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THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. SAMUEL PEARCE, A. M.

ABRIDGED FROM THE "MEMOIRS" OF THE
REV. ANDREW FULLER.

THE LIFE

THE REV. SAMUEL PEARCE.

CHAPTER I.

MR. SAMUEL PEARCE was born at Plymouth, July 20th, 1766. His father was a respectable silversmith, and many years a Deacon of the Baptist church in that place.

When a child, he lived with his grandfather, who was very fond of him, and endeavoured to impress his mind with the principles of religion. At about eight or nine years of age, he came home to his father, with a view of learning his business. As he advanced in life, his evil propensities, as he said, began to ripen ; and forming connexions with several vicious school-fellows, he became more and more corrupted. So greatly was his heart at this time set in him to do evil, that had it not been for the restraining goodness of God, which, he knew not how, preserved him in most instances from carrying his wicked inclinations

into practice, he supposed he should have been utterly ruined.

At times he was under strong convictions, which rendered him miserable: but at other times they subsided, and then he returned with eagerness to his sinful pursuits. When about fifteen years old, he was sent by his father to inquire after the welfare of a person in the neighbourhood, in dying circumstances, who (though before his departure he was in a happy state of mind) at that time was sinking into deep despair. While in the room of the dying man, he heard him cry out with inexpressible agony of spirit, "I am damned for ever!" These awful words pierced his soul, and he felt a resolution at the time to serve the Lord; but the impression soon wore off, and he again returned to folly.

When about sixteen years of age, it pleased God effectually to turn him to himself. A sermon delivered by Mr. Birt, who was then co-Pastor with Mr. Gibbs, of the Baptist church at Plymouth, was the first means of impressing his heart with a sense of his lost condition, and of directing him to the Gospel remedy. The change in him appears to have been sudden, but effectual; and though his vicious propensities were bitter to his recollection, yet being now sensibly subdued, he was furnished with so much the clearer evidence that the work was of God. "I believe," he says, "few conversions were more

joyful. The change produced in my views, feelings, and conduct, was so evident to myself, that I could no more doubt of its being from God, than of my existence. I had the witness in myself, and was filled with peace and joy unspeakable."

His feelings being naturally strong, and receiving a new direction, he entered into religion with all his heart; but not having known the devices of Satan, his soul was injured by its own ardour, and he was thrown into great perplexity. Having read Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," he determined formally to dedicate himself to the Lord, in the manner recommended in the seventeenth chapter of that work. The form of a covenant, as there drawn up, he also adopted as his own; and, that he might bind himself in the most solemn and affecting manner, signed it with his blood! But afterwards failing in his engagements, he was plunged into great distress, and almost into despair. On a review of his covenant, he seems to have accused himself of a pharisaical reliance upon the strength of his own resolutions; and therefore, taking the paper to the top of his father's house, he tore it into small pieces, and threw it from him to be scattered by the wind. He did not, however, consider his obligation to be the Lord's as hereby nullified; but feeling more suspicion of himself, he depended solely upon the blood of the cross.

After this he was baptized, and became a member of the Baptist church at Plymouth, the Ministers and members of which, in a few years, perceived in him talents for public work. Being solicited by both his Pastors, he preached as a probationer; and receiving a unanimous call from the church, entered on the work of the ministry in November, 1786. Soon after this, he went to the academy at Bristol, then under the superintendence of Dr. Caleb Evans.

Mr. Birt thus speaks of him: "Though he was, so far as I know, the very first fruits of my ministry, on my coming hither, and though our friendship and affection for each other were great and constant, yet, previous to his going to Bristol, I had but few opportunities of conversing with him, or of making particular observations on him. All who best knew him, however, will remember, and must tenderly speak of, his loving deportment; and those who attended the conferences with him, soon received the most impressive intimations of his future eminence as a Minister of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Very few have entered upon, and gone through, their religious profession with more exalted piety, or warmer zeal, than Samuel Pearce; and as few have exceeded him in the possession and display of that charity which 'suffereth long, and is kind, that envieth not, that vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up, that doth not behave

itself unseemly, that seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, that beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.’”

While at the academy he was much distinguished by the amiableness of his spirit and behaviour. It is sometimes observable, that where the talents of a young man are admired by his friends, and his early efforts flattered by crowded auditories, effects have been produced which have proved fatal to his future usefulness. But this was not the case with Mr. Pearce. Notwithstanding the popularity, which even at that early period attended his ministerial exercises, his tutors have more than once remarked, that he never appeared to them to be in the least elated, or to have neglected his proper studies; but was uniformly the serious, industrious, docile, modest, and unassuming young man.

Towards the latter end of 1789, he came to the church in Cannon-street, Birmingham, to whom he was recommended by Mr. Robert Hall, at that time one of his tutors. After preaching to them a while, he was chosen to be their Pastor. His ordination was in August, 1790.

About two months after this, he wrote to his friend Mr. Summers. Whether the sentiments contained in that letter arose from the recollection of his late solemn engagement, is uncertain; but they were certainly very appropriate to the occasion. Requesting his friend to pray for him, he

says, "Paul speaks of blessings received through the prayers of his fellow-Christians: no wonder, therefore, he so often solicits their continuance. But if it be well to be interested in the prayers of fellow-Christians, how much more to believe the great High Priest of our profession, Jesus the Son of God, is gone into the holy of holies, with our names on his breast-plate, ever to plead in the presence of God for us! O transporting thought! Who can doubt of the success of such an Intercessor?"

"I have of late had my mind very pleasantly and, I hope, profitably exercised on this subject, more than ever, and find increasing pleasure from a well-grounded faith in the divinity of my incarnate Advocate. I see the glory of his office, arising from the infinite extent of his knowledge, power, and love, as well as from the efficacy of his atoning sacrifice. I do not wonder at those men, who deny the priestly office of Christ, when they have refused him the honours of Deity. I rejoice in that He who pleads for us knows our wants individually, as well as the necessities of the whole church collectively. Through his intercession alone I expect my sins to be pardoned, my services accepted, and my soul preserved, guided, and comforted; and, with confidence in his intercession, I cannot doubt but I shall enjoy all. O how sweet is it, my dear friend, to exercise a lively faith in a living Saviour! May you and I

do this daily. Thus for us to live will be Christ, and to die gain : living or dying, we shall be the Lord's."

In this early stage of his ministry, redemption by the blood of Christ appears to have been his chosen theme. Writing to the same friend as above, on September 30th, 1791, he says, "I have for my evening discourse the best subject in all the Bible,—redemption, how welcome to the captive!—forgiveness, how delightful to the guilty!—grace, pleasing to the heart of a saved sinner! O, my dear friend, how much do we lose of Gospel blessings for want of realizing our personal concern with them! Hence it is that we are no more humble, thankful, watchful, prayerful, joyful. We view the glories of the Gospel at a distance; and for want of that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and evidence of things not seen, think too lightly of them. Lord, increase our faith!"

About a month after this, he was married to Miss Sarah Hopkins, daughter of Mr. Joshua Hopkins, of Alcester; a connexion which appears to have been a source of great enjoyment to him. The following lines, addressed to Mrs. Pearce when he was on a journey, a little less than a year after their marriage, show, not only the tenderness of his affection, but his heavenly-mindedness, his gentle manner of persuading, and how every argument was fetched from

religion, and every incident improved for introducing it:—

“CHIPPING-NORTON, *August 15th*, 1792.

“ I BELIEVE that I have hitherto rather anticipated the proposed time of my return, than delayed the interview with my dear Sarah for an hour. But what shall I say, my love, now to reconcile you to my procrastinating my return for several days more? Why, I will say, it appears I am called of God; and I trust the piety of both of us will submit, and say, ‘Thy will be done.’

“ You have, no doubt, perused Mr. Ryland’s letter to me, wherein I find he solicits an exchange. The reason he assigns is so obviously important, that a much greater sacrifice than we are called to make should not be withheld to accomplish it. I therefore propose, God willing, to spend the next Lord’s day at Northampton. I thought of taking tea with you this evening: that would have been highly gratifying to us both; but it must be our meat and drink to do and submit to the will of our heavenly Father. All is good that comes from him, and all is done right which is done in obedience to him. O to be perfectly resigned to his disposal, how good is it! May you, my dearest Sarah, and myself, daily prove the sweetness of this pious frame of soul: then all our duties will be sweet, all our trials will be light, all our pleasures will be pure, and all our hopes sanctified.

“Let your prayers assist my efforts on the ensuing Sabbath.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

The soul of Mr. Pearce was formed for friendship: it was natural therefore to suppose that, while engaging in the pursuit of his studies at the academy, he would contract religious intimacies with some of his brethren; and it is worthy of notice, that the grand cement of his friendship was kindred piety. In the two following letters, addressed to his friend Mr. Steadman, the reader will perceive the justness of this remark, as well as the encouraging prospects which soon attended his labours at Birmingham.

“*May 9th, 1792.*”

“MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

“I HOPE you are settled with a comfortable people, and that you enjoy much of your Master’s presence, both in the study and in the pulpit. For my part, I have nothing to lament, but an insensible, ungrateful heart; and that is sufficient cause for lamentation. This, only this, bows me down; and under this pressure I am ready to adopt the words I preached from last evening: ‘O that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away, and be at rest!’

“As a people, we are generally united: I believe more so than most churches of the same dimensions. Our number of members is about

two hundred and ninety-five, between forty and fifty of whom have joined us since I saw you; and most of them I have the happiness of considering as my children in the faith. There is still a crying out amongst us after salvation; and still, through much grace, it is my happiness to point them to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.

“In preaching, I have often peculiar liberty; at other times barren. I suppose my experience is like that of most of my brethren; but I am not weary of my work. I hope still that I am willing to spend and be spent, so that I may win souls to Christ, and finish my course with joy. But I want more heart-religion: I want a more habitual sense of the divine presence: I want to walk with God as Enoch walked. There is nothing that grieves me so much, or brings so much darkness on my soul, as my little spirituality, and frequent wanderings in secret prayer. I cannot neglect the duty; but it is seldom that I enjoy it.

‘Ye that love the Lord indeed,
Tell me, is it so with you?’

“When I come to the house of God, I pray and preach with freedom. Then I think the presence of the people seems to weigh more with me than the presence of God, and deem myself a hypocrite, almost ready to leave my pulpit for some more pious Preacher. But the Lord does

own the word ; and again I say, ‘ If I go to hell myself, I will do what I can to keep others from going thither ; ’ and so in the strength of the Lord I will.

“ An observation once made to me helps to support me above water : ‘ If you did not plough in your closet, you would not reap in the pulpit.’ And again I think, the Lord dwelleth in Zion, and loveth it more than the dwellings of Jacob.

“ SAMUEL PEARCE.”

“ *February 1st, 1793.*

“ THE pleasure which your friendly epistle gave me rises beyond expression ; and it is one of the first wishes of my heart ever to live in your valued friendship. Accept this, and my former letters, my dear brother, as sufficient evidences of my ardent wishes to preserve, by correspondence, that mutual remembrance of each other, which on my part will ever be pleasurable, and on yours, I hope, never painful.

“ But, ah ! how soon may we be rendered incapable of such an intercourse ! When I left Bristol, I left it with regret. I was sorry to leave my studies to embark, inexperienced as I am, on the ocean of public life, where the blowing winds and noisy billows must more or less inevitably annoy the trembling voyager. Nor did it make a small addition to my pain, that I was to part with so many of my dear companions, with whom

I had spent so many happy hours, either in furnishing or unburdening the mind. I need not say, amongst the first of these, I considered Josiah Evans. But, ah! my friend, we shall see his face no more! Through divine grace I hope we shall go to him; but he will not return to us. 'He wasted away, he gave up the ghost, and where is he?' The last time I heard directly from him, was by a very serious and affectionate letter, which I received, I think, last September. To it I replied; but received no answer. I conjectured, I feared; and now my conjectures and fears are all realized. Dear departed youth! Thy memory will ever be grateful to this affectionate breast. May thy amiable qualities live again in thy surviving friend, that to the latest period of his life he may thank God for the friendship of Josiah Evans!

"I assure you, my dear Steadman, I feel, keenly feel, the force of the sentiment,

'Of joys departed, ne'er to be recall'd,
How painful the remembrance!'

But I sorrow not as those without hope. I have a two-fold hope: I hope he is now among the spirits of the just made perfect, and that he will be of the blessed and holy number who have part in the first resurrection; and I hope also, through the same sovereign grace, to join the number too. Pleasing thought! Unite to divide no more!

“I preached last night from Revelation xxi. 6: ‘I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.’ I took occasion to expound the former part of the chapter, and found therein pleasure inexpressible; especially when speaking from the first verse, ‘And there was no more sea.’ The first idea that presented itself to me was this, ‘There shall be no bar to intercourse.’ Whether the thought be just or not, I leave with you and my hearers to determine; but I found happy liberty in illustrating it. What is it that separates one nation, and one part of the globe, from another? Is it not the sea? Are not Christians, though all of one family, the common Father of which is God, separated by this sea, or that river, or the other stream below? Yes; but they are one family still. There, there shall be none of these obstructions to communion, of these bars to intercourse; nothing to divide their affections, or disunite their praise for ever. Forgive my freedoms. I am writing to a friend, to a brother.

“I have been violently seized with a disorder very rife here, and which carried off many; supposed to be an inflammation in the bowels. One Sabbath evening I felt such alarming symptoms, that I did not expect to see Monday morning. In these circumstances I realized the feelings of a dying man. The first thing I attempted was a survey of my own conduct; my diligence and

faithfulness in the ministry, my unspotted life, &c. But, ah! vain props these for dying men to rest on! Such heart-sins, such corruptions, such evil propensities, recurred to my mind, that if ever I knew the moment when I felt my own righteousness to be as loathsome and filthy rags, it was then. I saw peace for guilty consciences was to be alone obtained through an almighty Saviour. And O! wonderful to tell, I again came to him; nor was I sent away without the blessing. I found him full of compassion, ready to receive the most ungrateful of men.

‘O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I’m constrain’d to be!’

“Join with me in praising him who remembered me in my low estate, because his mercy endureth for ever. I have found that it has made me more spiritual in preaching. I have prized the Gospel more than ever.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

From his first coming to Birmingham his meekness and patience were put to the trial by an Antinomian spirit, which infected many individuals, both in and out of his congregation. It is well known with what affection it was his practice to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, and to exhort Christians to the exercise of practical godliness; but these were things which they could not endure. Soothing doctrine was all they desired. Therefore it was that his minis-

try was traduced by them as Arminian, and treated with neglect and contempt. But, like his divine Master, he bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, and this while he had the strongest satisfaction, that, in those very things to which they objected, he was pleasing God. And though he plainly perceived the pernicious influence of their principles upon their own minds, as well as the minds of others, yet he treated them with great gentleness and long forbearance; and when it became necessary to exclude such of this description as were in communion with him, it was with the greatest reluctance that he came into that measure, and not without having first tried all other means in vain. He was not apt to deal in harsh language; yet, in one of his letters about that time, he speaks of the principles and spirit of these people as a “cursed leaven.”

Among his numerous religious friendships, he seems to have formed one for the special purpose of spiritual improvement. This was with Mr. Summers, of London, who often accompanied him in his journeys; to whom, therefore, it might be expected he would open his heart without reserve. On August 19th, 1793, he writes thus:—

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“WHEN I take my pen to pursue my correspondence with you, I have no concern but to

communicate something which may answer the end we propose in our annual journeys ; namely, lending some assistance in the important object of getting and keeping nearer to God. This, I am persuaded, is the mark at which we should be continually aiming, nor rest satisfied until we attain that to which we aspire. I am really ashamed of myself, when, on the one hand, I review the time that has elapsed since I first assumed the Christian name, with the opportunities of improvement in godliness which have crowded on my moments since that period ; and when, on the other, I feel the little advance I have made ! More light, to be sure, I have ; but light without heat leaves the Christian half dissatisfied. Yesterday, I preached on the duty of engagedness in God's service, from Jer. xxx. 21 : ' Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me ? saith the Lord.' While urging the necessity of heart religion, including sincerity and ardour, I found myself much assisted by reflecting on the ardour which our Redeemer discovered in the cause of sinners. ' Ah !' I could not help saying, ' if our Saviour had measured his intenseness in his engagements for us, by our fervency in fulfilling our engagements to him, we should have been now farther from hope than we are from perfection.'

“ Two things are causes of daily astonishment to me,—the readiness of Christ to come from

heaven to earth for me ; and my backwardness to rise from earth to heaven with him. But, O how animating the prospect ! A time approaches when we shall rise to sink no more,—‘ to be for ever with the Lord.’ To be with the Lord for a week, for a day, for an hour, how sweetly must the moments pass ! But to be for ever with the Lord,—that enstamps salvation with perfection ; that gives an energy to our hopes, and a dignity to our joy, so as to render it ‘ unspeakable and full of glory.’ I have had a few realizing moments since we parted ; and the effect has been, I trust, a broken heart. O, my brother, it is desirable to have a broken heart, were it only for the sake of the pleasure it feels in being helped and healed by Jesus ! Affecting views of the cursed effects of sin are highly salutary to a Christian’s growth in humility, confidence, and gratitude. At once how abasing and exalting is the comparison of our loathsome hearts with that of the lovely Saviour ! In him we see all that can charm an angel’s heart ; in ourselves all that can gratify a devil’s. And yet we may rest perfectly assured, that these nests of iniquity shall, ere long, be transformed into the temples of God ; and these sighs of sorrow be exchanged for songs of praise.

“ Last Lord’s day I spent the most profitable Sabbath to myself that I ever remember since I have been in the ministry ; and to this hour I feel the sweet solemnities of that day delightfully

protracted. Ah, my brother, were it not for past experience, I should say,

‘My heart presumes I cannot lose
The relish all my days.’

But now I rejoice with trembling; desiring to ‘hold fast what I have, that no man take my crown.’

“Yours, in our Saviour,
“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

In April, 1794, addressing a few lines to the compiler of these Memoirs, on a Lord’s-day evening, he thus concludes:—

have had a good day. I find, as a dear friend once said, ‘it is pleasant speaking for God when we walk with him.’ O for much of Enoch’s spirit! The Head of the church grant it to my dear brother, and his affectionate friend,
“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

In another letter to Mr. Summers, dated June 24th, 1794, he thus writes:—

“WE, my friend, have entered on a correspondence of heart with heart, and must not lose sight of that avowed object. I thank you sincerely for continuing the remembrance of so unworthy a creature in your intercourse with heaven; and I thank that sacred Spirit whose quickening influences you say you enjoy in the exercise. Yes, my brother, I have reaped the fruits of your supplications. I have

been indulged with some seasons of unusual joy, tranquil as solitude, and solid as the rock on which our hopes are built. In public exercises, peculiar assistance has been afforded; especially in these three things: the exaltation of the Redeemer's glory; the detection of the crooked ways, false refuges, and self-delusions of the human heart; and the stirring up of the saints to press onward, making God's cause their own, and considering themselves as living, not for themselves, but for him alone.

“Nor hath the word been without its effect: above fifty have been added to our church this year; most of whom I rejoice in as the seals of my ministry in the Lord. Indeed I am surrounded with goodness; and scarcely a day passes over my head, but I say, ‘Were it not for an ungrateful heart, I should be the happiest man alive; and that excepted, I neither expect nor wish to be happier in this world. My wife, my children, and myself, are uninterruptedly healthy; my friends kind; my soul at rest; and my labours successful. Who should be content and thankful if I should not?’ O my brother, help me to praise!

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

In a letter to Mrs. Pearce, from Plymouth, dated September 2d, 1794, the dark side of the cloud seems towards him:—“I have felt much barrenness,” says he, “as to spiritual things since

I have been here, compared with my usual frame at home; and it is a poor exchange, to enjoy the creature at the expense of the Creator's presence! A few seasons of spirituality I have enjoyed; but my heart, my inconstant heart, is' too prone to rove from its proper centre. Pray for me, my dearest friend: I do for you daily. O wrestle for me, that I may have more of Enoch's spirit! I am fully persuaded that a Christian is no longer really happy and inwardly satisfied, than while he walks with God; and I would this moment rejoice to abandon every pleasure here for a closer walk with him. I cannot, amidst all the round of social pleasure, amidst the most inviting scenes of nature, feel that peace with God which passeth understanding. My thirst for preaching Christ, I fear, abates; and a detestable vanity for the reputation of a good Preacher, as the world terms it, has already cost me many conflicts. Daily I feel convinced of the propriety of a remark which my friend Summers made on his journey to Wales,—that it is easier for a Christian to walk habitually near to God, than to be irregular in our walk with him. But I want resolution; I want a contempt for the world; I want more heavenly-mindedness; I want more humility; I want much, very much, of that which God alone can bestow. Lord, help the weakest lamb in all thy flock!

“ I preached this evening from Cant. ii. 3 :
‘ I sat down under his shadow with great delight,

and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' But how little love for my Saviour did I feel! With what little affection and zeal did I speak! I am praised by some; I am followed by many; I am respected by most of my acquaintance: but all this is nothing, yea, less than nothing, compared with possessing this testimony, that I please God. O thou Friend of sinners! humble me by repentance, and melt me down with love.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

On the same subject, and the same occasion, about three weeks afterwards (Sept. 23d, 1794) he wrote to Mr. Summers. His dissatisfaction with himself while spending his time in visits, and his satisfaction when engaged in his proper work, are well worthy of attention. “I was pretty much engaged in preaching,” says he, “and often felt enlarged in public work: but in private, my almost daily cry was, ‘My leanness, my leanness!’ Indeed it was a barren visit, as to the inward exercises of grace. Now and then I felt a brokenness of spirit, and a panting after God; but in general my mind was in a dissipated state. After so long an absence from so large an acquaintance, I was always crowded with company, some of whom, though amiable, were very gay. Their politeness and cheerfulness, joined with a high degree of indulgence, were too fascinating for my volatile mind. I admired, and was too much

conformed to their spirit. I did indeed often struggle with myself, and watched for occasions of dropping some improving hint; but either through want of opportunity or of fortitude, the hint seldom produced a long conversation, or a permanent effect. New visits or excursions were every day proposed, and my heart was continually divided between painful recollection and flattering hopes. One lesson indeed I have thoroughly learned,—that real, solid satisfaction is to be found in nothing but God. May I have grace to improve it throughout my future life.

“The last week I have known more of the power of inward religion than all the four which I have spent from home. I devoted the week to my Lord’s service entirely, and I found in keeping his commandments great reward.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

In another to Mr. Summers, dated November 10th, 1794, he says:

“I suppose I shall visit London in the spring & prepare my way by communion with God and man. I hope your soul prospers. I have enjoyed more of God within this month than ever since the day of my espousals with him. O my brother, help me to praise! I cannot say that I am quite so exalted in my frame to-day; yet still I acknowledge what I have lived upon for weeks,—that were there no being or

thing in the universe besides God and me, I should be at no loss for happiness. O

‘ ’Tis heaven to rest in his embrace,
And nowhere else but there.’

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

CHAPTER II.

MR. PEARCE was uniformly the spiritual and active servant of Christ; but neither his spirituality nor his activity would have appeared in the manner they have, but for his engagements in the introduction of the Gospel among the Heathen.

It was not long after his settlement at Birmingham, that he became acquainted with Mr. Carey, in whom he found a soul nearly akin to his own. When the brethren in the counties of Northampton and Leicester formed themselves into a Missionary Society at Kettering, in October, 1792, he was there, and entered into the business with all his heart. On his return to Birmingham, he communicated the subject to his congregation with so much effect, that to the small sum of £13. 2s. 6d. with which the subscription was begun, £70 were collected, and transmitted to the Treasurer; and the leading members of the church formed themselves into an Assistant Society. Early in the following spring, when it was resolved that Messrs. Thomas and Carey should go on a Mission

to the Hindoos, and a considerable sum of money was wanted for the purpose, he laboured with increasing ardour in various parts of the kingdom; and when the object was accomplished, he rejoiced in all his labours, smiling in every company, and blessing God.

During his labours and journeys on this important object, he wrote several letters to his friends; an extract or two from which will discover the state of his mind at this period, as well as the encouragements that he met with in his work at home.

TO MR. STEADMAN.

“BIRMINGHAM, *Feb. 8th, 1793.*

“MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

“UNION of sentiment often creates friendship among carnal men; and similarity of feeling never fails to produce affection among pious men, as far as that similarity is known. I have loved you ever since I knew you. We saw, we felt alike, in the interesting concerns of personal religion. We formed a reciprocal attachment. We expressed it by words. We agreed to do so by correspondence; and we have not altogether been wanting to our engagements. But our correspondence has been interrupted, not, I believe, through any diminution of regard on either side; I am persuaded not on mine. I rather condemn myself as the first aggressor: but I excuse while I condemn; and so would you, did you know half the concerns which devolve upon me in my present situation.

Birmingham is a central place ; the inhabitants are numerous ; our members are between three and four hundred. The word preached has lately been remarkably blessed. In less than five months I baptized nearly forty persons, almost all newly awakened. Next Lord's-day week I expect to add to their number. These persons came to my house, to propose the most important of all inquiries, 'What must we do to be saved?' I have been thus engaged some weeks, during the greatest part of most days. This, with four sermons a week, will account for my neglect. But your letter, received this evening, calls forth every latent affection of my heart for you. We are, my dear brother, not only united in the common object of pursuit,—salvation ; and not only rest our hopes on the same foundation,—Jesus Christ ; but we feel alike respecting the poor Heathens. O how Christianity expands the mind ! What tenderness for our poor fellow-sinners ! what sympathy for their moral misery ! what desires to do them everlasting good, doth it provoke ! How satisfying to our judgments is this evidence of grace ! How gratifying to our present taste are these benevolent breathings ! O how I love that man whose soul is deeply affected with the importance of the Gospel to idolatrous Heathens ! Excellently, my dear brother, you observe, that great as its blessings are in the estimation of a sinner called in a Christian country, inexpressibly greater must

they shine on the newly illuminated mind of a converted Pagan.

