy curate of Truro fell asleep in Christ, and went home. “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

Walker's literary remains are not many, but they deserve far more attention than many writings of the period when he lived. His "Lectures on the Church Catechism," his "Nine Sermons on the Covenant of Grace," and his eleven sermons entitled "The Christian," are all excellent books, and ought to be better known and more read than they are in the present day. His sermons give me a most favourable impression of his powers as a preacher. For simplicity, directness, vivacity, and home appeals to the heart and conscience, I am disposed to assign them a very high rank among the sermons of a hundred years ago. It is my deliberate impression, that if he had been an itinerant like Whitefield, and had not confined himself to his pulpit at Truro, he would probably have been reckoned one of the best preachers of his day.

The following extract from the last sermon preached by Walker at Truro is not only interesting in itself, but is also a very fair specimen of his style of preaching. The subject was the second coming of Christ to judge the quick and the dead. He said at the conclusion: "Can I think of this day, so honourable to him whom my soul loveth, without longing and wishing for its appearing? When I consider that his people shall partake with him in the glories of that day, and hear him say those ravishing words never to be recalled, 'Come, ye blessed of my father,' can I do other than say, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly?' Surely I should rejoice to see and be for ever with the Lord; to behold his beauty as the express image of his father's person; to contemplate with endless and insatiable transport the glory which the Father hath given him; to make my acknowledgment, amid the praises of heaven, among the multitude which no man can number, as saved, for ever saved, by his love and care, his power and grace. What! when the least beam of his glory let in upon my soul now turns my earth into heaven, and makes me cry out with Peter, 'It is good for us to be here,' can I wish to delay his coming? When, remaining in this vale of misery, I groan under corruptions, and am burdened with a corruptible body, can I say, 'This is better than to be fashioned in soul and body like unto the Lord?' When I find here nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit, shall I be averse to the Lord's coming to change my sorrows into joy unspeakable and full of glory? Here, beset as I am with enemies, would I not long for that blessed day when I shall see them again no more for ever? And would I not be glad to be taken from a world lying in wickedness, into that new heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness? I know that my redeemer liveth. I know that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. I have a humble confidence that he will own me among the children. And shall I, like those who know no better joys than this world can afford them, are ignorant of a Redeemer's righteousness, and lie under the unconscious guilt of unnumbered and unpardoned sin—shall I, like them, cleave to this base life as my all for happiness, and not wait, and wish, and long for the day of my Master's glorious appearing? No! I will not abide in that low

measure of faith, which only begets a hope that I may be well when the Lord comes, but knows not what it is to love the day of his appearing. My endeavour shall be to be strong in the faith, and abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, always fruitful in good works, and hasting unto the day of the Lord.

“As for you, my dear hearers, I am grieved at heart for many, very many of you, to think how you will make your appearance before Christ’s judgment-seat. You have no works to speak there for your belonging to Christ; I can see none. I see works of various kinds that prove you do not belong to him. If a life of pleasure, idleness, indulgence, drunkenness, pride, covetousness, would recommend you to the favour of the Judge, few would be better received than numbers of you! In the name of God, my friends, when you know this moment in your own consciences that if, as you have been and are, you should be called to judgment, you would be surely cast into hell, why will you live at such a rate? Well! we shall all be soon before the judgment-seat of Christ. There the controversy between me, persuading you by the terrors of the Lord to repent, and you, determined to abide in your sins, will be decided. There it will appear whether your blood will be upon your own heads for your obstinate impenitences, or upon mine for not giving you warning. Christ will certainly either acquit or condemn me on this account; and if I should be acquitted, what will become of you? I tremble to think how many words of mine will be brought up against you on that day. What will you say, what will you answer, how will you excuse yourselves? Oh, sirs, if you will not be prevailed upon, you will, with eternal self-reproach, curse the day that you knew me, or heard one word from my mouth. Why, why will ye die with so aggravated a destruction? May the Lord incline you to think! May he cause this word to sink deep into your hearts! May he show you all your dangers, and with an outstretched arm bring you out of the hands of the devil, and translate you into the kingdom of his dear Son.”

The letters which Mr. Sidney has collected in his biography of Walker are all interesting, especially those addressed to the two Wesleys, and to Mr. Adam of Winteringham, author of “Private Thoughts upon Religion.” Indeed, the whole book is valuable. I only regret that the author should have thought it necessary to elaborate so carefully his favourite idea, that Mr. Walker was a sound Churchman and not a Dissenter. It may be perfectly true, no doubt. But it is too often pressed and thrust upon our notice. Walker lived in a day when the very existence of Christianity in England was at stake, and when the main business of true-hearted Christians was to preserve the very foundations of revealed religion from being swept away. To my eyes, Walker’s thorough Christianity is a far more conspicuous object than his Churchmanship.

After all, I leave the subject of this chapter with a very deep conviction that we know comparatively very little about Walker. The half of his work, I suspect, has never yet been recorded. He lived near the Land's End. He seldom left his own parish. His life was never fully written till fifty or sixty years after he was dead. What wonder, then, if we know but little of the man! Yet I venture the surmise that in the last day, when the secrets of all ministries shall be disclosed, few will be found to have done better work for Christ in their day and generation than Walker of Truro.