“We shall be glad of all your assistance in a pecuniary way, as the expense will be heavy. Dear brother Carey has paid us a visit of love this week. He preached excellently to-night. I expect brother Thomas next week, or the week after. I wish you would meet him here. I have a house at your command, and a heart greatly attached to you.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

TO MR. FULLER.

“*February 23d, 1798.*”

“I AM willing to go any where, and do any thing in my power ; but I hope no plan will be suffered to interfere with the affecting, hoped for, dreaded day, March 13th, the day of our brethren Carey and Thomas’s solemn designation at Leicester. O how the anticipation of it at once rejoices and afflicts me ! Our hearts need steeling to part with our much-loved brethren, who are about to venture their all for the name of the Lord Jesus. I feel my soul melting within me when I read the twentieth chapter of Acts, and especially verses 36—38. But why grieve ? We shall see them again. O yes ! them and the children whom the Lord will give them ; we and the children whom the Lord hath given us. We shall meet again, not to weep and pray, but to smile and praise.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

From the day of the departure of the Missionaries, no one was more importunate in prayer than Mr. Pearce ; and, on the news of their safe arrival, no one was more filled with joy and thankfulness.

Hitherto we had witnessed his zeal in promoting this important undertaking at home ; but this did not satisfy him. In October, 1794, we were given to understand, that he had for some time had it in serious contemplation to go himself, and to cast in his lot with his brethren in India. When his designs were first discovered, his friends and connexions were much concerned, and endeavoured to persuade him, that he was already in a sphere of usefulness too important to be relinquished. But his answer was, that they were too interested in the affair to be competent judges. And nothing would satisfy him short of his making a formal offer of his services to the Committee ; nor could he be happy for them to decide upon it without their appointing a day of solemn prayer for the purpose, and, when assembled, hearing an account of the principal exercises of his mind upon the subject, with the reasons which induced him to make the proposal, as well as the reasons alleged by his connexions against it.

On October 4th, 1794, he wrote to an intimate friend, of whom he entertained a hope that he might accompany him, as follows :—

“LAST Wednesday I rode to Northampton, where a Ministers’ meeting was held on the following day. We talked much about the Mission. We read some fresh and very encouraging accounts. We lamented that we could not obtain any suitable persons to send out to the assistance of our brethren. Now what do you think was said at this meeting? My dear brother, do not be surprised that all present united in opinion, that in all our connexion there was no man known to us so suitable as you, provided you were disposed for it, and things could be brought to bear. I thought it right to mention this circumstance; and one thing more I cannot refrain from saying,—that were it manifestly the will of God, I should call that the happiest hour of my life which witnessed our both embarking with our families on board one ship, as helpers of the servants of Jesus Christ already in Hindostan. Yes; I could unreluctantly leave Europe and all its contents, for the pleasures and perils of this glorious service. Often my heart in the sincerest ardours thus breathes forth its desires unto God, ‘Here am I, send me.’ But I am ignorant whether you from experience can realize my feelings. Perhaps you have friendship enough for me to lay open your meditations on this subject in your next. If you have had half the exercises that I have, it will be a relief to your labouring mind; or if you think I have made too free with you, reprove me, and I will love you still. O if I

could find a heart that had been tortured and ravished like my own in this respect, I should form a new kind of alliance, and feel a friendship of a novel species. With eagerness should I communicate all the vicissitudes of my sensations, and with eagerness listen to a recital of kindred feelings. With impatience I should seek, and with gratitude receive, direction and support; and, I hope, feel a new occasion of thankfulness when I bow my knee to the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. Whence is it that I thus write to you, as I have never written to any one before? Is there a fellowship of the Spirit; or is it the confidence that I have in your friendship that thus directs my pen? Tell me, dear ——! tell me, how you felt, and how you still feel, on this interesting subject; and do not long delay the gratification to your very affectionate friend and brother,

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

About a month preceding the decision of this affair, he drew up a narrative of his experience respecting it; resolving at the same time to set apart one day in every week for secret fasting and prayer to God for direction, and to keep a diary of the exercises of his mind during the month.

When the Committee were assembled at Northampton, according to his desire, he presented to them the narrative; and which was as follows:—

“October 8th, 1794.

“ HAVING had some peculiar exercises of mind relative to my personally attempting to labour for the Redeemer amongst the Heathen, and being at a loss to know what is the will of the Lord in this matter respecting me, I have thought that I might gain some satisfaction, by adopting these two resolutions :—First, That I will, as in the presence of God, faithfully endeavour to recollect the various workings of my mind on this subject, from the first period of my feeling any desire of this nature until now, and commit them to writing ; together with what considerations do now, on the one hand, impel me to the work, and on the other, what prevent me from immediately resolving to enter upon it. Secondly, That I will from this day keep a regular journal, with special relation to this matter.

“ This account and journal will, I hope, furnish me with much assistance in forming a future opinion of the path of duty ; as well as help any friends whom I may hereafter think proper to consult, to give me suitable advice in the business. Lord, help me !

“ It is very common for young converts to feel strong desires for the conversion of others. These desires immediately followed the evidences of my own religion ; and I remember well they were particularly fixed upon the poor Heathens. I believe the first week that I knew the grace of God in truth, I put up many fervent cries to heaven in

their behalf; and at the same time felt an earnest desire to be employed in promoting their salvation. It was not long after, that the first settlers sailed for Botany-Bay. I longed to go with them, although in company with the convicts, in hopes of making known the blessings of the great salvation in New-Zealand. I actually had thought of making an effort to go out unknown to my friends; but, ignorant how to proceed, I abandoned my purpose. Nevertheless, I could not help talking about it; and at one time a report was circulated that I was really going, and a neighbouring Minister very seriously conversed with me on the subject.

“ While I was at the Bristol academy, the desire remained; but not with that energy as at first, except on one or two occasions. Being sent by my tutor to preach two Sabbaths at Coldford, I felt particular sweetness in devoting the evenings of the week to going from house to house among the colliers, who dwell in the Forest of Dean, adjoining the town, conversing and praying with them, and preaching to them. In these exercises I found the most solid satisfaction that I have ever known in discharging the duties of my calling. In a poor hut, with a stone to stand upon, and a three-legged stool for my desk, surrounded with thirty or forty of the smutty neighbours, I have felt such an unction from above, that my whole auditory have been melted into tears, whilst directed to ‘the Lamb of God

which taketh away the sin of the world ;' and I weeping among them, could scarcely speak, or they hear, for interrupting sighs and sobs. Many a time did I then think, 'Thus it was with the Apostles of our Lord, when they went from house to house among the poor Heathen. In work like this I could live and die.' Indeed, had I at that time been at liberty to settle, I should have preferred that situation to any in the kingdom with which I was then acquainted.

"But the Lord placed me in a situation very different. He brought me to Birmingham; and here, amongst the novelties, cares, and duties of my station, I do not remember any wish for foreign service, till, after a residence of some months, I heard Dr. Coke preach at one of Mr. Wesley's chapels, from Psalm lxxviii. 31: 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.' Then it was that, in Mr. Horne's phrase, 'I felt a passion for Missions.' Then I felt an interest in the state of the heathen world far more deep and permanent than before, and seriously thought how I could best promote their obtaining the knowledge of the crucified Jesus.

"As no way at that time was open, I cannot say that I thought of taking a part of the good work among the Heathen abroad; but resolved that I would render them all the assistance I could at home. My mind was employed during the residue of that week in meditating on Psalm

lxxxvii. 3, 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God;' and the next Sabbath morning I spoke from those words, on the promised increase of the church of God. I had observed, that our monthly meetings for prayer had been better attended than the other prayer-meetings, from the time that I first knew the people in Cannon-street; but I thought a more general attention to them was desirable. I therefore preached on the Sabbath-day evening preceding the next monthly prayer-meeting, from Matt. vi. 10, 'Thy kingdom come;' and urged with ardour and affection a universal union of the serious part of the congregation in this exercise. It rejoiced me to see three times as many the next night as usual; and for some time after that, I had nearly equal cause for joy.

"As to my own part, I continued to preach much upon the promises of God respecting the conversion of the heathen nations; and by so doing, and always communicating to my people every piece of information I could obtain respecting the present state of Missions, they soon imbibed the same spirit: and from that time to this they have discovered so much concern for the more extensive spread of the Gospel, that at our monthly prayer-meetings, both stated and occasional, I should be as much surprised at the case of the Heathen being omitted in any prayer, as at an omission of the name and merits of Jesus.

“ Indeed, it has been a frequent means of enkindling my languid devotion, in my private, domestic, and public engagements in prayer. When I have been barren in petitioning for myself, and other things, often have I been sweetly enlarged when I came to notice the situation of those who were perishing for lack of knowledge.

“ Thus I went on praying, and preaching, and conversing on the subject, till the time of brother Carey’s ordination at Leicester, May 24th, 1791. On the evening of that day, he read to the Ministers a great part of his manuscript, since published, entitled, ‘ An Inquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen.’ This added fresh fuel to my zeal. But to pray and preach on the subject was all I could then think of doing. But when I heard of a proposed meeting at Kettering, October 2d, 1792, for the express purpose of considering our duty in regard of the Heathen, I could not resist my inclination for going ; although at that time I was not much acquainted with the Ministers of the Northamptonshire Association. There I got my judgment informed, and my heart increasingly interested. I returned home resolved to lay myself out in the cause. The public steps I have taken are too well known to need repeating ; but my mind became now inclined to go among the Heathen myself. Yet a consideration of my connexions with the dear people of God in Birmingham

restrained my desires, and kept me from naming my wishes to any body, (as I remember,) except to brother Carey. With him I was pretty free. We had an interesting conversation about it just before he left Europe. I shall never forget the manner of his saying, 'Well, you will come after us.' My heart said, Amen! and my eagerness for the work increased; though I never talked freely about it, except to my wife; and we then both thought, that my relation to the church in Cannon-street, and usefulness there, forbade any such attempt. However, I have made it a constant matter of prayer, often begging of God, as I did when first I was disposed for the work of the ministry, either that he would take away the desire, or open a door for its fulfilment. And the result has uniformly been, that the more spiritual I have been in the frame of my mind, the more love I have felt for God, and the more communion I have enjoyed with him, so much the more disposed have I been to engage as a Missionary among the Heathen.

"Until the accounts came of our brethren's entrance on the work in India, my connexions in Europe pretty nearly balanced my desire for going abroad; and though I felt quite devoted to the Lord's will and work, yet I thought the scale rather preponderated on the side of my abiding in my present situation.

"But since our brethren's letters have inform-

ed us, that there are such prospects of usefulness in Hindostan, and that Preachers are a thousand times more wanted than people to preach to, my heart has been more deeply affected than ever with their condition ; and my desires for a participation of the toils and pleasures, crosses and comforts, of which they are the subjects, are advanced to an anxiety which nothing can remove, and time seems to increase.

“ It has pleased God also to teach me more than ever, that himself is the fountain of happiness ; that likeness to him, friendship for him, and communion with him, form the basis of all true enjoyment ; and that this can be attained as well in an eastern jungle, amongst Hindoos and Moors, as in the most polished part of Europe. The very disposition, which, blessed be my dear Redeemer ! he has given me, to be any thing, do any thing, or endure any thing, so that his name might be glorified,—I say, the disposition itself is heaven begun below ! I do feel a daily panting after more devotedness to his service, and I can never think of my suffering Lord without dissolving into love ; love which constrains me to glorify him with my body and spirit, which are his.

“ I do often represent to myself all the possible hardships of a Mission, arising from my own heart, the nature of the country, domestic connexions, disappointment in my hopes, &c. And then I set over against them all, these two thoughts : I am God’s servant, and God is my Friend. In

this I anticipate happiness in the midst of suffering, light in darkness, and life in death. Yea, I do not count my life dear unto myself, so that I may win some poor Heathens unto Christ; and I am willing to be offered as a sacrifice on the service of the faith of the Gospel.

“Mr. Horne justly observes, ‘that in order to justify a man’s undertaking the work of a Missionary, he should be qualified for it, disposed heartily to enter upon it, and free from such ties as to exclude an engagement.’ As to the first, others must judge for me; but they must not be men who have an interest in keeping me at home. I shall rejoice in opportunities of attaining to an acquaintance with the ideas of judicious and impartial men in this matter, and with them I must leave it. A willingness to embark in this cause I do possess; and I can hardly persuade myself, that God has for ten years inclined my heart to this work, without having any thing for me to do in it. But the third thing requires more consideration, and here alone I hesitate.”

Here he goes on to state all the objections from this quarter, with his answers to them; leaving it with his brethren to decide, when they had heard the whole.

The Committee, after the most serious and mature deliberation, though they were fully satisfied as to Mr. Pearce’s qualifications, and greatly

approved of his spirit, yet were unanimously of opinion that he ought not to go; and that, not merely on account of his connexions at home, which might have been pleaded in the case of Mr. Carey, but on account of the Mission itself, which required his assistance in the station which he already occupied.

In this opinion, Mr. Carey himself, with singular disinterestedness of mind, afterwards concurred; and wrote to Mr. Pearce to the same effect.*

On receiving the opinion of the Committee, he immediately wrote to Mrs. Pearce as follows:—

“NORTHAMPTON, *Nov. 13th, 1794.*

“MY DEAR SARAH,

“I AM disappointed, but not dismayed. I ever wish to make my Saviour’s will my own. I am more satisfied than ever I expected I should be with a negative upon my earnest desires, because the business has been so conducted, that, I think, (if by any means such an issue could be ensured,) the mind of Christ has been obtained. My dear brethren here have treated the affair with as much seriousness and affection as I could possibly desire, and, I think, more than so insignificant a worm could expect. After we had spent the former part of this day in fasting and prayer, with conversation on the subject, till near two o’clock, brother Potts, King, and I retired. We prayed while the Committee consulted. The

* See Periodical Accounts, vol. i., p. 374.

case seemed difficult, and I suppose they were near two hours in deciding it. At last, time forced them to a point ; and their answer I enclose for your satisfaction. Pray take care of it : it will serve for me to refer to when my mind may labour beneath a burden of guilt another day.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

The decision of the Committee, though it rendered him much more reconciled to abide in his native country than he could have been without it, yet did not in the least abate his zeal for the object. As he could not promote it abroad, he seemed resolved to lay himself out more for it at home. In March, 1795, after a dangerous illness, he says in a letter to Mr. Fuller, “Through mercy I am almost in a state of convalescence. May my spared life be wholly devoted to the service of my Redeemer ! I do not care where I am, whether in England or in India, so that I am employed as he would have me : but surely we need pray hard, that God would send some more help to Hindostan.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

In January, 1796, when he was first informed by the Secretary, of a young man (Mr. Fountain) being desirous of going, of the character that was given of him by Mr. Savage of London, and of a Committee-meeting being in contemplation, he wrote thus in answer :—“Your letter, just

arrived, put, I was going to say, another soul into my little body; at least it has added new life to the soul I have. I cannot be contented with the thought of being absent from your proposed meeting. I must be there, (for my own sake I mean,) and try to sing with you,

‘O’er the gloomy hills of darkness!’ *

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

In August, the same year, having received a letter from India, he wrote to Mr. Fuller as follows:—“Brother Carey speaks in such a manner of the effects of the Gospel in his neighbourhood as in my view promises a fair illustration of our Lord’s parable, when he compared the kingdom of heaven to a little leaven, hid in three measures of meal, which insinuated itself so effectually as to leaven the lump at last. Blessed be God, the leaven is already in the meal. The fermentation is begun; and my hopes were never half so strong as they are now, that the whole shall be effectually leavened. O that I were there to witness the delightful process! But whither am I running? I long to write you from Hindostan!

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

On receiving other letters from India in January, 1797, he thus writes:—“Perhaps you are now rejoicing in spirit with me over fresh intelligence

* Frequently sung at our Committee-meetings.

from Bengal. This moment have I concluded reading two letters from brother Thomas: one to the Society, and the other to myself. He speaks of others from brother Carey. I hope they are already in your possession. If his correspondence has produced the same effects on your heart as brother Thomas's has on mine, you are filled with gladness and hope. I am grieved that I cannot convey them to you immediately. I long to witness the pleasure their contents will impart to all whose hearts are with us. O that I were accounted worthy of the Lord to preach the Gospel to the Booteas!

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

It has been already observed, that for a month preceding the decision of the Committee, he resolved to devote one day in every week to secret prayer and fasting, and to keep a diary of the exercises of his mind during the whole of that period. This diary, which extends from October 8th to November 7th, 1794, was not shown to the Committee at the time; but merely the preceding narrative. Since his death a few of them have perused it; and have been almost ready to think, that if they had seen it before, they would not have dared to oppose his going. But the Lord hath taken him to himself! It no longer remains a question now, whether he shall labour in England or in India. A few passages, how-

ever, from this transcript of his heart, while contemplating a great and disinterested undertaking, will furnish a better idea of his character than could be given by any other hand.

“October 8th, 1794.—Had some remarkable freedom and affection this morning, both in family and secret prayer. With many tears I dedicated myself, body and soul, to the service of Jesus; and earnestly implored full satisfaction respecting the path of duty. I feel a growing deadness for all earthly comforts; and derive my happiness immediately from God himself. May I still endure, as Moses did, by seeing Him who is invisible.

“October 10th.—Enjoyed much freedom to-day in the family. While noticing in prayer the state of the millions of Heathens who know not God, I felt the aggregate value of their immortal souls with peculiar energy.

“Afterwards was much struck, whilst on my knees before God in secret, I read the fourth chapter of Micah. The ninth verse I fancied was very applicable to the church in Cannon-street: but what reason is there for such a cry about so insignificant a worm as I am? The third chapter of Habakkuk, too, well expresses that mixture of solemnity and confidence with which I contemplate the work of the Mission.

“Whilst at the prayer-meeting to-night, I learned more of the meaning of some passages of

Scripture than ever before. Suitable frames of soul are like good lights, in which a painting appears to its full advantage. I had often meditated on Philippians iii. 7, 8, and Galatians vi. 14, but never felt crucifixion to the world, and disesteem for all that it contains, as at that time. All prospects of pecuniary independence and growing reputation, with which in unworthier moments I had amused myself, were now chased from my mind; and the desire of living wholly to Christ swallowed up every other thought. Frowns and smiles, fulness and want, honour and reproach, were now equally indifferent; and when I concluded the meeting, my whole soul felt, as it were, going after the lost sheep of Christ among the Heathen.

“ I do feel a growing satisfaction in the proposal of spending my whole life in something nobler than the locality of this island will admit. I long to raise my Master’s banner in climes where the sound of his fame hath but scarcely reached. He hath said, for my encouragement, that all nations shall flow unto it.

“ The conduct and success of Stach, Boonish, and other Moravian Missionaries in Greenland, both confound and stimulate me. O Lord, forgive my past indolence in thy service, and help me to redeem the residue of my days for exertions more worthy a friend of mankind and a servant of God.

“October 13th.—Being taken up with visiters the former part of the day, I spent the after part in application to the Bengal language, and found the difficulties I apprehended vanish as fast as I encountered them. I read and prayed, prayed and read, and made no small advances. Blessed be God!

“October 15th.—There are in Birmingham fifty thousand inhabitants; and, exclusive of the vicinity, ten Ministers who preach the fundamental truths of the Gospel. In Hindostan there are twice as many millions of inhabitants, and not so many Gospel Preachers. Now Jesus Christ hath commanded his Ministers to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. Why should we be so disproportionate in our labours? Peculiar circumstances must not be urged against positive commands. I am therefore bound, if others do not go, to make the means more proportionate to the multitude.

“To-night, reading some letters from brother Carey, in which he speaks of his wife’s illness when she first came into the country, I endeavoured to realize myself not only with a sick but a dead wife. The thought was like a cold dagger to my heart at first: but on recollection, I considered the same God ruled in India as in Europe; and that he could either preserve her, or support me, as well there as here. My business is only to be where he would have me. Other

things I leave to him. O Lord, though with timidity, yet I hope not without satisfaction, I look every possible evil in the face, and say, 'Thy will be done !'

"October 17th.—This is the first day I have set apart for extraordinary devotion, in relation to my present exercise of mind. Rose earlier than usual, and began the day in prayer that God would be with me in every part of it, and grant the end I have in view may be clearly ascertained,—the knowledge of his will.

"Considering the importance of the work before me, I began at the foundation of all religion, and reviewed the grounds on which I stood,—the being of a God ; the relation of mankind to him ; with the divine inspiration of the Scriptures : and the review afforded me great satisfaction. I also compared the different religions which claimed divine origin, and found little difficulty in determining which had most internal evidence of its divinity. I attentively read and seriously considered Dr. Doddridge's three excellent Sermons on the Evidences of the Christian Religion ; which was followed by such conviction, that I had hardly patience to conclude the book before I fell on my knees before God, to bless him for such a religion, established on such a basis ; and I have received more solid satisfaction this day upon the subject than ever I did before.

"I also considered, since the Gospel is true,

since Christ is head of the church, and his will is the law of all his followers, what are the obligations of his servants, in respect of the enlargement of his kingdom. I here referred to our Lord's commission, which I could not but consider as universal in its object, and permanent in its obligations. I read brother Carey's remarks upon it : and as the command has never been repealed ; as there are millions of beings in the world on whom the command may be exercised ; as I can produce no counter-revelation ; and as I lie under no natural impossibilities of performing it ; I concluded that I, as a servant of Christ, was bound by this law.

“ I took the narrative of my experience, and statement of my views on this subject, in my hand, and, bowing down before God, I earnestly besought an impartial and enlightened spirit. I then perused that paper ; and can now say, that I have (allowing for my own fallibility) not one doubt upon the subject. I therefore resolved to close this solemn season with reading a portion of both Testaments, and earnest prayer to God for my family, my people, the heathen world, the Society, and particularly for the success of our dear brethren Thomas and Carey, and his blessing, presence, and grace, to be ever my guide and glory. Accordingly I read the forty-ninth chapter of Isaiah ; and with what sweetness ! I never read a chapter in private with such feelings since I

have been in the ministry. The 8th, 9th, 10th, 20th, and 21st verses, I thought remarkably suitable.

“Read also part of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the first chapter to the Philippians. O that for me to live may be Christ alone! Blessed be my dear Saviour, in prayer I have had such fellowship with him, as would warm me in Greenland, comfort me in New-Zealand, and rejoice me in the valley of the shadow of death!

“October 18th.—I dreamed that I saw one of the Christian Hindoos. O how I loved him! I long to realize my dream. How pleasant will it be to sit down at the Lord’s table with our swarthy brethren, and hear Jesus preached in their language! Surely then will come to pass the saying that is written, ‘In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; all are one in him.’

“Any thing relative to the salvation of the Heathen brings a certain pleasure with it. I find I cannot pray, nor converse, nor read, nor study, nor preach with satisfaction, without reference to this subject.

“October 20th.—Was a little discouraged on reading Mr. Zeigenbald’s conferences with the Malabarians, till I recollected, what ought to be ever present to my mind, in brother Carey’s words, ‘The work is God’s.’

“In the evening I found some difficulty with the language; but considering how merchants and captains overcome this difficulty for the sake

of my judgment. I therefore renewed my vows unto the Lord, that, let what difficulties soever be in the way, I would (provided the Society approved) surmount them all. I felt a kind of unutterable satisfaction of mind; in my resolution of leaving the decision in the hands of my brethren. May God rightly dispose their hearts! I have no doubt but he will.

“October 23d.—Have found a little time to apply to the Bengalee language. How pleasant is it to work for God! Love transforms thorns to roses, and makes pain itself a pleasure. I never sat down to any study with such peculiar and continued satisfaction. The thought of exalting the Redeemer in this language is a spur to my application paramount to every discouragement for want of a living tutor. I have passed this day with an abiding satisfaction respecting my present views.

“October 24th.—O for the enlightening, enlivening, and sanctifying presence of God to-day! It is the second of those days of extraordinary devotion, which I have set apart for seeking God in relation to the Mission. How shall I spend it? I will devote the morning to prayer, reading, and meditation; and the afternoon to visiting the wretched, and relieving the needy. May God accept my services, guide me by his counsel, and employ me for his praise!

“Having besought the Lord that he would not suffer me to deceive myself in so important a

matter as that which I had now retired to consider, and exercised some confidence that he would be the rewarder of those who diligently seek him, I read the 119th Psalm at the conclusion of my prayer, and felt and wondered at the congruity of so many of the verses to the breathings of my own heart. Often with holy admiration I paused, and read, and thought, and prayed over the verse again; especially verses 20, 31, 59, 60, 112, 145, 146: ‘My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. I have stuck to thy testimonies. O Lord, put me not to shame.’

“Most of the morning I spent in seriously reading Mr. Horne’s Letters on Missions, having first begged of the Lord to make the perusal profitable to my instruction in the path of duty. To the interrogation, ‘Which of you will forsake all, deny himself, take up his cross, and, if God pleases, die for his religion?’ I replied spontaneously, Blessed be God, I am willing! Lord, help me to accomplish it!

“Closed this season with reading the 61st and 62d chapters of Isaiah, and prayer for the church of God at large, my own congregation, the Heathens, the Society, brethren Thomas and Carey, all Missionaries whom God has sent, of every denomination, my own case, my wife and family, and for assistance in my work.

“The after-part of this day has been gloomy indeed. All the painful circumstances which can

attend my going have met upon my heart, and formed a load almost insupportable. A number of things, which have been some time accumulating have united their pressure, and made me groan, being burdened. Whilst at a prayer-meeting I looked round on my Christian friends, and said to myself, 'A few months more, and probably I shall leave you all!' But in the deepest of my gloom I resolved, though faint, yet to pursue; not doubting but my Lord would give me strength equal to the day.

"I had scarcely formed this resolution before it occurred, My Lord and Master was a man of sorrows. Oppressed, and covered with blood, he cried, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' Yet in the depth of his agonies he added, 'Thy will be done.' This thought was to me what the sight of the cross was to Bunyan's pilgrim; I lost my burden. Spent the remainder of the meeting in sweet communion with God.

"But on coming home, the sight of Mrs. Pearce replaced my load. She had for some time been much discouraged at the thoughts of going. I therefore felt reluctant to say any thing on ~~this~~ subject, thinking it would be unpleasant to her; but though I strove to conceal it, an involuntary sigh betrayed my uneasiness. She kindly inquired the cause. I avoided at first an explanation, till she, guessing the reason, said to this effect: 'I hope you will be no more uneasy on my account. For the last two or three days I have been more com-

fortable than ever in the thought of going. I have considered the steps you are pursuing to know the mind of God, and I think you cannot take more proper ones. When you consult the Ministers, you should represent your obstacles as strongly as your inducements; and then, if they advise your going, though the parting from my friends will be almost insupportable, yet I will make myself as happy as I can, and God can make me happy anywhere.'

“Should this little diary fall into the hands of a man having the soul of a Missionary, circumstanced as I am, he will be the only man capable of sharing my peace, my joy, my gratitude, my rapture of soul. Thus at eveningtide it is light: thus God brings his people through fire and through water into a wealthy place: thus those who ask do receive, and their joy is full. O, love the Lord, ye his saints: there is no want to them that fear him!

“October 26th.—Had much enlargement this morning, whilst speaking on the nature, extent, and influence of divine love: what designs it formed; with what energy it acted; with what perseverance it pursued its object; what obstacles it surmounted; what difficulties it conquered; and what sweetness it imparted under the heaviest loads and severest trials. Almost through the day I enjoyed a very desirable frame; and, on coming home, my wife and I had some conversation on the subject of my going. She said, though in

general the thought was painful, yet there were some seasons when she had no preference, but felt herself disposed to go or stay, as the Lord should direct.

“This day wrote to brother Fuller, briefly stating my desires, requesting his advice, and proposing a meeting of the Committee on the business. I feel great satisfaction arising from leaving the matter to the determination of my honoured brethren, and to God through them.

“ October 27th.—To-day I sent a packet to our brethren in India. I could not forbear telling brother Carey all my feelings, views, and expectations; but without saying, I should be entirely governed by the opinion of the Society.

“ October 28th.—Still panting to preach Jesus among my fellow-sinners to whom he is yet unknown. Wrote to Dr. Rogers, of Philadelphia, to-day upon the subject, with freedom and warmth; and inquired whether, whilst the people of the United States were forming Societies to encourage arts, liberty, and emigration, there could not a few be found among them who would form a Society for the transmission of the word of life to the benighted Heathens; or, in case that could not be, whether they might not strengthen our hands in Europe, by some benevolent proof of concurring with us in a design of which they speak with such approbation. With this I sent Horne’s Letters. I will follow both with my prayers; and who can tell?

“ October 29th.—Looked over the code of Hindoo laws to-day. How much is there to admire in it, founded on the principles of justice! The most salutary regulations are adopted in many circumstances. But what a pity that so much excellence should be debased by laws to establish or countenance idolatry, magic, prostitution, prayers for the dead, false-witnessing, theft, and suicide. How perfect is the morality of the Gospel of Jesus, and how desirable that they should embrace it! Ought not means to be used? Can we assist them too soon? There is reason to think that their Shasters were penned about the beginning of the Kollee Jogue, which must be soon after the deluge: and are not four thousand years long enough for a hundred millions of men to be under the empire of the devil?

“ October 31st.—I am encouraged to enter upon this day (which I set apart for supplicating God) by a recollection of his promises to those who seek him. If the sacred word be true, the servants of God can never seek his face in vain: and as I am conscious of my sincerity and earnest desire only to know his pleasure that I may perform it, I find a degree of confidence that I shall realize the fulfilment of the word on which he causeth me to hope.

“ Began the day with solemn prayer for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in my present exercise, that so I might enjoy the spirit and power of

prayer, and have my personal religion improved, as well as my public steps directed. In this duty I found a little quickening.

“I then read over the narrative of my experience and my journal. I find my views are still the same ; but my heart is much more established than when I began to write.

“Was much struck in reading Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians i. 17; when, after speaking of his purpose to travel for the preaching of the Gospel, he saith, ‘Did I then use lightness when I was thus minded? Or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?’ The piety of the Apostle in not purposing after the flesh, the seriousness of spirit with which he formed his designs, and his steadfast adherence to them, were in my view worthy of the highest admiration and strictest imitation.

“Thinking that I might get some assistance from David Brainerd’s experience, I read his Life up to the time of his being appointed a Missionary among the Indians. The exalted devotion of that dear man almost made me question mine. Yet at some seasons he speaks of sinking as well as rising. His singular piety excepted, his feelings, prayers, desires, comforts, hopes, and sorrows are my own ; and if I could follow him in nothing else, I knew I had been enabled to say this with him,—I felt exceedingly calm, and quite resigned to God re-

specting my future improvement (or station) when and where he pleased. My faith lifted me above the world, and removed all those mountains which I could not look over of late. I thought I wanted not the favour of man to lean upon; for I knew God's favour was infinitely better, and that it was no matter where or when or how Christ should send me, nor with what trials he should still exercise me, if I might be prepared for his work and will.

“ Read the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters of the second Epistle to the Corinthians. Felt a kind of placidity, but not much joy. On beginning the concluding prayer I had no strength to wrestle, nor power with God at all. I seemed as one desolate and forsaken. I prayed for myself, the Society, the Missionaries, the converted Hindoos, the church in Cannon-street, my family, and ministry; but all was dulness, and I feared I had offended the Lord. I felt but little zeal for the Mission, and was about to conclude with a lamentation over the hardness of my heart, when on a sudden it pleased God to smite the rock with the rod of his Spirit; and immediately the waters began to flow. O what a heavenly, glorious, melting power was it! My eyes, almost closed with weeping, hardly suffer me to write. I feel it over again. O what a view of the love of a crucified Redeemer did I enjoy! The attractions of his cross how powerful! I was as a giant

refreshed with new wine, as to my animation ; like Mary at the Master's feet, weeping, for tenderness of soul ; like a little child, for submission to my heavenly Father's will ; and like Paul, for a victory over all self-love, creature-love, and fear of man, when these things stand in the way of my duty. The interest that Christ took in the redemption of the Heathen, the situation of our brethren in Bengal, the worth of the soul, and the plain command of Jesus Christ, together with an irresistible drawing of soul, which far exceeded any thing I ever felt before, and is impossible to be described or conceived of by those who have never experienced it,—all compelled me to vow that I would, by his leave, serve him among the Heathen. The Bible lying open before me (upon my knees) many passages caught my eye, and confirmed the purposes of my heart. If ever in my life I knew any thing of the influences of the Holy Spirit, I did at this time. I was swallowed up in God. Hunger, fulness, cold, heat, friends, and enemies, all seemed nothing before God. I was in a new world. All was delightful, for Christ was all and in all. Many times I concluded prayer ; but, when rising from my knees, communion with God was so desirable, that I was sweetly drawn to it again and again, till my animal strength was almost exhausted. Then I thought it would be pleasure to burn for God !

“ And now while I write, such a heavenly

sweetness fills my soul, that no exterior circumstance can remove it ; and I do uniformly feel, that the more I am thus, the more I pant for the service of my blessed Jesus among the Heathen. Yes, my dear, my dying Lord, I am thine, thy servant ; and if I neglect the service of so good a Master, I may well expect a guilty conscience in life, and a death awful as that of Judas or Spira !

“ This evening I had a meeting with my friends. Returned much dejected. Received a letter from brother Fuller, which, though he says he has many objections to my going, yet is so affectionately expressed as to yield me a gratification.

“ November 3d.—This evening received a letter from brother Ryland, containing many objections : but contradiction itself is pleasant when it is the voice of judgment mingled with affection. I wish to remember that I may be mistaken, though I cannot say I am at present convinced that it is so. I am happy to find that brother Ryland approves of my referring it to the Committee. I have much confidence in the judgment of my brethren, and hope I shall be perfectly satisfied with their advice. I do think, however, that if they knew how earnestly I pant for the work, it would be impossible for them to withhold their ready acquiescence. O Lord, thou knowest my sincerity ; and that if I go not to the work, it will not be owing to any reluctance on my part ! If I stay in England, I fear I shall be a poor useless drone ;

or if a sense of duty prompt me to activity, I doubt whether I shall ever know inward peace and joy again. O Lord, I am, thou knowest, I am oppressed : undertake for me !

“ November 5th.—At times to-day I have been reconciled to the thought of staying, if my brethren should so advise ; but at other times I seem to think I could not. I look at brother Carey’s portrait as it hangs in my study. I love him in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and long to join his labours. Every look calls up a hundred thoughts, all of which inflame my desires to be a fellow-labourer with him in the work of the Lord. One thing, however, I have resolved upon ; that, the Lord helping me, if I cannot go abroad, I will do all I can to serve the Mission home.

“ November 7th.—This is the last day of peculiar devotion before the deciding meeting. May I have strength to wrestle with God to-day, for his wisdom to preside in the Committee, and by faith to leave the issue to their determination.

“ I did not enjoy much enlargement in prayer to-day. My mind seems at present incapable of those sensations of joy with which I have lately been much indulged, through its strugglings in relation to my going or staying : yet I have been enabled to commit the issue into the hands of God, as he may direct my brethren, hoping that their advice will be agreeable to his will.”

The result of the Committee-meeting has already been related ; together with the state of his mind, as far as can be collected from his letters for some time after it. The termination of these tender and interesting exercises, and of all his other labours, in so speedy a removal from the present scene of action, may teach us not to draw any certain conclusion as to the designs of God concerning our future labours, from the ardour or sincerity of our feelings. He may take it well that it was in our hearts to build him a house, though he should for wise reasons have determined not to gratify us. Let it suffice, that in matters of everlasting moment he has engaged to perfect that which concerns us. In this he hath condescended to bind himself as by an oath, for our consolation. Here therefore we may safely consider our spiritual desires as indicative of his designs : but it is otherwise, in various instances, with regard to present duty.

CHAPTER III.

HAD the multiplied labours of this excellent man permitted his keeping a regular diary, we may see, by the foregoing specimen of a single month, what a rich store of truly Christian experience would have pervaded these Memoirs. We should then have been better able to trace the

gradual openings of his holy mind, and the springs of that extraordinary unction of spirit, and energy of action, by which his life was distinguished. As it is, we can only collect the gleanings of the harvest, partly from memory, and partly from letters communicated by his friends.

There appears throughout the general tenor of his life a singular submissiveness to the will of God; and, what is worthy of notice, this disposition was generally most conspicuous when his own will was most counteracted. The justness of this remark is sufficiently apparent from his letter to Mrs. Pearce, of November 13th, 1794, after the decision of the Committee; and the same spirit was carried into the common concerns of life. Thus, about a month afterwards, when his Louisa was ill of a fever, he thus writes from Northampton, to Mrs. Pearce:—

“NORTHAMPTON, *Dec. 13th, 1794.*

MY DEAR SARAH,

“I AM just brought, on the wings of celestial mercy, safe to my Sabbath’s station. I am well; and my dear friends here seem healthy and happy: but I feel for you. I long to know how our dear Louisa’s pulse beats: I fear still feverish. We must not, however, suffer ourselves to be infected with a mental fever on this account. Is she ill? It is right. Is she very ill,—dying? It is still right. Is she gone to join the heavenly choristers? It is all right, notwithstanding our re-

pinings. Repinings! No; we will not repine. It is best she should go. It is best for her: this we must allow. It is best for us. Do we expect it? O, what poor ungrateful, short-sighted worms are we! Let us submit, my Sarah, till we come to heaven: if we do not then see that it is best, let us then complain. But why do I attempt to console? Perhaps an indulgent Providence has ere now dissipated your fears: or, if that same kind Providence has removed our babe, you have consolation enough in Him who suffered more than we; and more than enough to quiet all our passions, in that astonishing consideration,—‘God so loved the world, that he spared not his own Son.’ Did God cheerfully give the holy child Jesus for us; and shall we refuse our child to him? He gave his Son to suffer: he takes our children to enjoy. Yes; to enjoy himself.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

In June, 1795, he attended the Association at Kettering, partly on account of some Missionary business there to be transacted. That was a season of great joy to many, especially the last forenoon previous to parting. From thence he wrote to Mrs. Pearce as follows:—

‘MY DEAR SARAH,

“FROM a pew in the house of God at Kettering, with my cup of joy running over, I address

you by the hands of brother Simmons. Had it pleased divine Providence to permit your accompanying me, my pleasures would have had no small addition; because I should have hoped that you would have been filled with similar consolation, and have received equal edification by the means of grace on which I have attended. Indeed, I never remember to have enjoyed a public meeting to such a high degree since I have been in the habit of attending upon them. O that I may return to you, and the church of God, in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ! I hope that you are not without the enjoyment of the sweetness and the supports of the blessed Gospel. O that you may get and keep near to God, and in him find infinitely more than you can possibly lose by your husband's absence!

“Mr. Hall preached last evening, from 1 Pet. i. 8. A most evangelical and experimental sermon! I was charmed and warmed. O that Jesus may go on to reveal himself to him as altogether lovely! To-day I set off for Northampton, and preach there to-night. The Lord bless you!

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

In July, 1795, he received a pressing invitation from the General Evangelical Society in Dublin, to pay them a visit, and to assist in diffusing the Gospel of the grace of God in that kingdom. To

this invitation he replied in the following letter, addressed to Dr. M'Dowal:—

“BIRMINGHAM, *Aug. 3d*, 1795.

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,

“I RECEIVED your favour of the 22d ult., and, for the interesting reason you assign, transmit a ‘speedy answer.’ The Society on whose behalf you wrote, I have ever considered with the respect due to the real friends of the best of causes,—the cause of God and of his Christ; a cause which embraces the most important and durable interests of our fellow-men: and your name, dear Sir, I have been taught to hold in more than common esteem by my dear brother and father, Messrs. Birt and Francis. The benevolent institution which you are engaged in supporting, I am persuaded, deserves more than the good wishes or prayers of your brethren in the kingdom and patience of Jesus on this side the Channel; and it will yield me substantial pleasure to afford personal assistance in your pious labours. But, for the present, I am sorry to say, I must decline your proposal; being engaged to spend a month in London this autumn, on the business of our Mission Society, of which you have probably heard.

“When I formed my present connexions with the church in Birmingham, I proposed an annual freedom for six weeks from my pastoral duties; and should the Evangelical Society express a wish

for my services the ensuing year, I am perfectly inclined, God willing, to spend that time beneath their direction, and at what part of the year they conceive a visit would be most serviceable to the good design. I only request, that, should this be their desire, I may receive the information as soon as they can conveniently decide, that I may withhold myself from other engagements, which may interfere with the time they may appoint.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

The invitation was repeated, and he complied with their request, engaging to go in the month of June, 1796.

On May 31st he set off for Dublin, and “the Lord prospered his way,” so that he arrived at the time appointed; and from every account it appears, that he was not only sent in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace, but that the Lord himself went with him. His preaching was not only highly acceptable to every class of hearers, but the word came from him with power; and there is abundant reason to believe, that many will, through eternity, praise God for sending his message to them by this ambassador of Christ. His memory lives in their hearts, and they join with the other churches of Christ in deploring the loss they have sustained by his death.

He was earnestly solicited by the Evangelical

Society to renew his visit to that kingdom in 1798. Ready to embrace every call of duty, he had signified his compliance, and the time was fixed; but the breaking out of the rebellion prevented him from realizing his intention. This was a painful disappointment to many, who wished once more to see his face, and to hear the glad tidings from his lips.

Such is the brief account of his visit to Dublin, given by Dr. M'Dowal. The following letter was written to Mrs. Pearce, when he had been there little more than a week:—

“DUBLIN, *June 31st*, 1796.

“MY DEAR SARAH,

“I AM in perfect health: am delightfully disappointed with the place and its inhabitants. I am very thankful that I came. I have found much more religion here already than I expected to meet with during the whole of my stay. The prospect of usefulness is flattering. I have already many more friends (I hope Christian friends) than I can gratify by visits. Many doors are open for preaching the Gospel in the city; and my country excursions will probably be few.

“But you will like to know how I spend my time, &c. Well then: I am at the house of a Mr. H——, late High-Sheriff for the city: a gentleman of opulence, respectability, and evangelical piety. He is by profession a Calvinistic Presbyterian, and Elder of Dr. M'Dowal's church;

has a most amiable wife, and four children. I am very thankful for being placed here during my stay. I am quite at home, I mean as to ease and familiarity; for as to style of living, I neither do nor desire to equal it. Yet, in my present situation, it is convenient. It would, however, be sickening and dull, had I not a God to go to, to converse with, to enjoy, and to call my own. O it is this, it is this, my dearest Sarah, which gives a point to every enjoyment, and sweetens all the cup of life.

“The Lord’s day after I wrote to you last, I preached for Dr. M’Dowal in the morning, at half-past eleven; heard a Mr. Kilburne at five; and preached again at Plunket-street at seven. On Tuesday evening I preached at an hospital; and on Thursday evening at Plunket-street again. Yesterday, for the Baptists, in the morning; Dr. M’Dowal, at five; and at Plunket-street at seven.

“The hours of worship will appear singular to you: they depend on the usual meal-times. We breakfast at ten; dine between four and five, sometimes between five and six; take tea from seven to nine, and sup from ten to twelve. §

“I thank God that I possess an abiding determination to aim at the consciences of the people in every discourse. I have borne the most positive testimony against the prevailing evils of professors here: as, sensuality, gaiety, vain amusements, neglect of the Sabbath, &c.; and last night told an

immense crowd of professors of the first rank, 'that if they made custom and fashion their plea, they were awfully deluding their souls; for it had always been the fashion to insult God, to dissipate time, and to pursue the broad road to hell; but it would not lessen their torments there, that the way to damnation was the fashion.'

"I feared my faithfulness would have given them offence; but, I am persuaded, it was the way to please the Lord; and those who I expected would be enemies are not only at peace with me, but even renounce their sensual indulgences to attend on my ministry. I do assuredly believe that God hath sent me hither for good. The five o'clock meetings are miserably attended in general. In a house that will hold fifteen hundred or two thousand people, you will hardly see above fifty! Yesterday morning I preached on the subject of public worship, and seriously warned them against preferring their bellies to God, and their own houses to his. I was delighted and surprised, at the five o'clock meeting, to see the place nearly full. Surely this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in my eyes. Never did I more feel how weak I am in myself, and how strong I am in the omnipotence of God. I feel a superiority to all fear, and possess a conscious dignity in being the ambassador of Christ. O help me to praise! for it is He alone who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to

fight: and still pray for me; for if he withdraw for a moment, I become as weak and unprofitable as the briers of the wilderness.

“You cannot think how much I am supported by the assurance that I have left a praying people at Birmingham; and I believe, that in answer to their prayers I have hitherto been wonderfully assisted in the public work, as well as enjoyed much in private devotion.

“I have formed a most pleasing acquaintance with several serious young men in the University here, and with two of the Fellows of the College; most pious gentlemen indeed, who have undergone a world of reproach for Christ and his Gospel, and have been forbidden to preach in the churches by the Archbishop: but God has raised another house for them here, where they preach with much success, and have begun a meeting in the college, which promises fresh prosperity to the cause of Jesus.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

The following particulars are taken partly from some notes in his own hand-writing, and partly from the account given by his friend Mr. Summers, who accompanied him during the latter parts of his visits.

At his first arrival, the congregations were but thinly attended, and the Baptist congregation in particular, amongst whom he delivered several

discourses. It much affected him to see the whole city given to sensuality and worldly conformity ; and especially to find those of his own denomination amongst the lowest and least affected with their condition. But the longer he continued, the more the congregations increased, and every opportunity became increasingly interesting, both to him and them. His faithful remonstrances, and earnest recommendations of prayer-meetings to his Baptist friends, though at first apparently ill received, were well taken in the end ; and he had the happiness to see in them some hopeful appearances of a return to God. On June the 20th he wrote to his friend Mr. Summers, as follows :—

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ IF you mean to abide by my opinion, I say, come to Dublin, and come directly. I have been most delightfully disappointed. I expected darkness, and behold light ; sorrow, and I have had cause for abundant joy. I thank God that I came hither, and hope that many, as well as myself, will have cause to praise him. Never have I been more deeply taught my own nothingness ; never hath the power of God more evidently rested upon me. The harvest here is great indeed : and the Lord of the harvest hath enabled me to labour in it with delight.

“ The Lord has of late been doing great things for Dublin. Several of the young men in the Col-

lege have been awakened ; and two of the Fellows are sweet evangelical Preachers. One of them is of a spirit serene as the summer's evening, and sweet as the breath of May. I am already intimate with them, and have spent several mornings in college, with various students who bid fair to be faithful watchmen on Jerusalem's walls. But I hope you will come ; and then you will see for yourself. If not, I will give you some pleasant details when we meet in England.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

During his labours in Dublin, he was strongly solicited to settle in a very flattering situation in the neighbourhood ; and a liberal salary was offered him. On his positively declining it, mention was made of only six months of the year. When that was declined, three months were proposed ; and when he was about to answer this in the negative, the party refused to receive his answer, desiring him to take time to consider of it. He did so ; and though he entertained a very grateful sense of the kindness and generosity expressed by the proposal, yet, after the maturest deliberation, he thought it his duty to decline it. Mr. Pearce's modesty prevented his talking on such a subject ; but it was known at the time by his friend who accompanied him, and, since his death, has been frequently mentioned as an instance of his disinterested spirit.

His friends at Birmingham were ready to think it hard, that he should be so willing to leave them, to go on a mission among the Heathen : but they could not well complain, and much less think ill of him, when they saw that such a willingness was more than could be effected by the most flattering prospects of a worldly nature, accompanied too with promising appearances of religious usefulness.

About a month after his return from Dublin, Mr. Pearce addressed a letter to Mr. Carey, in which he gives some farther account of Ireland, as well as of some other interesting matters :—

“ BIRMINGHAM, *Aug. 12th, 1796.*

“ O, MY dear brother, did you but know with what feelings I resume my pen, freely to correspond with you, after receiving your very affectionate letter to myself, and perusing that which you sent by the same conveyance to the Society, I am sure you will persuade yourself, that I have no common friendship for you, and that your regards are at least returned with equal ardour.

“ I fear, I had almost said, that I shall never see your face in the flesh ; but if any thing can add to the joy which the presence of Christ, and conformity, perfect conformity to him, will afford in heaven, surely the certain prospect of meeting with my dear brother Carey there is one of the greatest. Thrice happy should I be, if

the providence of God would open a way for my partaking of your labours, your sufferings, and your pleasures, on this side the eternal world: but all my brethren here are of opinion, that I shall be more useful at home than abroad; and I, though reluctantly, submit. Yet I am truly with you in spirit. My heart is at Mudnabatty, and at times I even hope to find my body there: but with the Lord I leave it. He knows my wishes, my motives, my regret. He knows all my soul; and, depraved as it is, I feel an inexpressible satisfaction that he does know it. However, it is an humbling thought to me, that he sees I am unfit for such a station, and unworthy of such an honour as to bear his name among the Heathen. But I must be thankful still, that though he appoints me not to a post in foreign service, he will allow me to stand sentinel at home. In this situation may I have grace to be faithful unto death!

“With pleasure, approaching to rapture, I read the last accounts you sent us. I never expected immediate success: the prospect is truly greater than my most sanguine hopes. ‘The kingdom of heaven is like to a little leaven hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.’ Blessed be God! the leaven is in the meal, and its influence is already discoverable. A great God is doing great things by you. Go on, my dearest brother, go on: God will do greater

things than these. Jesus is worthy of a world of praise : and shall Hindostan not praise him ? Surely he shall see of the travail of his soul there, and the sower and the reaper shall rejoice together. Already the empire of darkness totters, and soon it shall doubtless fall. Blessed be the labourers in this important work ; and blessed be He who giveth them hearts and strength to labour, and promises that they shall not labour in vain.

“ Do not fear the want of money. God is for us, and the silver and the gold are his ; and so are the hearts of those who possess the most of it. I will travel from the Land’s End to the Orkneys, but we will get money enough for all the demands of the Mission. I have never had a fear on that head : a little exertion will do wonders ; and past experience justifies every confidence. Men we only want ; and God shall find them for us in due time.

“ I rejoice in contemplating a church of our Lord Jesus Christ in Bengal, formed upon his own plan. Why do not the Hindoo converts join it ? Lord, help their unbelief ! But perhaps the drop is now withheld, that you may by and by have the shower, and lift up your eyes, and say, ‘ These, whence came they ? They fly as clouds, or as doves to their windows.’ For three years we read of few baptized by the first disciples of our Lord ; but on the fourth, three

thousand and five thousand openly avowed him. The Lord send you such another Pentecost!

“I intend to write my dear brother a long letter. It will prove my desire to gratify him, if it do no more. I wish that I knew in what communications your other correspondents will be most deficient: then I would try to supply their omissions.

“I will begin with myself: but I have nothing good to say. I think I am the most vile ungrateful servant that ever Jesus Christ employed in his church. At some times, I question whether I ever knew the grace of God in truth; and at others, I hesitate on the most important points of Christian faith. I have lately had peculiar struggles of this kind with my own heart, and have often half concluded to speak no more in the name of the Lord. When I am preparing for the pulpit, I fear I am going to avow fables for facts, and doctrines of men for the truths of God. In conversation I am obliged to be silent, lest my tongue should belie my heart. In prayer I know not what to say, and at times think prayer altogether useless. Yet I cannot wholly surrender my hope, or my profession. Three things I find, above all others, tend to my preservation:—First, a recollection of a time when, at once, I was brought to abandon the practice of sins which the fear of damnation could never bring me to relinquish before. Surely, I say, this must be the finger of God, according to the Scripture

doctrine of regeneration. Secondly, I feel such a consciousness of guilt, that nothing but the Gospel scheme can satisfy my mind respecting the hope of salvation. Thirdly, I see that what true devotion does appear in the world, seems only to be found among those to whom Christ is precious.

“But I frequently find a backwardness to secret prayer, and much deadness in it: and it puzzles me to see how this can be consistent with a life of grace. However, I resolve, that, let what will become of me, I will do all I can for God while I live, and leave the rest to him; and this I usually experience the best way to be at peace.

“I believe, that if I were more fully given up to God, I should be free from these distressing workings of mind; and then I long to be a Missionary, where I should have temptations to nothing but to abound in the work of the Lord, and lay myself entirely out for him. In such a situation, I think pride would have but little food, and faith more occasion for exercise; so that the spiritual life and inward religion would thrive better than they do now.

“At times, indeed, I do feel, I trust, genuine contrition, and sincerely lament my short-comings before God. O the sweets that accompany true repentance! Yes, I love to be abased before God. ‘There it is I find my blessing.’ May the Lord daily and hourly bring me low, and keep me so!

“As to my public work, I find, whilst engaged

in it, little cause to complain for want either of matter or words. My labours are acceptable, and not altogether unprofitable, to the hearers: but what is this to me, if my own soul starve whilst others are fed by me? O my brother, I need your prayers: and I feel a great satisfaction in the hope that you do not forget me. O that I may be kept faithful unto death? Indeed, in the midst of my strugglings, a gleam of hope that I shall at last awake in the likeness of God affords me greater joy than words can express. To be with Christ is far better than to continue sinning here; but if the Lord hath any thing to do by me, his will be done.

“ I have never so fully opened my case to any one before. Your freedom on similar topics encourages me to make my complaint to you; and I think if you were near me, I should feel great relief in revealing to you all my heart. But I shall fatigue you with my moanings; so I will have done on this subject.

“ It is not long since I returned from a kind of mission to Ireland. Having engaged to spend ~~six~~ Lord's days in that kingdom, I arrived there the day before the first Sabbath in June. I first made myself acquainted with the general state of religion in Dublin. I found there were four Presbyterian congregations: two of these belong to the Southern Presbytery, and are Arians or Socinians; the other two are connected with the Northern Presbytery,

and retain the Westminster Confession of Faith. One of these latter congregations is very small ; and the Minister, though orthodox, appears to have but little success. The other is large and flourishing : the place of worship is ninety feet by seventy, and in a morning well filled. Their times of service are at half-past eleven and five. In the afternoon, the stated congregations are small indeed ; for five o'clock is the usual dining hour in Dublin, and few of the hearers would leave their dinners for the Gospel. The inhabitants of Dublin seem to be chiefly composed of two classes : the one assumes the appearance of opulence ; the other exhibits marks of the most abject poverty : and as there are in Ireland no parishes which provide for the poor, many die every year for want of the common necessaries of life.

“ Most of the rich are by profession Protestants. The poor are nearly all Papists, and strongly prejudiced against the Reformed religion. Their ignorance and superstition are scarcely inferior to your miserable Hindoos. On Midsummer-day I had an affecting proof of the latter. On the public road, about a mile from Dublin, is a well, which was once included in the precincts of a priory, dedicated to St. John of Jerusalem. This well is in high repute for curing a number of bodily complaints ; and its virtues are said to be the most efficacious on the saint's own day. So from twelve o'clock at night, for twenty-four hours, it becomes

the rendezvous for all the lame, blind, and otherwise diseased people, within a circuit of twenty miles. Here they brought old and young, and applied the holy water, both internally and externally; some by pouring, some by immersion, and all by drinking: whilst, for the good of those who could not attend in person, their friends filled bottles with the efficacious water, to use at home. Several I saw on their knees before the well, at their devotions, who were not unfrequently interrupted with a glass of whisky! With this they were supplied from a number of dealers in that article, who kept standings all round the well.

“Near to the spot was a churchyard, where great numbers kneeled upon the tombs of their deceased relatives, and appeared earnestly engaged in praying for the repose of their souls.

“It was truly a lamentable sight. My heart ached at their delusions; whilst I felt gratitude, I hope unfeigned, for an acquaintance with the ‘water of life, of which if a man drink, he shall live for ever.’

“There are few, or none, of the middle class to connect the rich and the poor; so that favourable access to them is far more difficult than to the lower orders of the people in England; and their Priests hold them in such bondage, that if a Catholic servant only attend on family worship in a Protestant house, penance must be performed for the offence.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

Mention has already been made of his having “formed a pleasing acquaintance with several serious young gentlemen of the University of Dublin.” The following letter was addressed to one of them, the Rev. Mr. Matthias, a few months after his return :—

“DEAR BROTHER MATTHIAS,

“I THOUGHT this morning of answering all their demands before I slept: but I have written so many sheets, and all full, that I find my eyes and my fingers both fail; and I believe this must close my intercourse with Dublin this day. When I shall be able to complete my purpose I do not know. To form friendships with good men is pleasant; but to maintain all that communion which friendship expects is in some cases very difficult. Happy should I be, could I meet my Irish friends *in propria persona*, instead of sitting in solitude, and maintaining, by the tedious medium of the pen, this distant intercourse. But ‘the Lord, he shall choose our inheritance for us.’ Were all the planets of our system embodied, and placed in close association, the light would be greater, and the object grander; but, then, usefulness and systematic beauty consist in their dispersion: and what are we, my brother, but so many satellites to Jesus, the great Sun of the Christian system? Some, indeed, like burning Mercuries, keep nearer the luminary, and receive

more of its light and heat; whilst others, like the ringed planet, or the Georgium Sidus, preserve a greater distance, and reflect a less portion of his light: yet if, amidst all this diversity, they belong to the system, two things may be affirmed of all,—all keep true to one Centre, and borrow whatever light they have from one Source. True it is, that the further they are from the sun, the longer are they in performing their revolutions; and is not this exemplified in us? The closer we keep to Jesus, the more brilliant are our graces; the more cheerful and active are our lives: but, alas! we are all comets; we all move in eccentric orbits; at one time glowing beneath the ray divine, at another congealing and freezing into icicles. ‘O what a miracle to man is man!’

“Little did I think when I began this letter that I should thus have indulged myself in allegory: but true friendship, I believe, always dictates extempore; and my friends must never expect from me a studied epistle. They can meet with better thoughts than I can furnish them with, in any bookseller’s shop. It is not the dish, however well it may be cooked, that gives the relish, ~~but~~ the sweet sauce of friendship; and this I think sometimes makes even nonsense palatable.

“But I have some questions to put to you. How are my college friends? How is their health? But chiefly, how are the interests of religion among you? are there any praying students added to your

number? Do all those you thought well of continue to justify their profession? You know what it is that interests me. Pray tell me all, whether it makes me weep, or rejoice.

“ We must sow in hope, and I trust that we shall all gather fruit to eternal life, even where the buddings have never appeared to us in this world. How is it with your own soul? I thank God, I never, I think, rejoiced habitually so much in him as I have done of late. ‘ God is love.’ That makes me happy. I rejoice that God reigns ; that he reigns over all ; over me ; over my crosses, my comforts, my family, my friends, my senses, my mental powers, my designs, my words, my preaching, my conduct ; that he is God over all, blessed for ever. I am willing to live, yet I long to die, to be freed from all error and all sin. I have nothing else to trouble me ; no other cross to carry. The sun shines without all day long ; but I am sensible of internal darkness. Well, through grace, it shall be all light by and by. Yes, you and I shall be angels of light ; all Mercuries then ; all near the Sun ; always in motion ; always glowing with zeal, and flaming with love. O for the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness !

‘ O what love and concord there,
 And what sweet harmony
 In heaven above, where happy souls
 Adore thy Majesty !

O how the heavenly choirs all sing
To Him who sits enthroned above ;

What admiring !

And aspiring !

Still desiring :—

O how I long to taste this feast of love !’

“ If you be not weary of such an eccentric correspondent, pray do not be long ere you write to

“ Your unworthy, but affectionate brother
in Christ,

“ SAMUEL PEARCE.”

Awhile after this, he thus writes to his friend
Mr. Summers :—

“ *December, 1796.*

“ I REJOICE that you have been supported under, and brought through, your late trials. I do not wonder at it ; for it is no more than God has promised : and though we may well wonder that he promises any thing, yet his performance is no just ground of surprise ; and when we find ourselves so employed, we had better turn our wonder to our own unbelief, that for one moment suspect God would not be as good as his word.

“ I have been lately more than ever delighted with the thought that God has engaged to do any thing for such worms as we. I never studied the deistical controversy so much, nor ever rejoiced in revelation more. Alas ! what should we know, if God had not condescended to teach us ? Paul very justly remarks, that no one knoweth any thing

of God, but the Spirit of God, and he to whom the Spirit revealeth him. Now the Spirit hath revealed God in the Bible ; but to an unbeliever the Bible is a sealed book. He can know nothing from a book that he looks upon as an imposture, and yet there is no other book in which God is revealed ; so that to reject the Bible is to immerse ourselves in darkness, and whilst professing to be wise, actually to become fools : whereas, no sooner do we believe what the Spirit saith, than God is revealed to us, and ‘ in his light do we see light,’

“ SAMUEL PEARCE.”

To the above may be added a few extracts of letters which he addressed to his friends in 1797 and 1798.

TO DR. RYLAND.

“ *March, 1797.*

“ DURING the last three weeks, I have at times been very poorly, with colds, &c. Am better now, and have been all along assisted in going through my public duties. Let us continue to pray for each other till death makes it a needless service. How uncertain is life, and what a blessing is death to a saint ! I seem lately to feel a kind of affection for death. Methinks, if it were visible, I could embrace it. ‘ Welcome herald, that bids the prisoner be free ; that announces the dawn of everlasting day ; that bids the redeemed come to

Zion with everlasting joy, to be beyond the reach of an erroneous judgment, and a depraved heart ! To believe, to feel, to speak, to act exactly as God will have me ; to be wholly absorbed and taken up with him ; this, nothing short of this, can make my bliss complete. But all this is mine. O the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of redeeming love ! It conquers my heart, and constrains me to yield myself a living sacrifice, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. My dear brother, we have had many happy meetings on earth : the best is in reserve.

‘ No heart upon earth can conceive
The bliss that in heaven they share :
Then who this dark world would not leave,
And cheerfully die to be there ? ’

O how full of love, and joy, and praise shall we be when that happy state is ours ! Well, yet a little while, and he that shall come will come. Even so, come, Lord Jesus ! My dear brother, forgive the hasty effusions of a heart that loves you in the bowels of Jesus, and is always happy in testifying itself to be

“ Affectionately yours, “
“ SAMUEL PEARCE.”

TO MR. CAVE.

“ 1797.”

“ I THANK you, my dear brother, for the confidence you repose in me, the affection you have for me, and the freedom with which you write to

me. Assure yourself that I sincerely sympathize in the cutting events which you have lately experienced. Trying indeed! Your heart must bleed. Yet be not discouraged in your work. The more Satan opposes Christ, the more let us oppose him. He comes with great violence, because his time is short. His kingdom is on the decline, his strongholds are besieged, and he knows they must soon be taken. Whilst it lasts, he is making desperate sallies on the armies of the Lamb. It is no great wonder that he fights and wounds a raw recruit now and then, who strays from the camp, and, thoughtless of the danger, keeps not close by the Captain's tent. I hope our glorious Leader will heal the wounded, and rescue the captive. He is sure to make reprisals. Christ will have ten to one. You will yet see his arm made bare. He shall go forth like a man of war. The prisoners shall be redeemed, and the old tyrant shall be cast into the bottomless pit. Be of good cheer, my fellow-soldier. The cause is not ours, but God's. Let us endure hardness, and still fight the good fight of faith. At last we shall come off conquerors, through him who hath loved us.

“I hope you have some causes for joy, as well as grief. I trust, though one, or two, or three fall, the tens and the twenties stand their ground. O do what you can to cheer them under the common trial. Let them not see a faint heart in

you. Fight manfully still. Tell them to watch the more ; to pray the harder ; to walk the closer with God. So out of the eater shall come forth meat, and sweetness out of the strong.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

TO MR. BATES AND MRS. BARNES.

“THE many expressions of Christian friendship which I received from you, and your affectionate families, during my late visit to London, will often excite grateful recollection in future, as they have almost daily, since I parted from you ; and though I do not write this avowedly as a mere letter of acknowledgment, yet I wish it to assure you, that I am not forgetful of my friends, nor unthankful for their kindness. May all the favour you show to the servants of our common Lord for his sake, be amply recompensed in present peace, and future felicity, when the promise of Him who cannot lie shall be fulfilled : ‘ A cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward.’

“ But, whilst you, my dear friends, live ‘ in hope of the glory ’ that remains ‘ to be revealed. ’ I am persuaded that you expect all as the fruit of sovereign mercy, which first forms us to the mind of Christ, then accepts, and then rewards. Truly if sinners be rewarded, it must be ‘ of grace, and not of debt. ’ Yet it is a mercy of unspeakable magnitude, that grace should establish a con-

nexion between obedience and enjoyment, such a connexion as at once ensures joy to the believer and glory to Christ.

“O that our thoughts, our affections, our desires, may be much in heaven! Here, you have been taught, is ‘no continuing city,’ no certain place of abode; and though you have been taught it awfully in flames, yet if you learn it effectually, the terror of the means will be conquered by the excellency and glory of the consequences. Yes my friends, ‘in heaven we have a better and enduring substance:’ the apartments there are more spacious; the society more sweet; the enjoyments more perfect; and all to last for ever. Well may Christians ‘rejoice in hope of the glory of God.’

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

TO DR. RYLAND.

“*November 17th, 1797.*”

“I FEEL much for you in relation both to the duties and trials of your present situation: at the same time I bless God who fixed you in it, because I am persuaded that it will be for his glory in the churches of Christ. And though none but those whose hands are full of religious concerns can guess at your difficulties, yet our blessed Redeemer knows them all. O, my brother, you are travailing for Him who redeemed you by his blood; who sympathizes with you, and who will graciously crown you at last. Small

as my trials are, I would turn smith, and work at the anvil and the forge, rather than bear them for any other Master than Christ. Yet were they ten thousand times as many as they are, the thought of their being for him, I trust, would sweeten them all.

“I have reason to be very thankful for much pleasure of late, both as a Christian and a Minister. I have never felt so deeply my need of a divine Redeemer, and seldom possessed such solid confidence that he is mine. I want more and more to become a little child, to dwindle into nothing in my own esteem, to renounce my own wisdom, power, and goodness, and simply look to, and live upon, Jesus for all. I am ashamed that I have so much pride, so much self-will. O my Saviour! make me ‘meek and lowly in heart;’ in this alone I find ‘rest to my soul.’

“I could say much of what Immanuel has done for my soul; but I fear lest even this should savour of vanity. When shall I be like my Lord? O welcome death, when I have nothing more to do for Christ. To him, till then, may I live every day and every hour. Rather may I be annihilated than not live to him.

“You will rejoice with me to hear that we have a pleasing prospect as a church. Several very hopeful, and some very valuable, characters are about to join us. Lord, carry on thy work.

“SAMUEL PEARCE.”

TO MRS. PEARCE.

“PORTSMOUTH, *Jan. 29th, 1798.*

“IGNORANT of the circumstances of our dear child, how shall I address myself to her dearer mother? With a fluttering heart, and a trembling hand, I, in this uncertainty, resume my pen. One consideration tranquillizes my mind,—I and mine are in the hands of God; the wise, the good, the indulgent parent of mankind. Whatever he does is best. I am prepared for all his will, and hope that I shall never have a feeling, whose language is not, ‘Thy will be done.’

“I am most kindly entertained here by Mr. and Mrs. Shoveller; and, except my dear Sarah’s presence, feel myself at home. They have had greater trials than we can at present know: they have attended seven children to the gloomy tomb. They have been supported beneath their loss by Him who hath said, ‘As thy day is so shall thy strength be.’ Mrs. S. tells me, she ‘blessed God for all.’ May my dear Sarah be enabled to do the same, whatever the result may prove. To-morrow I expect another letter from you; yet, lest you should too much feel my absence, I will not delay forwarding this a single post. O that it may prove in some degree a messenger of consolation!

“Yesterday I preached three times: God was very good. I received your letter before the first service: you may be assured that I bore you on my heart in the presence of my Lord and yours;

nor shall I pray in vain: He will either restore the child, or support you under the loss of it. I dare not pray with importunity for any earthly good; for 'who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow?' But strength to bear the loss of earthly comforts, He has promised: for that I importune; and that, I doubt not, will be granted.

"In a house directly opposite to the window before which I now write, a wife, a mother, is just departed! Why am I not a bereaved husband? Why are not my children motherless? When we compare our condition with our wishes, we often complain; but if we compare it with that of many around us, our complaints will be exchanged for gratitude and praise.

"SAMUEL PEARCE."

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

February 14th, 1798.

"Not a day has hurried by, since I parted with my dear friends in Pall-Mall, but they have been in my affectionate remembrance; but not being able to speak with any satisfaction respecting our dear child, I have withheld myself from imparting new anxieties to bosoms already alive to painful sensibility.

"At length, however, a gracious God puts it in my power to say that there is hope. After lan-

guishing between life and death for many days, she now seems to amend. We flatter ourselves that she has passed the crisis, and will yet be restored to our arms ; but parental fears forbid too strong a confidence. It may be that our most merciful God saw that the shock of a sudden removal would be too strong for the tender feelings of a mother ; and so by degrees prepares for the stroke which must fall at last. However, she is in the best hands ; and we are, I hope, preparing for submission to whatever may be the blessed will of God.

“ I was brought home in safety, and feel myself in much better health in consequence of my journey. O that it may be all consecrated to my Redeemer’s praise !

“ Happy should I be if I could oftener enjoy your friendly society ; but we must wait for the full accomplishment of our social wishes till we come to that better world, for which divine grace is preparing us. There our best, our brightest hopes, and there our warmest affections, must be found. Could we have all we want below, we should be reluctant to ascend, when Jesus calls us home. No, this is not our rest ; it is polluted with sin, and dashed with sorrow : but though our pains in themselves are evil, yet our God turns the curse into a blessing, and makes all that we meet with accomplish our good.

“ What better can I wish my friends, than the humble place of Mary, or the happy rest of John ?

Faith can enjoy them both, till actually we fall at the Saviour's feet, and lean upon his bosom, when we see him as he is.

' O the delights, the heavenly joys,
The glories of the place,
Where Jesus sheds the brightest beams
Of his o'erflowing grace ! ' ”

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY in October, 1798, Mr. Pearce attended at the Kettering Ministers'-meeting, and preached from Psalm xc. 16, 17 : “ Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us ; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us ; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.” He was observed to be singularly solemn and affectionate in that discourse. If he had known it to be the last time that he should address his brethren in that part of the country, he could scarcely have felt or spoken in a more interesting manner. It was a discourse full of instruction, full of a holy unction, and that seemed to breathe an apostolical ardour. On his return, he preached at Market-Harborough ; and riding home the next day, in company, with his friend Mr. Summers, of London, they were overtaken with rain. Mr. Pearce

was wet through his clothes, and towards evening complained of a chillness. A slight hoarseness followed. He preached several times after this, which brought on an inflammation, and issued in a consumption. It is probable, that if his constitution had not been previously impaired, such effects might not have followed in this instance. His own thoughts on this subject are expressed in a letter to Dr. Ryland, dated December 4th, 1798; and in another to Mr King, dated from Bristol, on his way to Plymouth, March 30th, 1799. In the former, he says:—"Ever since my Christmas journey last year to Sheepshead, Nottingham, and Leicester, on the Mission business, I have found my constitution greatly debilitated, in consequence of a cold caught after the unusual exertions which circumstances then demanded; so that from a frame that could endure any weather, I have since been too tender to encounter a single shower without danger; and the duties of the Lord's day, which, as far as bodily strength went, I could perform with little fatigue, have since frequently overcome me. But the severe cold I caught in my return from the last Kettering Ministers'-meeting, has affected me so much that I have sometimes concluded I must give up preaching entirely; for though my head and spirits are better than for two years past, yet my stomach is so very weak, that I cannot pray in my family without frequent pauses for breath, and in the pulpit it

is labour and agony, which must be felt to be conceived of. I have, however, made shift to preach sometimes thrice, but mostly only twice, on a Lord's day, till the last ; when the morning sermon only, though I delivered it with great pleasure of mind, and with as much caution as to my voice as possible, yet cost me so much labour as threw me into a fever till the next day, and prevented my sleeping all night." In the latter, he thus writes :—"Should my life be spared, I, and my family, and all my connexions will stand indebted, under God, to you. Unsuspecting of danger myself, I believe I should have gone on with my own exertions, till the grave had received me. Your attention sent the apothecary to me ; and then I first learned what I have since been increasingly convinced of, that I was rapidly destroying the vital principle. And the kind interest you have taken in my welfare ever since has often drawn the grateful tear from my eye. May the God of heaven and earth reward your kindness to his unworthy servant, and save you from all the evils from which your distinguished friendship would have saved me !"

His labours were certainly abundant ; perhaps too great for his constitution : but it is probable that nothing was more injurious to his health than a frequent exposure to night air, and an inattention to the necessity of changing damp clothes.

Hitherto we have seen in Mr. Pearce the active, assiduous, and laborious servant of Jesus Christ ; but now we see him laid from his work, wasting away by slow degrees, patiently enduring the will of God, and cheerfully waiting for his dissolution. And as here is but little to narrate, I shall content myself with copying his letters, or extracts from them, to his friends, in the order of time in which they were written, only now and then dropping a few hints to furnish the reader with the occasions of some of them.

TO DR. RYLAND.

“ BIRMINGHAM, *October 8th*, 1798.

“ O, MY dear brother, your letter of the 5th, which I received this morning, has made me thankful for all my pulpit agonies, as they enabled me to weep with a weeping brother. They have been of use to me in other respects : particularly, in teaching me the importance of attaining and maintaining that spirituality and pious ardour in which I have found the most effectual relief ; so that on the whole I must try to ‘glory in tribulations also.’ I trust I often can when the conflict is past ; but to glory ‘in’ them, especially in mental distress,—*hic labor, hoc opus est.*

“ But how often has it been found, that when Ministers have felt themselves most embarrassed,

the most effectual good has been done to the people! O for hearts entirely resigned to the will of God!

“How happy should I be, could I always enjoy the sympathies of a brother who is tried in these points as I of late have been!”

TO MR. FULLER.

“BIRMINGHAM, *Oct. 29th*, 1798.

“I CAUGHT a violent cold in returning from our last Committee-Meeting, from which I have not yet recovered. A little thing now affects my constitution, which I once judged would be weather and labour proof for at least thirty years, if I lived so long. I thank God that I am not debilitated by iniquity. I have lately met with an occurrence, which occasioned me much pain and perplexity. . . . Trials soften our hearts, and make us more fully prize the dear few, into whose faithful sympathizing bosoms we can with confidence pour our sorrows. I think I should bless God for my afflictions, if they produced no other fruit than these,—the tenderness they inspire, and the friendships they capacitate us to enjoy.”

To a young man, who had applied to him for advice how he should best improve his time, previous to his going to the Bristol Academy:—

“BIRMINGHAM, *Nov. 13th*, 1798.

“MY DEAR M.,

“I CAN only confess my regret at not replying to yours at a much earlier period, and assure you that the delay has been accidental, and not designed. I feel the importance of your request for advice. I was sensible it deserved some consideration before it was answered. I was full of business at the moment. I put it by, and it was forgotten; and now it is too late: the time of your going to Bristol draws nigh. If, instead of an opinion respecting the best way of occupying your time before you go, you will accept a little counsel during your continuance there, I shall be happy at any time to contribute such a mite as my experience and observation have put in my power.

“At present, the following rules appear of so much moment, that, were I to resume a place in any literary establishment, I would religiously adopt them as the standard of my conduct:—First, I would cultivate a spirit of habitual devotion. Warm piety, connected with my studies, and especially at my entrance upon them, would not only assist me in forming a judgment on their respective importance, and secure the blessing of God upon them; but would so cement the religious feeling with the literary pursuit, as might abide with me for life. The habit of uniting these, being once formed, would, I hope, be never

lost; and I am sure that, without this, I shall both pursue trivial and unworthy objects, and those that are worthy I shall pursue for a wrong end. Secondly, I would determine on a uniform submission to the instructions of my preceptor, and study those things which would give him pleasure. If he be not wiser than I am, for what purpose do I come under his care? I accepted the pecuniary help of the Society on condition of conforming to its will; and it is the Society's will that my tutor should govern me. My example will have influence; let me not, by a single act of disobedience, or by a word that implicates dissatisfaction, sow the seeds of discord in the bosom of my companions. Thirdly, I would pray and strive for the power of self-government, to form no plan, to utter not a word, to take no step, under the mere influence of passion. Let my judgment be often asked, and let me always give it time to answer. Let me always guard against a light or trifling spirit; and particularly as I shall be amongst a number of youths, whose years will incline them all to the same frailty. Fourthly, I would in all my weekly and daily pursuits observe the strictest order. Always let me act by a plan. Let every hour have its proper pursuits; from which let nothing, but a settled conviction that I can employ it to better advantage, ever cause me to deviate. Let me have fixed time for prayer, meditation, reading,

languages, correspondence, recreation, sleep, &c. Fifthly, I would not only assign to every hour its proper pursuit; but what I did, I would try to do it with all my might. The hours at such a place are precious beyond conception, till the student enters on life's busy scenes. Let me set the best of my class ever before me, and strive to be better than they. In humility and diligence, let me aim to be the first. Sixthly, I would particularly avoid a versatile habit. In all things I would persevere. Without this, I may be a gaudy butterfly; but never, like the bee, will my hive bear examining. Whatever I take in hand, let me first be sure I understand it, then duly consider it, and, if it be good, let me adopt and use it.

“To these, my dear brother, let me add three or four things more minute, but which I am persuaded will help you much. Guard against a large acquaintance while you are a student. Bristol friendship, while you sustain that character, will prove a vile thief, and rob you of many an invaluable hour. Get two or three of the students, whose piety you most approve, to meet for one hour in a week for experimental conversation, and mutual prayer. I found this highly beneficial; though, strange to tell, by some we were persecuted for our practice! Keep a diary. Once a week, at farthest, call yourself to an account: what advances you have made in your different studies; in divinity, history, languages,

natural philosophy, style, arrangement; and amidst all, do not forget to inquire, Am I more fit to serve and to enjoy God than I was last week?"

On December 2d, 1798, he delivered his last sermon. The subject was taken from Daniel x. 19: "O man, greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my Lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me." "Amongst all the Old Testament saints," said he in his introduction to that discourse, "there is not one whose virtues were more, and whose imperfections were fewer, than those of Daniel. By the history given of him in this book, which yet seems not to be complete, he appears to have excelled among the excellent." Doubtless, no one was farther from his thoughts than himself: several of his friends, however, could not help applying it to him, and that with a painful apprehension of what followed soon after.

TO MR. CAVE, LEICESTER.

"BIRMINGHAM, *Dec. 4th*, 1798.

"BLESSED be God, my mind is calm; and though my body be weakness itself, my spirits are good, and I can write as well as ever, though I can hardly speak two sentences without a pause. All is well, brother! all is well, for time and

eternity. My soul rejoices in the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. Peace from our Lord Jesus be with your spirit, as it is (yea, more also) with

“Your affectionate brother.”

TO MR. NICHOLLS, NOTTINGHAM.

“BIRMINGHAM, *Dec. 10th, 1798.*”

“I AM now quite laid by from preaching, and am so reduced in my strength, that I can hardly converse with a friend for five minutes without losing my breath. Indeed, I have been so ill, that I thought the next ascent would be, not to a pulpit, but to a throne,—the throne of glory. Yes, indeed, my friend, the religion of Jesus will support when flesh and heart fail, and in my worst state of body, my soul was filled with joy. I am now getting a little better, though but very slowly. But fast or slow, or as it may, the Lord doeth all things well.”

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

“I HAVE overdone myself in preaching. I am now ordered to lie by, and not even to converse, without great care; nor indeed, till to-day, have I for some time been able to utter a sentence, without a painful effort. Blessed be God! I have been filled all through my affliction with peace and joy in believing; and at one time, when I thought I was entering the valley of death,

the prospect beyond was so full of glory, that, but for the sorrow it would have occasioned to some who would be left behind, I should have longed that moment to have mounted the skies. O, my friend, what a mercy that I am not receiving the wages of sin ; that my health has not been impaired by vice ; but that, on the contrary, I am 'bearing in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus!' To him be all the praise ! Truly I have proved that God is faithful ; and most cheerfully would I take double the affliction for one half of the joy and sweetness which have attended it. Accept a sermon which is this day published." *

TO MR. BATES AND MRS. BARNES, MINORIES.

"BIRMINGHAM, Dec. 14th, 1798.

"I COULD tell you much of the Lord's goodness during my affliction. Truly 'his left hand hath been under my head, and his right embraced me.' And when I was at the worst especially, and expected ere long to have done with time, even then, such holy joy, such ineffable sweetness filled my soul, that I would not have exchanged that situation for any besides heaven itself.

"O, my dear friends, let us live to Christ, and lay ourselves wholly out for him whilst we live ;

* The last but one he ever preached, entitled " Motives to Gratitude." It was delivered on the day of national thanksgiving, and printed at the request of his own congregation.

and then, when health and life forsake us, he will be the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever."

About this time, the congregation at Cannon-street was supplied for several months by Mr. Ward, who afterwards went as a Missionary to India. Here that amiable man became intimately acquainted with Mr. Pearce, and conceived a most affectionate esteem for him. In a letter to a friend, dated January 5th, 1799, he writes as follows:—

"I AM happy in the company of brother Pearce. I have seen more of God in him than in any other person I ever knew. O how happy should I be to live and die with him! When well, he preaches three times on a Lord's day, and two or three times in the week besides. He instructs the young people in the principles of religion, natural philosophy, astronomy, &c. They have a Benevolent Society, from the funds of which they distribute forty or fifty pounds a year to the poor of the congregation. They have a Sick Society for visiting the afflicted in general; a Book Society at chapel; a Lord's-day school, at which more than two hundred children are instructed. Add to this, Missionary business, visiting the people, an extensive correspondence, two volumes of Mission history preparing for the press, &c., and then you will see something of the soul of

Pearce. He is every where venerated, though but a young man ; and all the kind, tender, gentle affections make him as a little child at the feet of his Saviour.”

In February he rode to the opening of a Baptist meeting-house at Bedworth, but did not engage in any of the services. Here several of his brethren saw him for the last time. Soon afterwards, writing to the compiler of these Memoirs, he says, “The Lord’s day after I came home I tried to speak a little after sermon. It inflamed my lungs afresh, produced phlegm, coughing, and spitting of blood. Perhaps I may never preach more. The Lord’s will be done. I thank him that he ever took me into his service ; and now if he see fit to give me a discharge, I submit.”

During the above meeting, a word was dropped by one of his brethren, which he took as a reflection, though nothing was farther from the intention of the speaker. It wrought upon his mind ; and in a few days after he wrote as follows :—“Do you remember what passed at B— ? Had I not been accustomed to receive plain, friendly, remarks from you, I should have thought you meant to insinuate a reproof. If you did, tell me plainly. If you did not, it is all at an end. You will not take my naming it unkind, although I should be mistaken ; since affectionate explana-

tions are necessary when suspicions arise, to the preservation of friendship ; and I need not say that I hold the preservation of your friendship in no small account."

The above is copied, not only to set forth the spirit and conduct of Mr. Pearce in a case wherein he felt himself aggrieved ; but to show in how easy and amiable a manner thousands of mistakes might be rectified, and differences prevented, by a frank and timely explanation.

TO MR. COMFIELD, NORTHAMPTON.

" BIRMINGHAM, *March 4th, 1799.*

" I COULD wish my sympathies to be as extensive as human—I was going to say (and why not?) as animal misery. The very limited comprehension of the human intelligence forbids this indeed ; and whilst I am attempting to participate as far as the news of affliction reaches me, I find the same events do not often produce equal feelings. We measure our sympathies, not by the causes of sorrow, but by the sensibilities of the sorrowful : hence I abound in feeling on your account. The situation of your family, in you must have produced agonies. I know the tenderness of your heart : your feelings are delicately strong. You must feel much, or nothing ; and he that knows you, and does not feel much when you feel, must be a brute.

“ May the Fountain of mercy supply you with the cheering stream. May your sorrow be turned into joy.

“ I am sure that I ought to value more than ever your friendship for me. You have remembered me, not merely in my affliction, but in your own. Our friendship, our benevolence must never be compared with that of Jesus: but it is truly delightful to see the disciple treading, though at an humble distance, in the footsteps of a Master who, amidst the tortures of crucifixion, exercised forgiveness to his murderers, and the tenderness of filial piety to a disconsolate mother. When we realize the scene, how much do our imaginations embrace!—the persons,—the circumstances,—the words,—‘ Woman, behold thy son! John, behold thy mother!’ ”

By this letter, the reader will perceive that, while deeply afflicted himself, he felt in the tenderest manner for the afflictions of others.

TO MR. FULLER.

“ *March 23d, 1799.*

HE was now setting out for Plymouth; and after observing the great danger he was supposed to be in, with respect to a consumption, he adds, “ But thanks be to God, who giveth my heart the victory, let my poor body be consumed or preserved. In the thought of leaving, I feel a

momentary gloom ; but in the thought of going, a heavenly triumph.

‘ O to grace how great a debtor ! ’

“ Praise God with me, and for me, my dear brother ; and let us not mind dying any more than sleeping. No, no ; let every Christian sing the loudest as he gets the nearest to the presence of his God.

“ Eternally yours,

“ In Him who hath washed us both in his blood.”

TO MR. MEDLEY, LONDON,

“ *March 23d, 1799.*

“ MY affliction has been rendered sweet, by the supports and smiles of Him whom I have served in the Gospel of his Son. He hath delivered, he doth deliver, and I trust that he will yet deliver. Living or dying, all is well for ever. O what shall I render to the Lord ! ”

It seems that, in order to avoid wounding Mrs. Pearce’s feelings, he deferred the settlement of his affairs till he arrived at Bristol ; from whence he wrote to his friend Mr. King, requesting him to become an executor. On his receiving a favourable answer, he replied as follows:—

“ BRISTOL, *April 6th, 1799.*

“ YOUR letter, just received, affected me too much, with feelings of sympathy and gratitude,

to remain unanswered a single post. Most heartily do I thank you for accepting a service, which friendship alone can render agreeable in the most simple cases. Should that service demand your activities at an early period, may no unforeseen occurrence increase the necessary care. But may the Father of the fatherless, and Judge of the widows, send you a recompence into your own bosom, equal to all that friendship, to which, under God, I have been so much indebted in life, and reposing on whose bosom, even death itself loses a part of its gloom! In you, my children will find another father; in you, my wife another husband. Your tenderness will sympathize with the one, under the most distressing sensibilities; and your prudent counsels be a guide to the others, through the unknown mazes of inexperienced youth. Enough. Blessed God! my soul prostrates, and adores thee for such a friend."

TO MR. FULLER.

"PLYMOUTH, *April 18th, 1799*."

"THE last time that I wrote to you was at the close of a letter sent to you by brother Ryland. I did not like that postscript form; it looked so card-like, as to make me fear that you would deem it unbrotherly. After all, perhaps, you thought nothing about it; and my anxieties might arise only from my weakness, which seems

to be constantly increasing my sensibilities. If ever I felt love in its tenderness for my friends, it has been since my affliction. This, in great measure, is no more than the love of publicans and harlots, who love those that love them. I never conceived myself by a hundred degrees so interested in the regards of my friends as this season of affliction has manifested I was; and therefore, so far from claiming any reward for loving them in return, I should account myself a monster of ingratitude were it otherwise. Yet there is something in affliction itself, which by increasing the delicacy of our feelings, and detaching our thoughts from the usual round of objects which present themselves to the mind when in a state of health, may be easily conceived to make us susceptible of stronger and more permanent impressions of an affectionate nature.

“I heard at Bristol, that you and your friends had remembered me in your prayers at Kettering. Whether the Lord whom we serve may see fit to answer your petitions on my account or not, may they at least be returned into your own bosoms!

“For the sake of others, I should be happy, could I assure you that my health was improving. As to myself, I thank God that I am not without a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. I find that neither in sickness, nor in health, I can be so much as I wish

like Him whom I love. 'To die is gain.' O to gain that state, those feelings, that character, which perfectly accord with the mind of Christ, and are attended with the full persuasion of his complete and everlasting approbation! I want no heaven but this; and to gain this, most gladly would I this moment expire. But if to abide in the flesh be more needful for an individual of my fellow-men, Lord, let thy will be done; only let Christ be magnified by me, whether in life or death!

"The weather has been so wet and windy since I have been at Plymouth, that I could not reasonably expect to be much better; and I cannot say that I am much worse. All the future is uncertain. Professional men encourage me; but frequent returns appear, and occasional discharges of blood check my expectations. If I speak but for two minutes, my breast feels as sore as though it were scraped with a rough-edged razor: so that I am mute all the day long, and have actually learned to converse with my sister by means of our fingers.

"Unless the Lord work a miracle for me, I am sure that I shall not be able to attend the Olney meeting. It is to my feelings a severe anticipation; but how can I be a Christian, and not submit to God?"

TO MR. WARD.

“ PLYMOUTH, *April 22d*, 1799.

“ Most affectionately do I thank you for your letter, so full of information and of friendship. To our common Friend, who is gone into heaven, where he ever sitteth at the right hand of God for us, I commend you. Whether I die or live, God will take care of you till he has ripened you for the common salvation. Then shall I meet my dear brother Ward again; and who can tell how much more interesting our intercourse in heaven will be made by the scenes that most distress our poor spirits here? O had I none to live for, I had rather die than live, that I may be at once like Him whom I love. But while he ensures me grace, why should I regret the delay of glory? No: I will wait his will who performeth all things for me.

“ My dear brother, had I strength, I should rejoice to acquaint you with the wrestlings and the victories, the hopes and the fears, the pleasures and the pangs, which I have lately experienced. But I must forbear. All I can now say is, that God hath done me much good by all, and made me very thankful for all he has done.

“ Alas! I shall see you no more. I cannot be at Olney on the 7th of May. The journey would be my death. But the Lord whom you serve will be with you then, and for ever. My love to all the dear assembled saints, who

will give your benedictions at that solemn season."

TO DR. RYLAND.

"PLYMOUTH, *April 24th*, 1799.

"VERY DEAR BROTHER,

"MY health is in much the same state as when I wrote last, excepting that my muscular strength rather increases, and my powers of speaking seem less and less every week. I have, for the most part, spoken only in whispers for several days past; and even these seem too much for my irritable lungs. My father asked me a question to-day; he did not understand me when I whispered; so I was obliged to utter one word, and one word only, a little louder, and that brought on a soreness which I expect to feel till bed-time.

"I am still looking out for fine weather; all here is cold and rainy. We have had but two or three fair and warm days since I have been here; then I felt better. I am perfectly at a loss even to guess what the Lord means to do with me; but I desire to commit my ways to him, and be at peace. I am going to-day about five miles into the country, (to Tamerton,) where I shall await the will of God concerning me.

"I knew not of any Committee-meeting of our Society to be held respecting Mr. Marshman and his wife. I have therefore sent no vote; and,

indeed, it is my happiness that I have full confidence in my brethren at this important crisis, since close thinking, or much writing, always increases my fever, and promotes my complaint.

“ My dear brother, I hope you will correspond much with Kettering. I used to be a medium ; but God has put me out of the way. I could weep that I can serve him no more ; and yet I fear some would be tears of pride. O for perfect likeness to my humble Lord ! ”

TO MR. KING.

“ TAMERTON, *May 2d*, 1799.

“ GIVE my love to all the dear people at Cannon-street. O pray that He who afflicts would give me patience to endure. Indeed, the state of suspense in which I have been kept so long requires much of it ; and I often exclaim, ere I am aware, ‘ O my dear people ! O my dear family ! when shall I be restored to you again ? ’ The Lord forgive all the sin of my desires ! At times I feel a sweet and perfect calm, and wish ever to live under the influence of a belief in the goodness of God, and of all his plans, and all his works.”

The reader has seen how much he regretted being absent from the solemn designation of the Missionaries at Olney. He, however, addressed the following lines to Mr. Fuller, which were

read at the close of that meeting, to the dissolving of nearly the whole assembly in tears:—

“TAMERTON, *May 2d*, 1799.

“O THAT the Lord, who is unconfined by place or condition, may copiously pour out upon you all the rich effusions of his Holy Spirit on the approaching day! My most hearty love to each Missionary who may then encircle the throne of grace. Happy men! Happy women! You are going to be fellow-labourers with Christ himself! I congratulate—I almost envy you; yet I love you, and can scarcely now forbear dropping a tear of love as each of your names passes across my mind. O what promises are yours! and what a reward! Surely heaven is filled with double joy, and resounds with unusual acclamations, at the arrival of each Missionary there. O be faithful, my dear brethren, my dear sisters, be faithful unto death, and all this joy is yours! Long as I live, my imagination will be hovering over you in Bengal; and should I die, if separate spirits be allowed a visit to the world they have left, methinks mine would soon be at Mudnabatty, watching your labours, your conflicts, and your pleasures, whilst you are ‘always abounding in the work of the Lord.’”

TO DR. RYLAND.

"PLYMOUTH, *May 14th*, 1799.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"I HAVE suffered much in my health since I wrote to you last, by the increase of my feverish complaint, which filled me with heat and horror all night, and in the day sometimes almost suffocated me with the violence of its paroxysms. I am extremely weak; and now, that warm weather which I came into Devon to seek, I dread as much as the cold, because it excites the fever. I am happy, however, in the Lord. I have not a wish to live or die, but as he pleases. I truly enjoy the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and would not be without his divine atonement, whereon to rest my soul, for ten thousand worlds. I feel quite weaned from earth, and all things in it. Death has lost his sting, the grave his horrors; and the attractions of heaven, I had almost said, are sometimes violent.

‘ O to grace how great a debtor!’

"But I am wearied. May all grace abound towards my dear brother!"

TO THE CHURCH IN CANNON-STREET.

"PLYMOUTH, *May 31st*, 1799.

"To the dear people of my charge, the flock of Christ, assembling in Cannon-street, Birmingham; their afflicted but affectionate Pastor pre-

sents his love in Christ Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep.

“My dearest, dearest friends and brethren, separated as I have been a long time from you, and during that time of separation having suffered much both in body and mind, yet my heart has still been with you, participating in your sorrows, uniting in your prayers, and rejoicing with you in the hope of that glory to which divine faithfulness has engaged to bring us, and for which our heavenly Father, by all his providences, and by every operation of his Holy Spirit, is daily preparing us.

“Never, my dear brethren, did I so much rejoice in our being made ‘partakers of the heavenly calling,’ as during my late afflictions. The sweet thoughts of glory, where I shall meet my Lord Jesus, with all his redeemed ones, perfectly freed from all that sin which now burdens us, and makes us groan from day to day, this transports my soul, whilst out of weakness I am made strong, and at times am enabled to glory even in my bodily infirmities, that the power of Christ, in supporting when flesh and heart fail, may the more evidently rest upon me. O my dear brethren and sisters! let me, as one alive almost from the dead, let me exhort you to stand fast in that blessed Gospel, which for ten years I have now preached among you: the Gospel of the grace of God; the Gospel of free, full, everlasting

salvation, founded on the sufferings and death of God manifest in the flesh. Look much at this all-amazing scene !

‘ Behold ! a God descends and dies
To save my soul from gaping hell ; ’

and then say, whether any poor broken-hearted sinner need be afraid to venture his hopes of salvation on such a sacrifice ; especially since he who is thus ‘ mighty to save,’ hath said that ‘ whosoever cometh to him he will in no wise cast out.’ You, beloved, who have found the peace-speaking virtue of this blood of atonement, must not be satisfied with what you have already known or enjoyed. The only way to be constantly happy, and constantly prepared for the most awful changes which we must all experience, is to be constantly looking and coming to a dying Saviour ; renouncing all our own worthiness, cleaving to the loving Jesus as our all in all ; giving up every thing, however valuable to our worldly interests, that clashes with our fidelity to Christ ; begging that of his fulness we may receive ‘ grace upon grace,’ whilst our faith actually relies on his power and faithfulness, for the full accomplishment of every promise in his word that we plead with him, and guarding against every thing that might for a moment bring distance and darkness between your souls and your precious Lord. If you thus live, (and O that you may daily receive fresh life from Christ

so to do!) 'the peace of God will keep your hearts and minds,' and you will be filled with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

"As a church, you cannot conceive what pleasure I have enjoyed in hearing that you are in peace; that you attend prayer-meetings; that you seem to be stirred up of late for the honour and prosperity of religion. Go on in these good ways, my beloved friends, and assuredly the God of peace will be with you. Yea, if, after all, I should be taken entirely from you, yet God will surely visit you, and never leave you nor forsake you.

"As to my health, I seem on the whole to be still mending, though but very slowly. The fever troubles me often, both by day and night; but my strength increases. I long to see your faces in the flesh; yea, when I thought myself near the gates of the grave, I wished, if it were the Lord's will, to depart among those whom I so much loved. But I am in good hands, and all must be right.

"I thank both you and the congregation most affectionately for all the kindness you have shown respecting me and my family, during my absence. The Lord return it a thousandfold! My love to every one, both old and young, rich and poor, as though named. The Lord bless to your edification the occasional ministry which you enjoy. I hope you regularly attend upon it, and keep

together, as 'the horses in Pharaoh's chariot.' I pray much for you: pray, still pray, for your very affectionate, though unworthy Pastor."

In a postscript to Mr. King, he says, "I have made an effort to write this letter: my affections would take no denial; but it has brought on the fever."

Towards the latter end of May, when Mr Ward and his companions were just ready to sail, a consultation concerning Mr. Pearce was held on board the Criterion, in which all the Missionaries, and some of the members of the Baptist Missionary Society, were present. It was well known that he had for several years been engaged in preparing materials for a History of Missions, to be comprised in two volumes octavo; and as the sending of the Gospel among the Heathen had so deeply occupied his heart, considerable expectations had been formed by religious people, of his producing an interesting work on the subject. The question now was, could not this performance be finished by other hands, and the profits of it be appropriated to the benefit of Mr. Pearce's family? It was admitted by all, that this work would, partly from its own merits, and partly from the great interest which the author justly possessed in the public esteem, be very productive; and that it would be a delicate and proper method of enabling the religious public, by subscribing liberally

to it, to afford substantial assistance to the family of this excellent man. The result was, that one of the members of the Society addressed a letter to Mr. Pearce's relations at Plymouth, requesting them to consult him, as he should be able to bear it, respecting the state of his manuscripts; and to inquire whether they were in a condition to admit of being finished by another hand; desiring them also to assure him, for his present relief concerning his family, that whatever the hand of friendship could effect on their behalf, should be accomplished. The answer, though it left no manner of hope as to the accomplishment of the object, yet is so expressive of the reigning dispositions of the writer's heart, as an affectionate husband, a tender father, a grateful friend, and a sincere Christian, that it cannot be uninteresting to the reader:—

“TAMERTON, *June 24th, 1799.*

“To use the common introduction of ‘dear brother’ would fall far short of my feelings towards a friend whose uniform conduct has ever laid so great a claim to my affection and gratitude; but whose recent kindness, kindness in adversity, kindness to my wife, kindness to my children, kindness that would go far to ‘smooth the bed of death,’ has overwhelmed my whole soul in tender thankfulness, and engaged my everlasting esteem. I know not how to begin.

‘Thought is poor, and poor expression.’ The only thing that lay heavy on my heart, when in the nearest prospect of eternity, was the future situation of my family. I had but a comparatively small portion to leave behind me, and yet that little was the all that an amiable woman, delicately brought up, and, through mercy, for the most part comfortably provided for since she entered on domestic life, with five babes to feed, clothe, and educate, had to subsist on. Ah, what a prospect! Hard and long I strove to realize the promises made to the widows and the fatherless; but these alone I could not fully rest on and enjoy. For my own part, God was indeed very gracious. I was willing, I hope, to linger in suffering, if I might thereby most glorify him; and death was an angel whom I longed to come and embrace me, ‘cold’ as his embraces are. But how could I leave those who were dearest to my heart in the midst of a world in which, although thousands now professed friendship for me, and, on my account, for mine; yet, after my decease, would, with few exceptions, soon forget my widow and my children, among the crowds of the needy and distressed? It was at this moment of painful sensibility that your heart meditated a plan to remove my anxieties; a plan too that would involve much personal labour before it could be accomplished. ‘Blessed be God who put it into thy heart, and blessed be thou.’ May the

blessing of the widow and the fatherless rest on you and yours for ever. Amen and amen!

“ You will regret perhaps that I have taken up so much room respecting yourself; but I have scarcely gratified the shadow of my wishes. Excuse then, on the one hand, that I have said so much; and accept, on the other, what remains unexpressed.

“ My affections and desires are among my dear people at Birmingham; and unless I find my strength increase here, I purpose to set out for that place in the course of a fortnight, or at most a month. The journey performed by short stages may do me good: if not, I expect when the winter comes to sleep in peace; and it will delight my soul to see them once more before I die. Besides, I have many little arrangements to make among my books and papers, to prevent confusion after my decease. Indeed, till I get home, I cannot fully answer your kind letter; but I fear that my materials consist so much in references, which none but myself would understand, that a second person could not take it up, and prosecute it. I am still equally indebted to you for a proposal so generous, so laborious.

“ Rejoice with me, that the blessed Gospel still ‘bears my spirits up.’ I am become familiar with the thoughts of dying. I have taken my leave often of the world; and, thanks be to God, I do it always with tranquillity, and often with rapture.

“O what grace! what grace it was that ever called me to be a Christian! What would have been my present feelings, if I were going to meet God with all the filth and load of my sin about me! But God in my nature hath put my sin away, taught me to love him, and long for his appearing. O my dear brother, how consonant is everlasting praise with such a great salvation!”

After this another letter was addressed to Mr. Pearce, informing him more particularly, that the above proposal did not originate with an individual, but with several of the brethren who dearly loved him, and had consulted on the business; and that it was no more than an act of justice to one who had spent his life in serving the public; also requesting him to give directions by which his manuscripts might be found and examined, lest he should be taken away before his arrival at Birmingham. To this he answered as follows:—

“PLYMOUTH, *July 6th*, 1799.

“I NEED not repeat the growing sense I have of your kindness, and yet I know not how to forbear.

“I cannot direct Mr. K—— to all my papers, as many of them are in books from which I was making extracts; and if I could, I am persuaded that they are in a state too confused, incorrect, and unfinished, to suffer you or any other friend to realize your kind intentions.

“ I have possessed a tenacious memory. I have begun one part of the history ; read the necessary books ; reflected ; arranged ; written, perhaps, the introduction ; and then, trusting to my recollection, with the revisal of the books as I should want them, have employed myself in getting materials for another part, &c. Thus, till my illness, the volumes existed in my head, my books were at hand, and I was on the eve of writing them out, when it pleased God to make me pause : and as close thinking has been strongly forbidden me, I dare say, that were I again restored to health, I should find it necessary to go over much of my former reading to refresh my memory.

“ It is now Saturday. On Monday next we propose setting out on our return. May the Lord prosper our way !”

As the manuscripts were found to be in such a state, that no person, except the author himself, could finish them, the design was necessarily dropped. The public mind, however, was deeply impressed with Mr. Pearce's worth ; and that which the friendship of a few could not effect, has since been amply accomplished by the liberal exertions of many.

TO MR. BIRT.

“ BIRMINGHAM, *July 26th, 1799.*

“ It is not with common feelings that I begin a letter to you. Your name brings so many inte-

resting circumstances of my life before me, in which your friendship has been so uniformly and eminently displayed, that now, amidst the imbecilities of sickness, and the serious prospect of another world, my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude, whilst it glows with affection, an affection which eternity shall not annihilate, but improve.

“ We reached Bristol on the Friday after we parted from you, having suited our progress to my strength and spirits. We stayed with Bristol friends till Monday, when we pursued our journey, and went comfortably on till the uncommonly rough road from Tewkesbury to Evesham quite jaded me ; and I have not yet recovered from the excessive fatigue of that miserable ride. At Alcester we rested a day and a half ; and, through the abundant goodness of God, we safely arrived at Birmingham on Friday evening, the 19th of July.

“ I feel an undisturbed tranquillity of soul, and am cheerfully waiting the will of God. My voice is gone, so that I cannot whisper without pain ; and of this circumstance I am at times most ready to complain. For to see my dear and amiable Sarah look at me, and then at the children, and at length bathe her face in tears, without my being able to say one kind word of comfort,—O!!! . . . Yet the Lord supports me under this also ; and I trust will support me to the end.”

TO MR. ROCK.

“ July 28th, 1799.

“ I AM now to all appearance within a few steps of eternity. In Christ I am safe. In him I am happy. I trust we shall meet in heaven.”

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.

“ BIRMINGHAM, Aug. 1st, 1799.

“ MUCH disappointed that I am not released from this world of sin, and put in possession of the pleasures enjoyed by the spirits of just men made perfect, I once more address my dear fellow-heirs of that glory which, ere long, shall be revealed to us all.

“ We returned from Devon last Friday week. I was exceedingly weak, and for several days afterwards got rapidly worse. My friends compelled me to try another Physician. I am still told that I shall recover. Be that as it may, I wish to have my own will annihilated, that the will of the Lord may be done. Through his abundant grace, I have been and still am happy in my soul ; and I trust my prevailing desire is, that, living or dying, I may be the Lord's.

“ SAMUEL PEARCE.”

TO R. BOWYER, ESQ.,

ON HIS HAVING SENT HIM A PRINT OF MR. SCHWARTZ, THE
MISSIONARY ON THE MALABAR COAST.

“BIRMINGHAM, *Aug. 16th, 1799.*

“ON three accounts was your last parcel highly acceptable. It represented a man whom I have long been in the habit of loving and revering; and whose character and labours I intended, if the Lord had not laid his hand upon me by my present illness, to have presented to the public in Europe, as he himself presented them to the millions of Asia. The execution, bearing so strong a likeness to the original, heightened its value. And then, the hand from whence it came, and the friendship it was intended to express, add to its worth.”

TO MR. FULLER.

“BIRMINGHAM, *Aug. 19th, 1799.*

“THE Doctor has been making me worse and weaker for three weeks. In the middle of the last week he spoke confidently of my recovery; but to-day he has seen fit to alter his plans: and if I do not find a speedy alteration for the better, I must have done with all Physicians, but Him who ‘healeth the broken in heart.’

“For some time after I came home, I was led to believe my case to be consumptive; and then, thinking myself of a certainty near the kingdom of heaven, I rejoiced hourly in the delightful prospect.

“Since then I have been told that I am not in a dangerous way; and though I give very little credit to such assertions in this case, yet I have found my mind so taken up with earth again, that I seem as though I had another soul. My spiritual pleasures are greatly interrupted, and some of the most plaintive parts of the most plaintive Psalms seem the only true language of my heart. Yet, ‘Thy will be done,’ I trust, prevails; and if it be the Lord’s will that I linger long, and suffer much, O let him give me the patience of hope; and still his will be done. I can write no more. This is a whole day’s work; for it is only after tea, that, for a few minutes, I can sit up, and attend to any thing.”

From the latter end of August, and all through the month of September to the tenth of October, the day on which he died, he seems to have been unable to write. He did not, however, lose the exercise of his mental powers; and though in the last of the above letters he complains of darkness, it appears that he soon recovered that peace and joy in God, by which his affliction, and even his life, were distinguished.

A little before he died he was visited by Mr. Medley of London, with whom he had been particularly intimate on his first coming to Birmingham. Mr. Pearce was much affected at the sight of his friend; and continued silently weeping for

nearly ten minutes, holding and pressing his hand. After this, he spoke, or rather whispered, as follows:—"This sick bed is a Bethel to me: it is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven. I can scarcely express the pleasures that I have enjoyed in this affliction. The nearer I draw to my dissolution, the happier I am. It scarcely can be called an affliction, it is so counter-balanced with joy. You have lost your pious father; tell me how it was." Here Mr. Medley informed him of particulars. He wept much at the recital, and especially at hearing of his last words, "Home, Home!" Mr. Medley telling him of some temptations he had lately met with, he charged him to keep near to God. "Keep close to God," said he, "and nothing will hurt you."

The following letters and narrative were read by Dr. Ryland at the close of his funeral sermon:—

TO DR. RYLAND.

"BIRMINGHAM, *Dec. 9th, 1798. Lord's-day Evening.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"AFTER a Sabbath—such a one I never knew before—spent in an entire seclusion from the house and ordinances of my God, I seek Christian converse with you, in a way in which I am yet permitted to have intercourse with my

brethren. The day after I wrote to you last, my medical attendant laid me under the strictest injunctions not to speak again in public for one month at least. He says that my stomach is become so irritable, through repeated inflammations, that conversation, unless managed with great caution, would be dangerous: that he does not think my present condition alarming, provided I take rest; but without that, he intimated, my life was in great danger. He forbids my exposing myself to the evening air, on any account, and going out of doors, or to the door, unless when the air is dry and clear; so that I am, during the weather we now have in Birmingham, (very foggy,) a complete prisoner; and the repeated cautions from my dear and affectionate friends, whose solicitude, I conceive, far exceeds the danger, compels me to a rigid observance of the Doctor's rules.

“This morning brother Pope took my place; and in the afternoon, Mr. Brewer (who has discovered uncommon tenderness and respect for me and the people, since he knew my state) preached a very affectionate sermon from 1 Sam. iii. 18: ‘It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.’ By what I hear, his sympathizing observations, in relation to the event which occasioned his being then in my pulpit, drew more tears from the people's eyes than a dozen such poor creatures as their Pastor could deserve. But I have,

blessed be God, long had the satisfaction of finding myself embosomed in friendship,—the friendship of the people of my charge: though I lament their love should occasion them a pang. But thus it is, our heavenly Father sees, that, for our mixed characters, a mixed state is best.

“I anticipated a day of gloom: but I had unexpected reason to rejoice, that the shadow of death was turned into the joy of the morning; and though I said, with perhaps before unequalled feeling, ‘How amiable are thy tabernacles!’ yet I found the God of Zion does not neglect the dwellings of Jacob. My poor wife was much affected at so novel a thing as leaving me behind her, and so it was a dewy morning; but the Sun of righteousness soon arose, and shed such ineffable delight throughout my soul, that I could say, ‘It is good to be here.’ Motive to resignation and gratitude also crowded upon motive, till my judgment was convinced that I ought to rejoice in the Lord exceedingly, and so my whole soul took its fill of joy. May I, if it be my Saviour’s will, feel as happy when I come to die! When my poor Sarah lay at the point of death, for some days after her first lying in, toward the latter days, I enjoyed such support, and felt my will so entirely bowed down to that of God, that I said in my heart, ‘I shall never fear another trial. He that sustained me amidst this flame will defend me from every spark!’ And this confidence I

long enjoyed. But that was nearly six years ago, and I had almost forgotten the land of the Hermonites and the hill Mizar. But the Lord has prepared me to receive a fresh display of his fatherly care, and his (shall I call it?) punctilious veracity. If I should be raised up again, I shall be able to preach on the faithfulness of God more experimentally than ever. Perhaps some trial is coming on, and I am to be instrumental in preparing them for it; or if not, if I am to depart hence to be no more seen, I know the Lord can carry on his work as well without me as with me. He who redeemed the sheep with his blood will never suffer them to perish for want of shepherding, especially since he himself is the chief Shepherd of souls. But my family! Ah, there I find my faith but still imperfect. However, I do not think the Lord will ever take me away, till he helps me to leave my fatherless children in his hands, and trust my widow also with him.

‘ His love in times past,
(and I may add in times present too,)
Forbids me to think,
He will leave me at last
In trouble to sink.’

“ Whilst my weakness was gaining ground, I used to ask myself how I could like to be laid by. I have dreamed that this was the case; and both awake and asleep, I felt as though it were an evil

that could not be borne : but now, I find the Lord can fit the back to the burden ; and though I think I love the thought of serving Christ at this moment better than ever, yet he has made me willing to be—nothing, if he please to have it so ; and now my happy heart ‘could sing itself away to everlasting bliss.’

“O what a mercy that I have not brought on my affliction by serving the devil ! What a mercy that I have so many sympathizing friends ! What a mercy that I have so much domestic comfort ! What a mercy that I am in no violent bodily pain ! What a mercy that I can read and write without doing myself an injury ! What a mercy that my animal spirits have all the time this has been coming on (ever since the last Kettering meeting of Ministers) been vigorous, free from dejection ! And, which I reckon among the greatest of this day’s privileges, what a mercy that I have been able to employ myself for Christ and his cause to-day ! as I have been almost wholly occupied in the concerns of the (I hope) reviving church at Bromsgrove, and the infant church at Cradley. O, my dear brother, it is all mercy ; is it not ? O help me then in his praise, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.

“Ought I to apologize for this experimental chat with you, who have concerns to transact of so much more importance than any that are confined to an individual ? Forgive me, if I have

intruded too much on your time ; but do not forget to praise on my behalf our faithful God. I shall now leave room against I have some business to write about : till then adieu ; but let us not forget that this God is our God for ever and ever, and will be our guide even until death. Amen. Amen. We shall soon meet in heaven."

TO MR. KING.

" PLYMOUTH, *April 23d*, 1799.

" MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

" I HAVE the satisfaction to inform you, that at length my complaint appears to be removed, and that I am by degrees returning to my usual diet, by which, with the divine blessing, I hope to be again strengthened for the discharge of the duties, and the enjoyment of the pleasures, which await me among the dear people of my charge.

" I am indeed informed by a medical attendant here, that I shall never be equal to the labours of my past years, and that my return to moderate efforts must be made by slow degrees. As the path of duty, I desire to submit ; but, after so long a suspension from serving the Redeemer in his church, my soul pants for usefulness more extensive than ever, and I long to become an Apostle to the world. I do not think I ever prized the ministerial work so much as I now do. Two questions have been long before me. The

first was, Shall I live or die? The second, If I live, how will my life be spent? With regard to the former, my heart answered, 'It is no matter: all is well. For my own sake, I need not be taught that it is best to be with Christ; but for the sake of others, it may be best to abide in the body. I am in the Lord's hands; let him do by me as seemeth him best for me and mine, and for his cause and honour in the world.' But as to the second question, I could hardly reconcile myself to the thoughts of living, unless it were to promote the interest of my Lord; and if my disorder should so far weaken me as to render me incapable of the ministry, nothing then appeared before me but gloom and darkness. However, I will hope in the Lord, that though he hath chastened me sorely, yet since he hath not given me over unto death, sparing mercy will be followed with strength, that I may show forth his praise in the land of the living.

"I am still exceedingly weak; more so than at any period before I left home, except the first week of my lying by; but I am getting strength, though slowly. It is impossible at present to fix any time for my return. It grieves me that the patience of the dear people should be so long tried; but the trial is as great on my part as it can be on theirs, and we must pity and pray for one another. It is now a task for me to write at all, or this should have been longer."

TO MR. POPE.

“PLYMOUTH, *May 24th*, 1799.

“I CANNOT write much : this I believe is the only letter I have written (except to my wife) since I wrote to you last. My complaint has issued in a confirmed, slow, nervous fever ; which has wasted my spirits and strength, and taken a great part of the little flesh I had when in health away from me. The symptoms have been very threatening, and I have repeatedly thought, that let the Physician do what he will, he cannot keep me long from those heavenly joys, for which, blessed be God, I have lately been much longing ; and were it not for my dear people and family, I should have earnestly prayed for leave to depart, and to be with Christ, which is so much better than to abide in this vain, suffering, sinning world.

“The Doctors, however, now pronounce my case very hopeful ; say there is little or no danger, but that all these complaints require a great deal of time to get rid of. I still feel myself on precarious ground, but quite resigned to the will of Him ~~who~~, unworthy as I am, continues daily to ‘fill my soul with joy and peace in believing.’ Yes, my dear friend, now my soul feels the value of a free, full, and everlasting salvation ; and, what is more, I do enjoy that salvation ; while I rest all my hope on the Son of God in human nature, dying

on the cross for me. To me now, health or sickness, pain or ease, life or death, are things indifferent. I feel so happy in being in the hands of infinite love, that when the severest strokes are laid upon me, I receive them with pleasure, because they come from my heavenly Father's hands."

TO DR. RYLAND.

" BIRMINGHAM, *July 20th*, 1799.

" MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

" YOUR friendly anxieties on my behalf demand the earliest satisfaction. We had a pleasant ride to Newport on the afternoon we left you, and the next day without much fatigue reached Tewkesbury; but the road was so rough from Tewkesbury to Evesham, that it wearied and injured me more than all the jolting we had had before put together. However, we reached Alcester on Wednesday evening, stopped there a day to rest, and last night were brought safe hither, blessed be God!

" I find myself getting weaker and weaker; and so my Lord instructs me in his pleasure to remove me soon. You say well, my dear brother, that at such a prospect I 'cannot complain.' No, blessed be His name, who shed his blood for me, he helps me to rejoice at times with joy unspeakable. Now I see the value of the religion of the cross. It is a religion for a dying sinner. It is

all that the most guilty, the most wretched, can desire. Yes, I taste its sweetness, and enjoy its fulness, with all the gloom of a dying bed before me. And far rather would I be the poor emaciated and emaciating creature that I am, than be an Emperor, with every earthly good about him, but without God.

“I was delighted the other day, in re-perusing the Pilgrim’s Progress, to observe, that when Christian came to the top of the hill Difficulty, he was put to sleep in a chamber called ‘Peace.’ ‘Why, how good is the Lord of the way to me!’ said I. ‘I have not reached the summit of the hill yet, but notwithstanding, he puts me to sleep in the chamber of peace every night. True it is often a chamber of pain; but let pain be as formidable as it may, it has never yet been able to expel that peace, which the great Guardian of Israel has appointed to keep my heart and mind through Christ Jesus.’

“I have been labouring lately to exercise most love to God when I have been suffering most severely; but what shall I say? Alas! too often the sense of pain absorbs every other thought. Yet there have been seasons when I have been affected with such a delightful sense of the loveliness of God as to ravish my soul, and give predominance to the sacred passion. It was never till to-day that I got any personal instruction from our Lord’s telling Peter by what death he

should glorify God. O what a satisfying thought it is, that God appoints those means of dissolution whereby he gets most glory to himself. It was the very thing I needed; for of all the ways of dying, that which I most dreaded was by a consumption, in which it is now highly probable my disorder will issue. But, O my Lord, if by this death I can most glorify thee, I prefer it to all others, and thank thee that by this means thou art hastening my fuller enjoyment of thee in a purer world.

“A sinless state! ‘O it is a heaven worth dying for!’ I cannot realize any thing about heaven, but the presence of Christ and his people, and a perfect deliverance from sin; and I want no more. I am sick of sinning: soon I shall be beyond its power.

‘O joyful hour! O blest abode!
I shall be near and like my God!’

“I only thought of filling one side, and now have not left room to thank you and Mrs. Ryland for the minute, affectionate, and constant attentions you paid us in Bristol. May the Lord reward you! Our hearty love to all around, till we meet in heaven.”

MEMORANDA

Taken down occasionally by Mrs. Pearce, within four or five weeks of Mr. Pearce's death.

HE once said, "I have been in darkness two or three days, crying, 'O when wilt thou comfort me!' But last night the mist was taken from me, and the Lord shone in upon my soul. O that I could speak! I would tell a world to trust a faithful God. Sweet affliction, now it worketh glory, glory!"

Mrs. Pearce having told him the various exercises of her mind, he replied, "O trust the Lord; if he lifts up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become molehills. I feel your situation; I feel your sorrows; but He who takes care of sparrows, will care for you and my dear children."

When scorching with burning fever, he said, "Hot and happy." One Lord's-day morning he said, "Cheer up, my dear: think how much will be said to-day of the faithfulness of God. Though we are called to separate, he will never separate from you. I wish I could tell the world what a good and gracious God he is. Never need they who trust in him be afraid of trials. He has promised to give strength for the day; that is his

promise. He is my God and yours. He will never leave us nor forsake us; no, never! I have been thinking that this and that medicine will do me good: but what have I to do with it? It is in my Jesus's hands; he will do it all, and there I leave it. What a mercy is it, I have a good bed to lie upon; you, my dear Sarah, to wait upon me; and friends to pray for me! O how thankful should I be for all my pains! I want for nothing; all my wishes are anticipated! O, I have felt the force of those words of David, 'Unless thy law,' my gracious God! 'had been my delights, I should have perished in mine affliction.' Though I am too weak to read it, or hear it, I can think upon it; and, O, how good it is! I am in the best hands I could be in; in the hands of my Lord and Saviour, and he will do all things well. Yes, yes, he cannot do wrong."

One morning Mrs. Pearce asked him how he felt. "Very ill, but unspeakably happy in the Lord Jesus." Once beholding her grieving, he said, "O my dear Sarah, do not be so anxious; but leave me entirely in the hands of Jesus, and think, if you were as wise as he, you would do the same by me. If he takes me, I shall not be lost; I shall only go a little before; we shall meet again never to part."

After a violent fit of coughing, he said, "It is all well. O what a good God is he! It is done

by him, and it must be well. If I ever recover, I shall pity the sick more than ever; and if I do not, I shall go to sing delivering love; so you see it will be all well. O for more patience! My God is the God of patience, and he will give me all I need. I rejoice it is in my Jesus's hands to communicate, and it cannot be in better. It is my God who gives me patience to bear all his will."

When, after a restless night, Mrs. Pearce asked him what she should do for him, he said, "You can do nothing but pray for me, that I may have patience to bear all my Lord's will." After taking a medicine, he said, "If it be the Lord's will to bless it, for your sake, and for the sake of the dear children but the Lord's will be done. O I fear I sin, I dishonour God by impatience; but I would not for a thousand worlds sin in a thought if I could avoid it." Mrs. Pearce replied, she trusted the Lord would still keep him: seeing he had brought him thus far, he would not desert him at last. "No, no," he said, "I hope he will not. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Why do I complain? My Jesus's sufferings were much sorer and more bitter than mine. And did he thus suffer, and shall I repine? No; I will cheerfully suffer my Father's will."

One morning, after being asked how he felt, he replied, "I have but one severe pain about me.

What a mercy ! O how good a God to afford me some intervals amidst so much pain ! He is altogether good. Jesus lives, my dear, and that must be our consolation." After taking a medicine which operated very powerfully, he said, "This will make me so much lower ; well, let it be. Multiply my pains, thou good God ; so thou art but glorified, I care not what I suffer : all is right !"

Being asked how he felt after a restless night, he replied, "I have so much weakness and pain, I have not had much enjoyment ; but I have a full persuasion that the Lord is doing all things well. If it were not for strong confidence in God, I must sink ; but all is well. O blessed God, I would not love thee less. O support a sinking worm ! O what a mercy to be assured that all things are working together for good !"

Mrs. Pearce saying, "If we must part, I trust the separation will not be for ever : " "O no," he replied, "we sorrow not as those who have no hope." She said, "Then you can leave me and your dear children with resignation, can you ?" He answered, "My heart was pierced through with many sorrows, before I could give you and the dear children up ; but the Lord has heard me say, 'Thy will be done ;' and I now can say, 'Blessed be his name, I have none of my own.'"

His last day, October 10th, was very happy. Mrs. Pearce repeated this verse :—

“ Since all that I meet shall work for my good,
The bitter is sweet, the med'cine is food ;
Though painful at present, 'twill cease before long ;
And then, O how pleasant the conqueror's song ! ”

He repeated, with an inexpressible smile, the last line,—

“ The conqueror's song.”

He said once, “ O my dear ! what shall I do ? But why do I complain ? He makes all my bed in my sickness.”

She then repeated those lines :—

“ Jesus can make a dying bed,
Feel soft as downy pillows are.”

“ Yes,” he replied, “ he can, he does, I feel it.”

CHAPTER V.

To develope the character of any person, it is necessary to determine what was his governing principle. If this can be clearly ascertained, we shall easily account for the tenor of his conduct.

The governing principle in Mr. Pearce, beyond all doubt, was holy love.

To mention this, is sufficient to prove it to all who knew him. His friends have often compared him to that disciple whom Jesus loved. His religion

was that of the heart. Almost every thing he saw, or heard, or read, or studied, was converted to the feeding of this divine flame. Every subject that passed through his hands seemed to have been cast into this mould. Things that to a speculative mind would have furnished matter only for curiosity, to him afforded materials for devotion. His sermons were generally the effusions of his heart, and invariably aimed at the hearts of his hearers.

For the justness of the above remarks I might appeal, not only to the letters which he addressed to his friends, but to those which his friends addressed to him. It is worthy of notice, how much we are influenced in our correspondence by the turn of mind of the persons we address. If we write to a humorous character, we shall generally find that what we write, perhaps without being conscious of it, will be interspersed with pleasantries; or if to one of a very serious cast, our letters will be more serious than usual. On this principle it has been thought we may form some judgment of our own spirit by the spirit in which our friends address us. These remarks will apply with singular propriety to the correspondence of Mr. Pearce. In looking over the first volume of "Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Mission," the reader will easily perceive, the most affectionate letters from the Missionaries are those which are addressed to him.

It is not enough to say of this affectionate spirit, that it formed a prominent feature in his character: it was rather the life-blood that animated the whole system. He seemed, as one of his friends observed, to be baptized in it. It was holy love that gave the tone to his general deportment: as a son, a subject, a neighbour, a Christian, a Minister, a Pastor, a friend, a husband, and a father, he was manifestly governed by this principle; and this it was that produced in him that lovely uniformity of character which constitutes the true beauty of holiness.

By the grace of God he was what he was; and to the honour of grace, and not for the glory of a sinful worm, be it recorded. Like all other men, he was the subject of a depraved nature. He felt it, and lamented it, and longed to be freed from it; but certainly we have seldom seen a character, taking him altogether, "whose excellencies were so many and so uniform, and whose imperfections were so few." We have seen men rise high in contemplation, who have abounded but little in action. We have seen zeal mingled with bitterness, and candour degenerate into indifference; experimental religion mixed with a large portion of enthusiasm; and what is called "rational religion," void of everything that interests the heart of man. We have seen splendid talents tarnished with insufferable pride; seriousness

with melancholy ; cheerfulness with levity ; and great attainments in religion with uncharitable censoriousness towards men of low degree ; but we have not seen these things in our brother Pearce.

There have been few men in whom has been united a greater portion of the contemplative and the active ; holy zeal and genuine candour ; spirituality and rationality ; talents that attracted almost universal applause, and yet the most unaffected modesty ; faithfulness in bearing testimony against evil, with the tenderest compassion to the soul of the evil doer ; fortitude that would encounter any difficulty in the way of duty, without any thing boisterous, noisy, or overbearing ; deep seriousness, with habitual cheerfulness ; and a constant aim to promote the highest degrees of piety in himself and others, with a readiness to hope the best of the lowest ; not “breaking the bruised reed,” nor “quenching the smoking flax.”

“He loved the divine character as revealed in the Scriptures.” To adore God, to contemplate his glorious perfections, to enjoy his favour, and submit to his disposal, were his highest delight. “I felt,” says he, when contemplating the hardships of a Missionary life, “that were the universe destroyed, and I the only being in it besides God, he is fully adequate to my complete happiness ; and had I been in an African wood, sur-

rounded with venomous serpents, devouring beasts, savage men; in such a frame I should be the subject of perfect peace, and exalted joy. Yes, O my God! thou hast taught me that thou alone art worthy of my confidence; and, with this sentiment fixed in my heart, I am freed from all solicitude about my temporal concerns. If thy presence be enjoyed, poverty shall be riches; darkness, light; affliction, prosperity; reproach, my honour; and fatigue, my rest."

"He loved the Gospel." The truths which he believed and taught dwelt richly in him, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. The reader will recollect how he went over the great principles of Christianity, examining the grounds on which he rested, in the first of those days which he devoted to solemn fasting and prayer in reference to his becoming a Missionary;* and with what ardent affection he set his seal anew to every part of divine truth as he went along.

If salvation had been of works, few men, according to our way of estimating characters, had a fairer claim; but, as he himself has related, he could not meet the king of terrors in this armour.† So far was he from placing any dependence on his own works, that the more he did for God, the less he thought of it in such a way. "All the satisfaction I wish for here," says he, "is to be doing my heavenly Father's will. I hope

* See chap. ii.

† Chap. i.

I have found it my meat and drink to do his work ; and can set to my seal, that the purest pleasures of human life spring from the humble obedience of faith. It is a good saying, ‘ We cannot do too much for God, nor trust in what we do too little.’ I find a growing conviction of the necessity of a free salvation. The more I do for God, the less I think of it ; and am progressively ashamed that I do no more.”

Christ crucified was his darling theme, from first to last. This was the subject on which he dwelt at the outset of his ministry among the Coleford colliers, when “ he could scarcely speak for weeping, nor they hear for interrupting sighs and sobs.” This was the burden of the song, when addressing the more polished and crowded audiences at Birmingham, London, and Dublin ; this was the grand motive exhibited in sermons for the promotion of public charities ; and this was the rock on which he rested all his hopes in the prospect of death.

Notwithstanding this, however, there were those in Birmingham, and other places, who would not allow that he preached the Gospel. And if by “ the Gospel ” were meant the doctrine taught by Mr. Huntington, it must be granted he did not. If the fall and depravity of man operate to destroy his accountableness to his Creator ; if his natural inability to obey the law, or comply with the Gospel, be of such a nature as to excuse him in

the neglect of either ; or, if not, yet if Christ's coming under the law frees believers from all obligations to obey its precepts ; if Gospel invitations are addressed only to the regenerate ; if the illuminating influences of the Holy Spirit consist in revealing to us the secret purposes of God concerning us, or impressing us with the idea that we are the favourites of heaven ; if believing such impressions be Christian faith, and doubting of their validity unbelief ; if there be no such thing as progressive sanctification, or any sanctification inherent, except that of the illumination before described ; if wicked men are not obliged to do any thing beyond what they can find in their hearts to do, nor good men to be holy beyond what they actually are ; and if these things constitute the Gospel, Mr. Pearce certainly did not preach it. But if man, whatever be his depravity, be necessarily a free agent, and accountable for all his dispositions and actions ; if Gospel invitations be addressed to men, as sinners exposed to the righteous displeasure of God ; if Christ's obedience and death rather increase than diminish our obligations to love God and one another ; if faith in Christ be a falling in with God's way of salvation, and unbelief a falling out with it ; if sanctification be a progressive work, and so essential a branch of our salvation, as that without it no man shall see the Lord ; if the Holy Spirit instruct us in nothing by his illuminating influ-

ences but what was already revealed in the Scriptures, and which we should have perceived but for that we loved darkness rather than light; and if he incline us to nothing but what was antecedently right, or to such a spirit as every intelligent creature ought at all times to have possessed; then Mr. Pearce did preach the Gospel; and that which his accusers call by this name is another Gospel, and not the Gospel of Christ.

Moreover, if the doctrine taught by Mr. Pearce be not the Gospel of Christ, and that which is taught by the above writers and their adherents be, it may be expected that the effects produced will in some degree correspond with this representation. And is it evident to all men, who are acquainted with both, and who judge impartially, that the doctrine taught by Mr. Pearce is productive of hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, railings, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings; that it renders those who embrace it lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, false accusers, fierce, despisers of those that are good; while that of his adversaries promotes love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance? "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

Mr. Pearce's ideas of preaching human obligation may be seen in the following extract from a

letter addressed to a young Minister, who was sent out of the church of which he was Pastor :—
“ You request my thoughts how a Minister should preach human obligation. I would reply, Do it extensively, do it constantly ; but withal do it affectionately, and evangelically. I think, considering the general character of our hearers, and the state of their mental improvement, it would be time lost to argue much from the data of natural religion. The best way is, perhaps, to express duties in Scripture language, and enforce them by evangelical motives ; as the example of Christ, the end of his sufferings and death, the consciousness of his approbation, the assistance he has promised, the influence of a holy conversation on God’s people, and on the people of the world, the small returns we at best can make for the love of Jesus, and the hope of eternal happiness. These form a body of arguments, which the most simple may understand, and the most dull may feel. Yet I would not neglect on some occasions to show the obligations of man to love his Creator, the reasonableness of the divine law, and the natural tendency of its commands to promote our own comfort, the good of society, and the glory of God. These will serve to illuminate ; but, after all, it is the Gospel of the grace of God that will most effectually animate, and impel to action.”

Mr. Pearce’s affection to the doctrine of the

cross was not merely, nor principally, on account of its being a system which secured his own safety. Had this been the case, he might, like others whose religion originates and terminates in self-love, have been delighted with the idea of the grace of the Son; but it would have been at the expense of all complacency in the righteous government of the Father. He might have admired something which he accounted the Gospel, as saving him from misery; but he could have discerned no loveliness in the divine law, as being holy, just, and good, nor in the mediation of Christ, as doing honour to it. That which in his view constituted the glory of the Gospel was, that God is therein revealed as “the just God and the Saviour,—just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”

“He was a lover of good men.” He was never more in his element than when joining with them in spiritual conversation, prayer, and praise. His heart was tenderly attached to the people of his charge; and it was one of the bitterest ingredients in his cup during his long affliction, to be cut off from their society. When in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, he thus writes to Mr. King, one of the Deacons:—“Give my love to all the dear people. O pray that He who afflicts would give me patience to endure. Indeed, the state of suspense in which I have been kept so long requires much of it; and I often exclaim,

ere I am aware, ‘O my dear people! O my dear family! when shall I return to you again!’” He conscientiously dissented from the Church of England, and from every other national Establishment of religion; yet he embraced with brotherly affection great numbers of godly men both in and out of the Establishment. His spirit was truly catholic; he loved all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. “Let us pray,” said he, in a letter to a friend, “for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper who love, not this part, or the other, but who love her; that is, the whole body of Christ.”

He bare good-will to all mankind. It was from this principle that he so ardently desired to go and preach the Gospel among the Heathen. And even under his long affliction, when at times he entertained hopes of recovery, he would say, “My soul pants for usefulness more extensive than ever: I long to become an Apostle to the world!” The errors and sins of men wrought much in him in a way of pity. He knew that they were culpable in the sight of God; but he knew also that he himself was a sinner, and felt that they were entitled to his compassion. His zeal for the divinity and atonement of his Saviour never appeared to have operated in a way of unchristian bitterness against those who rejected these important doctrines; and though he was shamefully traduced by professors of another

description, as a mere legal Preacher, and his ministry held up as affording no food for the souls of believers ; and though he could not but feel the injury of such misrepresentations ; yet he does not appear to have cherished unchristian resentment ; but would at any time have laid himself out for the good of his worst enemies. It was his constant endeavour to promote as good an understanding between the different congregations in the town as the nature of their different religious sentiments would admit. His regard to mankind made him lament the consequences of war ; but while he wished and prayed for peace to the nations, and especially to his native country, he had no idea of turbulently contending for it. Though friendly to civil and religious liberty, he stood aloof from the fire of political contention. In an excellent circular letter, of which he was the writer, he thus expresses himself : “ Have as little as possible to do with the world. Meddle not with political controversies. An inordinate pursuit of these, we are sorry to observe, has been as a canker-worm at the root of vital piety ; and caused the love of many, formerly zealous professors, to wax cold. The Lord reigneth ; it is our place to rejoice in his government, and quietly wait for the salvation of God. The establishment of his kingdom will be the ultimate end of all those national commotions which terrify the earth. The wrath of man shall praise him ;

and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." From this time, more than ever, he turned his whole attention to the promoting of the kingdom of Christ; cherishing and recommending a spirit of contentment and gratitude for the civil and religious advantages that we enjoyed. Such were the sentiments inculcated in the last sermon that he printed, and the last but one that he preached. His young friends who are gone to India will never forget how earnestly he charged them by letter, when confined at Plymouth, to conduct themselves in all civil matters as peaceable and obedient subjects to the government under which they lived, in whatever country it might be their lot to reside.

It was love that tempered faithfulness with so large a portion of tender concern for the good of those whose conduct he was obliged to censure. He could not bear them that were evil; but would set himself against them with the greatest firmness; yet it was easy to discover the pain of mind with which this necessary part of duty was discharged.

It was love that expanded his heart, and prompted him to labour in season and out of season for the salvation of sinners. This was the spring of that constant stream of activity by which his life was distinguished. His conscience would not suffer him to decline what appeared to be right. "I dare not refuse," he would say, "lest I should

shrink from duty. Unjustifiable ease is worse than the most difficult labours to which duty calls." To persons who never entered into his views and feelings, some parts of his conduct, especially those which relate to his desire of quitting his country that he might preach the Gospel to the Heathen, will appear extravagant; but no man could with greater propriety have adopted the language of the Apostle: "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause; for the love of Christ constraineth us."

He was frequently told that his exercises were too great for his strength; but such was the ardour of his mind, "he could not die in a better work." When he went up into the pulpit to deliver his last sermon, he thought he should not have been able to get through; but when he became warm, he felt relieved, and forgot his indisposition, preaching with equal fervour and freedom as when in perfect health. While he was laid aside he could not forbear hoping that he should some time resume his delightful work; and knowing the strength of his feelings to be such, that it would be unsafe to trust himself, he proposed for a time to write his discourses, that his mind might not be at liberty to overdo his debilitated frame.

All his counsels, cautions, and reproofs appear to have been the effect of love. It was a rule dictated by his heart, no less than by his judg-

ment, to discourage all evil speaking ; nor would he approve of just censure, unless some good and necessary end were to be answered by it. Two of his distant friends being at his house together, one of them, during the absence of the other, suggested something to his disadvantage. He put a stop to the conversation by answering, "He is here, take him aside, and tell him of it by himself: you may do him good."

If he perceived any of his acquaintance bewildered in fruitless speculations, he would in an affectionate manner endeavour to draw off their attention from these mazes of confusion to the simple doctrine of the cross. A specimen of this kind of treatment will be seen in the letter, No. I., towards the close of this chapter.

He was affectionate to all, but especially towards the rising generation. The youth of his own congregation, of London, and of Dublin, have not forgotten his melting discourses, which were particularly addressed to them. He took much delight in speaking to the children, and would adapt himself to their capacities, and expostulate with them on the things which belonged to their everlasting peace. While at Plymouth, he wrote thus to one of his friends: "O how should I rejoice, were there a speedy prospect of my returning to my great and little congregations!" Nor was it by preaching only that he sought their eternal welfare: several of his letters are addressed

to young persons. See Nos. II. and III., towards the close of this chapter.

With what joy did he congratulate one of his most intimate friends, on hearing that three of the younger branches of his family had apparently been brought to take the Redeemer's yoke upon them. "Thanks, thanks, thanks be to God," said he, "for the enrapturing prospects before you as a father, as a Christian father especially. What, three of a family! and these three at once! O the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of his unfathomable grace! My soul feels joy unspeakable at the blessed news. Three immortal souls secured for eternal life! Three rational spirits preparing to grace Immanuel's triumphs, and sing his praise! Three examples of virtue and goodness, exhibiting the genuine influences of the true religion of Jesus before the world! Perhaps three mothers training up to lead three future families in the way to heaven. O what a train of blessings do I see in this event! Most sincerely do I participate with my dear friend, in his pleasures, and in his gratitude."

Towards the close of life, writing to the same friend, he thus concludes his letter:—"Present our love to dear Mrs. — and the family, especially those whose hearts are engaged to seek the Lord and his goodness. O tell them they will find him good all their lives, supremely good on dying beds, but best of all in glory."

In his visits to the sick he was singularly useful. His sympathetic conversation, affectionate prayers, and endearing manner of recommending to them a compassionate Saviour, frequently operated as a cordial to their troubled hearts. A young man of his congregation was dangerously ill. His father, living at a distance, was anxious to hear from him; and Mr. Pearce, in a letter to the Minister on whose preaching the father attended, wrote as follows:—"I feel for the anxiety of Mr. V——, and am happy in being at this time a Barnabas to him. I was not seriously alarmed for his son till last Tuesday, when I expected from every symptom, and the language of his Apothecary, that he was nigh unto death. But to our astonishment and joy, a surprising change has since taken place. I saw him yesterday apparently in a fair way of recovery. His mind for the first part of his illness was sometimes joyful, and almost constantly calm; but when at the worst, suspicions crowded his mind, he feared he had been an hypocrite. I talked, and prayed, and wept with him. One scene was very affecting: both he and his wife appeared like persons newly awakened. They never felt so strongly the importance of religion before. He conversed about the tenderness of Jesus to broken-hearted sinners; and whilst we spoke, it seemed as though he came and began to heal the wound. It did me good, and I trust was not unavailing to them.

They have since been for the most part happy; and a very pleasant interview I had with them on the past day."

Every man must have his seasons of relaxation. In his earlier years Mr. Pearce took strong bodily exercise. Of late he occasionally employed himself with the microscope, and in making a few philosophical experiments. "We will amuse ourselves with philosophy," said he to a philosophical friend, "but Jesus shall be our Teacher." In all these exercises he seems never to have lost sight of God; but would be discovering something in his works that should furnish matter for praise and admiration. His mind did not appear to have been unfitted, but rather assisted, by such pursuits, for the discharge of the more spiritual exercises, into which he would fall at a proper season, as into his native element. If in company with his friends, and the conversation turned upon the works of nature, or art, or any other subject of science, he would cheerfully take a part in it; and when occasion required, by some easy and pleasant transition, direct it into another channel. An ingenious friend once showed him a model of a machine which he thought of constructing, and by which he hoped to be able to produce a perpetual motion. Mr. Pearce having patiently inspected it, discovered where the operation would stop, and pointed it out. His friend was convinced, and felt, as may be supposed,

rather unpleasant at his disappointment. He consoled him; and, a prayer-meeting being at hand, said to this effect, "We may learn from hence our own insufficiency, and the glory of that Being who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working: let us go and worship him."

His mild and gentle disposition, not apt to give or take offence, often won upon persons in matters wherein at first they have shown themselves averse. When collecting for the Baptist Mission, a gentleman, who had no knowledge of him, or of the conductors of that undertaking, made some objections on the ground that the Baptists had little or nothing to say to the unconverted. This objection Mr. Pearce attempted to remove, by alleging that the parties concerned in this business were entirely of another mind. "I am glad to hear it," said the gentleman, "but I have my fears." "Then pray, Sir," said Mr. Pearce, "do not give till you are satisfied." "Why, I assure you," replied the other, "I think the Methodists more likely to succeed than you: and should feel more pleasure in giving them ten guineas, than you one." "If you give them twenty guineas, Sir," said Mr. Pearce, "we shall rejoice in their success: and if you give us one, I hope it will not be misapplied." The gentleman smiled, and gave him four.

His figure, to a superficial observer, would, at first sight, convey nothing very interesting; but,

on close inspection, his countenance would be acknowledged to be a faithful index to his soul. Calm, placid, and, when in the pulpit especially, full of animation, his appearance was not a little expressive of the interest he felt in the eternal welfare of his audience ; his eyes beaming benignity, and speaking in the most impressive language his willingness to impart not only the Gospel of God, but his own soul also.

His imagination was vivid, and his judgment clear. He relished the elegancies of science, and felt alive to the most delicate and refined sentiments : yet these were things on account of which he does not appear to have valued himself. They were rather his amusements than his employment.

His address was easy and insinuating ; his voice pleasant, but sometimes overstrained in the course of his sermon ; his language chaste, flowing, and inclining to the florid : this last, however, abated as his judgment ripened. His delivery was rather slow than rapid ; his attitude graceful ; and his countenance, in almost all his discourses, approaching to an affectionate smile. He never appears, however, to have studied what are called "the graces of pulpit-action ;" and, whatever he had read concerning them, it was manifest that he thought nothing of them, or of any other of the ornaments of speech, at the time. Both his action and language were the genuine

expressions of an ardent mind, affected, and sometimes deeply, with his subject. Being rather below the common stature, and disregarding, or rather, I might say, disapproving, every thing pompous in his appearance, he has upon some occasions been prejudged to his disadvantage: but the song of the nightingale is not the less melodious for his not appearing in a gaudy plumage. His manner of preparing for the pulpit may be seen in a letter which he addressed to Mr. C——, of L——, who was sent out of his church; and which may be of use to others in a similar situation. See No. IV., towards the close of this chapter.

His ministry was highly acceptable to persons of education; but he appears to have been most in his element when preaching to the poor. The feelings which he himself expresses, when instructing the colliers, appear to have continued with him through life. It was his delight to carry the glad tidings of salvation into the villages, wherever he could find access and opportunity. And as he sought the good of their souls, so he both laboured and suffered to relieve their temporal wants; living himself in a style of frugality and self-denial, that he might have whereof to give to them that needed.

Finally: He possessed a large portion of real happiness. There are few characters, whose enjoyments, both natural and spiritual, have risen to so great a height. He dwelt in love: "and he

that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Such a life must needs be happy. If his religion had originated and terminated in self-love, as some contend the whole of religion does, his joys had been not only of a different nature, but far less extensive than they were. His interest was bound up with that of his Lord and Saviour. Its afflictions were his affliction, and its joys his joy. The grand object of his desire was to see the good of God's chosen, to rejoice in the gladness of his nation, and to glory with his inheritance. "What pleasures do those lose," says he, "who have no interest in God's gracious and holy cause!"

If an object of joy presented itself to his mind, he would delight in multiplying it by its probable or possible consequences. Thus it was, as we have seen, in his congratulating his friend on the conversion of three of his children; and thus it was when speaking of a people who divided into two congregations, not from discord, but from an increase of numbers; and who generously united in erecting a new and additional place of worship:—"These liberal souls are subscribing," said he, "in order to support a religion, which, as far as it truly prevails, will render others as liberal as themselves."

His heart was so much formed for social enjoyment, that he seems to have contemplated the heavenly state under this idea with peculiar

advantage. This was the leading theme of a discourse from Rev. v. 9–12, which he delivered at a meeting of Ministers at Arnsby, April 18th, 1797; and of which his brethren retain a lively remembrance. On this pleasing subject he dwells also in a letter to his dear friend Birt:—"I had much pleasure, a few days since, in meditating on the affectionate language of our Lord to his sorrowful disciples: 'I go to prepare a place for you.' What a plenitude of consolation do these words contain! What a sweet view of heaven as a place of society! It is one place for us all; that place where his glorified body is, there all his followers shall assemble, to part no more. Where he is, there we shall be also. O, blessed anticipation! There shall be Abel, and all the Martyrs; Abraham, and all the Patriarchs; Isaiah, and all the Prophets; Paul, and all the Apostles; Gabriel, and all the angels; and above all, Jesus, and all his ransomed people! O, to be amongst the number! My dear brother, let us be strong in the Lord. Let us realize the bliss before us. Let our faith bring heaven itself near, and feast, and live upon the scene. O what a commanding influence would it have upon our thought, passions, comforts, sorrows, words, ministry, prayers, praises, and conduct! What manner of persons should we be in all holy conversation and godliness!"

In many persons the pleasures imparted by religion are counteracted by a gloomy constitution;

but it was not so in him. In his disposition they met with a friendly soil. Cheerfulness was as natural to him as breathing; and this spirit, sanctified by the grace of God, gave a tincture to all his thoughts, conversation, and preaching. He was seldom heard without tears, but they were frequently tears of pleasure. No levity, no attempts at wit, no aiming to excite the risibility of an audience, ever disgraced his sermons. Religion in him was habitual seriousness, mingled with sacred pleasure, frequently rising into sublime delight, and occasionally overflowing with transporting joy.

LETTERS REFERRED TO IN THIS CHAPTER.

No. I.

TO A YOUNG MAN, WHOSE MIND WAS BEWILDERED WITH FRUITLESS SPECULATIONS.

“THE conversation we had on our way to — so far interested me in your religious feelings, that I find it impossible to satisfy my mind till I have expressed my ardent wishes for the happy termination of your late exercises, and contributed my mite to the promotion of your joy in the Lord. A disposition more or less to ‘scepticism,’ I believe,

is common to our nature, in proportion as opposite systems and jarring opinions, each supported by a plausibility of argument, are presented to our minds: and with some qualification I admit Robinson's remark, 'That he who never doubted never believed.' While examining the grounds of persuasion, it is right for the mind to hesitate. Opinions ought not to be prejudged any more than criminals. Every objection ought to have its weight; and the more numerous and forcible objections are, the more cause shall we finally have for the triumph. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit.* But there are two or three considerations which have no small weight with me in relation to religious controversies.

"The first is the importance of truth. It would be endless to write on truth in general. I confine my views to what I deem the leading truth in the New Testament; the atonement made on behalf of sinners by the Son of God; the doctrine of the cross; Jesus Christ and him crucified. It surely cannot be a matter of small concern whether the Creator of all things, out of mere love to rebellious men, exchanged a throne for a cross, and thereby reconciled a ruined world to God. If this be not true, how can we respect the Bible as an inspired book, which so plainly attributes our salvation to the grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus? And if we discard the Bible, what can we do with prophecies, miracles, and all

the power of evidence on which, as on adamantine pillars, its authority abides? Surely the infidel has more to reject than the believer to embrace. That book, then, which we receive, not as the word of man, but as the word of God, not as the religion of our ancestors, but on the invincible conviction which attends an impartial investigation of its evidences ;—that book reveals a truth of the highest importance to men, consonant to the opinions of the earliest ages, and the most enlightened nations ; perfectly consistent with the Jewish economy, as to its spirit and design ; altogether adapted to unite the equitable and merciful perfections of the Deity in the sinner's salvation ; and, above all things, calculated to beget the most established peace, to inspire with the liveliest hope, and to engage the heart and life in habitual devotedness to the interest of morality and piety. Such a doctrine I cannot but venerate ; and to the author of such a doctrine, my whole soul labours to exhaust itself in praise.

‘O the sweet wonders of the cross,
Where God my Saviour loved and died!’

“Forgive, my friend, forgive the transport of a soul compelled to feel where it attempts only to explore. I cannot on this subject control my passions by the laws of logic. ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord.’

“Secondly, I consider man as a depraved creature ; so depraved, that his judgment is as dark as his appetites are sensual ; wholly dependent on God, therefore, for religious light, as well as true devotion ; yet, such a dupe to pride, as to reject every thing which the narrow limits of his comprehension cannot embrace ; and such a slave to his passions, as to admit no law but self-interest for his government. With these views of human nature, I am persuaded we ought to suspect our own decisions, whenever they oppose truths too sublime for our understandings, or too pure for our lusts. To err on this side, indeed, ‘is human ;’ wherefore the wise man saith, ‘He that trusteth to his own heart is a fool.’ Should therefore the evidence be only equal on the side of the Gospel of Christ, I should think, with this allowance, we should do well to admit it.

“Thirdly, if the Gospel of Christ be true, it should be heartily embraced. We should yield ourselves to its influence without reserve. We must come to a point, and resolve to be either infidels or Christians. To know the power of the sun, we should expose ourselves to his rays : to know the sweetness of honey, we must bring it to our palates. Speculations will not do in either of these cases ; much less will it in matters of religion. ‘My son,’ saith God, ‘give me thine heart !’

“Fourthly, an humble admission of the light we already have, is the most effectual way to a

full conviction of the truth of the doctrine of Christ. 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of his doctrine whether it be of God.' If we honour God as far as we know his will, he will honour us with farther discoveries of it. Thus shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; thus, thus shall you, my dear friend, become assured, that there is salvation in no other name than that of Jesus Christ; and thus, from an inward experience of the quickening influences of his Holy Spirit, you will join the admiring church, and say of Jesus, 'This is my Beloved, this is my Friend; he is the chiefest among ten thousand, he is altogether lovely.' Yes, I yet hope, I expect to see you rejoicing in Christ Jesus; and appearing as a living witness that he is faithful who hath said, 'Seek, and yet shall find; ask and receive, that your joy may be full.'

In another letter to the same correspondent, after congratulating himself that he had discovered such a mode of killing noxious insects as should put them to the least pain, and which was characteristic of the tenderness of his heart, he proceeds as follows:—"But enough of nature. How is my brother as a Christian? We have had some interesting moments in conversation of the methods of grace, that grace whose influence reaches to the day of adversity, and the hour of

death ; seasons when of every thing else it may be said, ‘ Miserable comforters are they all ! ’ My dear friend, we will amuse ourselves with philosophy ; but Christ shall be our Teacher ; Christ shall be our glory ; Christ shall be our portion. O that we may be enabled ‘ to comprehend the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge ! ’ ”

No. II.

TO A YOUNG GENTLEMAN STUDYING PHYSIC
AT EDINBURGH.

“ DID my dear friend P—— know with what sincere affection, and serious concern, I almost daily think of him, he would need no other evidence of the effect which his last visit, and his subsequent letters, have produced. Indeed, there is not a young man in the world, in earlier life than myself, for whose universal prosperity I am so deeply interested. Many circumstances I can trace, on a review of the past fourteen years, which have contributed to beget and augment affection and esteem ; and I can assure you that every interview, and every letter, still tend to consolidate my regard.

“ Happy should I be, if my ability to serve you at this important crisis of human life were equal to your wishes, or my own. Your situation

demands all the aids which the wisdom and prudence of your friends can afford, that you may be directed not only to the most worthy objects of pursuit, but also to the most effectual means for obtaining them. In your professional character it is impossible for me to give you any assistance. If any general observations I can make should prove at all useful, I shall be richly rewarded for the time I employ in their communication.

“ I thank you sincerely for the freedom wherewith you have disclosed the peculiarities of your situation, and the views and resolutions wherewith they have inspired you. I can recommend nothing better, my dear friend, than a determined adherence to the purposes you have already formed, respecting the intimacies you contract, and the associates you choose. In such a place as Edinburgh, it may be supposed, no description of persons will be wanting. Some so notoriously vicious, that their atrocity of character will have no small tendency to confirm your morals from the odious contrast which their practices present to your view. Against these, therefore, I need not caution you. You will flee them as so many serpents, in whose breath is venom and destruction. More danger may be apprehended from those mixed characters, who blend the profession of philosophical refinement with the secret indulgence of those sensual gratifications, which at

once exhaust the pocket, destroy the health, and debase the character.

“That morality is friendly to individual happiness and to social order, no man who respects his own conscience, or character, will have the effrontery to deny. Its avenues cannot, therefore, be too sacredly guarded, nor those principles, which support a virtuous practice, be too seriously maintained. But morality derives, it is true, its best, its only, support from the principles of religion. ‘The fear of the Lord,’ said the wise man, ‘is to hate evil.’ He therefore, who endeavours to weaken the sanctions of religion, to induce a sceptical habit, to detach my thoughts from an ever-present God, and my hopes from a futurity of holy enjoyment, is a worse enemy than the man who meets me with the pistol and the dagger. Should my dear friend then fall into the company of those whose friendship cannot be purchased, but by the sacrifice of revelation, I hope he will ever think such a price too great for the good opinion of men, who blaspheme piety, and dishonour God. Deism is indeed the fashion of the day; and to be in the mode, you must quit the good old path of devotion, as too antiquated for any but Monks and hermits; so as you laugh at religion, that is enough to secure to you the company and the applause of the sons of politeness. O that God may be a buckler and a shield to defend you from their assaults! Let

but their private morals be inquired into, and if they may have a hearing, I dare engage they will not bear a favourable testimony to the good tendency of scepticism ; and it may be regarded as an indisputable axiom, that what is unfriendly to virtue is unfriendly to man.

“ Were I to argue *à posteriori*, in favour of truth, I should contend, that those principles must be true, which, first, corresponded with general observation ; secondly, tended to general happiness ; thirdly, preserved a uniform connexion between cause and effect, evil and remedy, in all situations.

“ I would then apply these data to the principles held, on the one side, by the Deists ; and, on the other, by the believers in revelation. In the application of the first, I would refer to the state of human nature. The Deist contends for its purity and powers. Revelation declares its depravity and weakness. I compare these opposite declarations with the facts that fall under constant observation. Do I not see that there is a larger portion of vice in the world than of virtue ; that no man needs solicitation to evil, but every man a guard against it ; and that thousands bewail their subjection to lusts, which they have not power to subdue, whilst they live in moral slavery, and cannot burst the chain ? Which principle then shall I admit ? Will observation countenance the deistical ? I am convinced to

the contrary; and must say, I cannot be a Deist without becoming a fool; and to exalt my reason I must deny my senses.

“I take the second datum, and inquire, Which tends most to general happiness? To secure happiness, three things are necessary,—object, means, and motives. The question is, which points out the true source of happiness; which directs to the best means for attaining it; and, which furnishes me with the most powerful motives to induce my pursuit of it? If I take a Deist for my tutor, he tells me that fame is the object; universal accommodation of manners to interest, the means; and self-love, the spring of action. Sordid teacher! From him I turn to Jesus. His better voice informs me, that the source of felicity is the friendship of my God; that love to my Maker, and love to man, expressed in all the noble and amiable effusions of devotion and benevolence, are the means; and that the glory of God, and the happiness of the universe, must be my motives. Blessed Instructor; thy dictates approve themselves to every illuminated conscience, to every pious heart! Do they not, my dear P——, approve themselves to yours?

“But I will not tire your patience by pursuing these remarks. Little did I think of such amplification when I first took up my pen. O that I may have the joy of finding that these (at least

well meant) endeavours to establish your piety have not been ungraciously received, nor wholly unprofitable to your mind! I am encouraged to these effusions of friendship by that amiable self-distrust which your letter expresses; a temper not only becoming the earlier stages of life, but graceful in all its advancing periods.

“Unspeakable satisfaction does it afford me to find that you are conscious of the necessity of ‘first’ seeking assistance from heaven. Retain, my dear friend, this honourable, this equitable sentiment. ‘In all thy ways acknowledge God, and he shall direct thy paths.’

“I hope you will still be cautious in your intimacies. You will gain more by a half-hour’s intercourse with God, than the friendship of the whole college can impart. Too much acquaintance would be followed with a waste of that precious time, on the present improvement of which your future usefulness and respectability in your profession depend. Like the bee, you may do best by sipping the sweets of every flower; but remember, the sweetest blossom is not the hive.”

No. III.

TO A YOUNG LADY AT SCHOOL, A DAUGHTER
OF ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH.

“I CANNOT deny myself the pleasure which this opportunity affords me of expressing the concern I feel for your happiness, arising from the sin-

cerest friendship ; a friendship, which the many amiable qualities you possess, together with the innumerable opportunities I have had of seeing them displayed, have taught me to form and perpetuate.

“ It affords me inexpressible pleasure to hear that you are so happy in your present situation ; a situation in which I rejoice to see you placed, because it is not merely calculated to embellish the manners, but to profit the soul. I hope that my dear Ann, amidst the various pursuits of an ornamental or scientific nature which she may adopt, will not omit that first, that great concern, the dedication of her heart to God. To this, my dear girl, every thing invites you that is worthy of your attention. The dignity of a rational and immortal soul, the condition of human nature, the gracious truths and promises of God, the sweetness and usefulness of religion, the comfort it yields in affliction, the security it affords in temptation, the support it gives in death, and the prospects it opens of life everlasting ; all these considerations, backed with the uncertainty of life, the solemnity of judgment, the terrors of hell, and the calls of conscience and of God, all demand your heart for the blessed Jehovah. This, and nothing short of this, is true religion. You have often heard, and often written on religion : it is time you should feel it now. O what a blessedness will attend your hearty surrender of

yourself to the God and Father of men! Methinks I see all the angels of God rejoicing at the sight, all the saints in heaven partaking of their joy; Jesus himself, who died for sinners, gazing on you with delight; your own heart filled with peace and joy in believing; and a thousand streams of goodness flowing from your renovated soul to refresh the aged saint, and to encourage your fellow-youth to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and press on to God. But, O, should I be mistaken! Alas, alas! I cannot bear the thought. O thou Saviour of sinners and God of love, take captive the heart of my dear young friend, and make her truly willing to be wholly thine!

“If you can find freedom, do oblige me with a letter on the state of religion in your own soul, and be assured of every sympathy or advice that I am capable of feeling or giving.”

No. IV.

TO A YOUNG MINISTER, ON PREPARATION FOR
THE PULPIT.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“YOUR first letter gave me much pleasure. I hoped you would learn some useful lesson from the first Sabbath’s disappointment. Every thing is good that leads us to depend more simply on the Lord. I would say, respecting industry in

preparation for public work, as is frequently said respecting Christian obedience; I would apply as close as though I expected no help from the Lord, whilst I would depend upon the Lord for assistance, as though I had never made any preparation at all.

“I rejoice much in every thing that affords you ground for solid pleasure. The account of the affection borne you by the people of God was therefore a matter of joy to my heart, especially as I learn from the person who brought your letter, that the friendship seemed pretty general.

“Your last has occasioned me some pain on your account, because it informs me, that you have been ‘exceedingly tried in the pulpit:’ but I receive satisfaction again from considering, that the gloom of midnight precedes the rising day, not only in the natural world, but frequently also in the Christian Minister’s experience. Do not be discouraged, my dear brother: those whose labours God has been pleased most eminently to bless, have generally had their days of prosperity ushered in with clouds and storms. You are in the sieve; but the sieve is in our Saviour’s hands; and he will not suffer any thing but the chaff to fall through, let him winnow us as often as he may. No one at times, I think I may say, has been worse tried than myself, in the same manner as you express; though I must be thankful it has not been often.

“ You ask direction of me, my dear brother. I am too inexperienced myself to be capable of directing others; yet if the little time I have been employed for God has furnished me with any thing worthy of communication, it will be imparted to no one with more readiness than to you.

“ I should advise you, when you have been distressed by hesitation, to reflect, whether it arose from an inability to recollect your ideas, or to obtain words suited to convey them. If the former, I think these two directions may be serviceable :—

“ First, Endeavour to think in a train. Let one idea depend upon another in your discourses, as one link does upon another in a chain. For this end I have found it necessary to arrange my subjects in the order of time. Thus, for instance, if speaking of the promises, I would begin with those which were suited to the earliest inquiries of a convinced soul,—as pardon, assistance in prayer, wisdom, &c. ; then go to those parts of Christian experience which are usually subsequent to the former,—as, promises of support in afflictions, deliverance from temptations, and perseverance in grace ; closing with a review of those which speak of support in death, and final glory. Then all the varieties of description respecting the glory of heaven will follow in natural order ; as the enlargement of the understanding, purifi-

cation of the affections, intercourse with saints, angels, and even Christ himself, which will be eternal. Thus beginning with the lowest marks of grace, and ascending step by step, you arrive at last in the fruition of faith. This mode is most natural and most pleasing to the hearers, as well as assisting to the Preacher: for one idea gives birth to another, and he can hardly help going forward regularly and easily.

“Secondly, Labour to render your ideas transparent to yourself. Never offer to introduce a thought which you cannot see through before you enter the pulpit. You have read in Claude, that the best preparative to preach from a subject is to understand it: and I think Bishop Burnet says, ‘No man properly understands any thing, who cannot at any time represent it to others.’

“If your hesitation proceeds from a want of words, I should advise you, 1. To read good and easy authors; Dr. Watts especially. 2. To write a great part of your sermons, and for a while get at least the leading ideas of every head of discourse by heart, enlarging only at the close of every thought. 3. Sometimes, as in the end of sermons, or when you preach in villages, start off in preaching beyond all you have premeditated. Fasten on some leading ideas; as, the solemnity of death, the awfulness of judgment, the necessity of a change of heart, the willingness of Christ to save, &c.: never mind how far you ramble from the

point, so as you do not lose sight of it; and if your heart be any way warm, you will find some expressions then fall from your lips, which your imagination could not produce in an age of studious application. 4. Divest yourself of all fear. If you should break the rules of grammar, or put in, or leave out, a word, and recollect at the end of the sentence the impropriety, unless it makes nonsense or bad divinity, never try to mend it, but let it pass. If so, perhaps only a few would notice it; but if you stammer in trying to mend it, you will expose yourself to all the congregation.

“In addition to all I have said, you know where to look, and from whom to seek that wisdom and strength which only God can give. To him I recommend you, my dear brother, assuring you of my real esteem for you.”

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

THE great ends of Christian biography are instruction and example. By faithfully describing the lives of men eminent for godliness, we not only embalm their memory, but furnish ourselves with fresh materials and motives for a holy life. It is abundantly more impressive to view the religion of Jesus as operating in a living character

than to contemplate it abstractedly. For this reason we may suppose the Lord the Spirit has condescended to exhibit first and principally the life of Christ; and after his, that of many of his eminent followers. And for this reason he, by his holy influences, still furnishes the church with now and then a singular example of godliness, which it is our duty to notice and record. There can be no reasonable doubt, that the Life of Mr. Pearce ought to be considered as one of these examples. May that same divine Spirit, who had manifestly so great a hand in forming his character, teach us to derive from it both instruction and edification!

First, In him we may see the holy efficacy, and, by consequence, the truth, of the Christian religion. It was long since asked, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he who believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" This question contained a challenge to men of all religions who were then upon the earth. Idolatry had a great diversity of species; every nation worshipping its own gods, and in modes peculiar to itself: philosophers also were divided into numerous sects, each flattering itself that it had found the truth; even the Jews had their divisions, their Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes: but great as many of them were in deeds of divers kinds, an Apostle could look them all in the face, and ask, "Who is he that overcometh the world?" The same

question might be safely asked in every succeeding age. The various kinds of religions that still prevail,—the Pagan, Mahometan, Jewish, Papal, or Protestant,—may form the exteriors of man according to their respective models: but where is the man amongst them, save the true believer in Jesus, that overcometh the world? Men may cease from particular evils, and assume a very different character; may lay aside their drunkenness, blasphemies, or debaucheries, and take up with a kind of monkish austerity, and yet all amount to nothing more than an exchange of vices. The lusts of the flesh will on many occasions give place to those of the mind; but to overcome the world is another thing. By embracing the doctrine of the cross, to feel not merely a dread of the consequences of sin, but a holy abhorrence of its nature; and, by conversing with invisible realities, to become regardless of the best, and fearless of the worst, that this world has to dispense; this is the effect of genuine Christianity, and this is a standing proof of its divine original. Let the most inveterate enemy of revelation have witnessed the disinterested benevolence of a Paul, a Peter, or a John, and, whether he would own it or not, his conscience must have borne testimony that this is true religion. The same may be said of Samuel Pearce: whether the doctrine he preached found a place in the hearts of his hearers or not, his spirit and

life must have approved themselves to their consciences.

Secondly, In him we see how much may be done for God in a little time. If his death had been foreknown by his friends, some might have hesitated whether it was worth while for him to engage in the work of the ministry for so short a period : yet if we take a view of his labours, perhaps there are few lives productive of a greater portion of good. That life is not always the longest which is spun out to the greatest extent of days. The best of all lives amounted but to thirty-three years ; and the most important works pertaining to that were wrought in the last three. There is undoubtedly a way of rendering a short life a long one, and a long life a short one, by filling or not filling it with proper materials. That time which is squandered away in sloth, or trifling pursuits, forms a kind of blank in human life : in looking it over there is nothing for the mind to rest upon ; and a whole life so spent, whatever number of years it may contain, must appear upon reflection short and vacant, in comparison of one filled up with valuable acquisitions and holy actions. It is like the space between us and the sun, which, though immensely greater than that which is traversed in a profitable journey, yet being all empty space, the mind goes over it in much less time, and without any satisfaction. If "that life be long which answers

life's great end," Mr. Pearce may assuredly be said to have come to his grave in a good old age. And might we not all do much more than we do, if our hearts were more in our work? Where this is wanting, or operates but in a small degree, difficulties are magnified into impossibilities; a lion is in the way of extraordinary exertion: or, if we be induced to engage in something of this kind, it will be at the expense of a uniform attention to ordinary duties. But some will ask, "How are our hearts to be in our work?" Mr. Pearce's heart was habitually in his; and that which kept alive the sacred flame in him appears to have been the constant habit of conversing with divine truth, and walking with God in private.

Thirdly, In him we see, in clear and strong colours, to what a degree of solid peace and joy true religion will raise us, even in the present world. "A little religion," it has been justly said, "will make us miserable; but a great deal will make us happy." The one will do little more than keep the conscience alive, while our numerous defects and inconsistencies are perpetually furnishing it with materials to scourge us; the other keeps the heart alive, and leads us to drink deep at the fountain of joy. Hence it is, in a great degree, that so much of the spirit of bondage, and so little of the Spirit of adoption, prevails among Christians. Religious enjoyments with us are rather occasional than habitual; or if in some

instances it be otherwise, we are ready to suspect that it is supported in part by the strange fire of enthusiasm, and not by the pure flame of scriptural devotion. But, in Mr. Pearce, we saw a devotion ardent, steady, pure, and persevering ; kindled, as we may say, at the altar of God ; like the fire of the temple, it went not out by night nor by day. He seemed to have learned that heavenly art, so conspicuous among the primitive Christians, of converting every thing he met with into materials for love, and joy, and praise. Hence he laboured (as he expresses it) “to exercise most love to God when suffering most severely ;” and hence he so affectingly encountered the billows that overwhelmed his feeble frame, crying,

“ Sweet affliction, sweet affliction,
Singing as I wade to heaven.”

The constant happiness that he enjoyed in God was apparent in the effects of his sermons upon others. Whatever we feel ourselves, we shall ordinarily communicate to our hearers ; and it has been already noticed, that one of the most distinguishing properties of his discourses was, that they inspired the serious mind with the liveliest sensations of happiness. They descended upon the audience, not indeed like a transporting flood, but like a shower of dew, gently insinuating itself into the heart, insensibly dissipating its gloom, and gradually drawing forth the graces of faith, hope, love, and joy : while the countenance was bright-

ened almost into a smile, tears of pleasure would rise, and glisten, and fall from the admiring eye.

What a practical confutation did his life afford of the slander so generally cast upon the religion of Jesus, that it fills the mind with gloom and misery ! No : leaving futurity out of the question, the whole world of unbelievers might be challenged to produce a character from among them who possessed half his enjoyments.

Fourthly, From his example we are furnished with the greatest encouragement, while pursuing the path of duty, to place our trust in God. The situation in which he left his family, we have seen already, was not owing to an indifference to their interest, or an improvident disposition, or the want of opportunity to have provided for them ; but to a steady and determined obedience to do what he accounted the will of God. He felt deeply for them, and we all felt with him, and longed to be able to assure him before his departure, that they would be amply provided for : but, owing to circumstances which have already been mentioned, this was more than we could do. This was a point in which he was called to die in faith : and indeed so he did. He appears to have had no idea of that flood of kindness which, immediately after his decease, flowed from the religious public ; but he believed in God, and cheerfully left all with him. “ O that I could speak ! ” said he to Mrs. Pearce, a little before his death ; “ I would tell a

world to trust a faithful God. Sweet affliction ! now it worketh glory, glory !" And when she told him the workings of her mind, he answered, " O trust the Lord ! If he lift up the light of his countenance upon you, as he has done upon me this day, all your mountains will become mole-hills. I feel your situation ; I feel your sorrows ; but He who takes care of sparrows will care for you and my dear children."

The liberal contributions which have since been made, though they do not warrant Ministers in general to expect the same, and much less to neglect providing for their own families on such a presumption ; yet they must needs be considered as a singular encouragement, when we are satisfied that we are in the path of duty, to be inordinately " careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known unto God."

Finally, In him we see, that the way to true excellence is not to affect eccentricity, nor to aspire after the performance of a few splendid actions ; but to fill up our lives with a sober, modest, sincere, affectionate, assiduous, and uniform conduct. Real greatness attaches to character, and character arises from a course of action. The solid reputation of a merchant arises, not from his having made his fortune by a few successful adventures ; but from a course of wise economy and honourable industry, which, gradually accumu-

lated, advances by pence to shillings, and by shillings to pounds. The most excellent philosophers are not those who have dealt chiefly in splendid speculation, and looked down upon the ordinary concerns of men as things beneath their notice, but those who have felt their interests united with the interests of mankind, and bent their principal attention to things of real and public utility. It is much the same in religion. We do not esteem a man for one, or two, or three good deeds, any farther than as these deeds are indications of the real state of his mind. We do not estimate the character of Christ himself so much from his having given sight to the blind, or restored Lazarus from the grave, as from his going about continually doing good.

These single attempts at great things are frequently the efforts of a vain mind, which pants for fame, and has not patience to wait for it, nor discernment to know the way in which it is obtained. One pursues the shade, and it flies from him; while another turns his back upon it, and it follows him. The one aims to climb the rock, but falls ere he reaches the summit: the other, in pursuit of a different object, ere he is aware, possesses it; seeking the approbation of his God, he finds with it that of his fellow-Christians.

THE LIFE

OF

THE REV. JOHN SHOWER,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN LONDON.

ABRIDGED FROM THE NARRATIVE OF THE
REV. WILLIAM TONG.

THE LIFE
OF
THE REV. JOHN SHOWER.

CHAPTER I.

MR. JOHN SHOWER was born in the city of Exeter, in the parish of St. Kerrian, or St. Petrox, and was baptized May 18th, 1657. His parents were persons of very good reputation and great usefulness.

His father's name was William. He was the younger son of a gentleman in that country. He was put apprentice to a French merchant in Exeter, and followed the same business himself, with good success. He was very exemplary for his charity to the poor; and even when he had met with some losses himself, would take the opportunity to relieve those that were truly necessitous; and would do it with great willingness, as having put out so much into the best fund and upon the best securities: which brings to my mind what I have heard many years ago of a very religious

gentleman and wealthy merchant in Derbyshire, that having heard of the loss of a ship near Hull, in which he had effects to the value of £1500 or upwards, he presently called to his cash-keeper, and ordered him to distribute a hundred pounds among certain poor Ministers and Christians; "For," says he, "if it be going by £1500 at a lump, it is time to make sure of some part of it, before it be all gone."

His mother's name was Dorcas. She was the daughter of Mr. John Anthony, merchant of the same place, esteemed at that time one of the best families for religion and estate in that great and wealthy city. This gentlewoman was a great blessing to her family, very strictly pious, and of a most excellent natural temper.

Mr. John Shower's father died in the prime of his days, about the year 1661. He left a widow and four sons. They had a daughter named Hannah; but she died a little before the father. He left a competent estate for them; and left them with a good mother, who managed all her concerns with great discretion, and much to the advantage of her family.

Her eldest son, Mr. William Shower, was put to a merchant. He afterwards lived near the Devizes, in Wiltshire, but under many decays and infirmities of body; as I find in a letter dated July 27th, 1715, soon after the death of our Mr. Shower, written by the wife of this his brother,

Mr. William Shower, to their nephew here in town, condoling with the fatherless children their great loss, and kindly inviting them down into the country.

Mr. John Shower was their second son. He very early discovered an inclination to the ministry, and a suitable spirit and capacity for it; and his good mother was well pleased with such a disposition, and gave him all the encouragement and advantages for it that lay in her power.

The third son was Bartholomew, afterwards Sir Bartholomew, whom she bred up a lawyer; and how famous he was in that profession, what eminent posts he held, and how he signalized himself in public affairs, both at the bar and in Parliament, is too well known to need any farther mention here.

The fourth and youngest son was Phinehas, who was bound apprentice to Mr. Harvey, a druggist in London.

The Spirit of God singled out our Mr. John Shower from the rest of the family, to make him more eminently useful in his day and place. He had the honour to be related to several worthy Ministers in and about Exeter: the ever memorable Mr. Trosse, that mirror of grace and mercy, was his relation by marriage; and they had a great mutual affection and esteem for each other to the last.

He was also related to the late eminently holy,

zealous, useful Minister, Mr. Benjamin Hooper, who died May 1st, 1715, after many years of extraordinary diligence, exemplary holiness, and uncommon success. He went off the stage in those raptures of joy and thankfulness, that will never be forgotten by those who were the witnesses of them.

Mr. Shower had an uncle, an eminent Dissenting Minister in Exeter, Mr. Downe, who took great delight in this his nephew, and encouraged him much in his learning, and would frequently propose cases to him, both in grammar and divinity, that had something curious and difficult in them, and would press him (who was ever noted for a native modesty) to speak his thoughts about them, and expressed to his mother the very great satisfaction he had in her son's capacity, and the great expectations he had from him.

An aged person that was very much in the family of Mrs. Shower, said that when he was very young, he was so grave and serious, so dutiful to his mother, and so very diligent, that, whenever she looked upon him, she thought he was surely sanctified from his infancy.

He was very forward in his learning. I find in papers from different hands, that he was under the care of one Bradford, a schoolmaster in Exeter; another says of Mr. Seddon: both may be true. All agree that he was more observed for his good capacity and great industry than any

other youth in the school; that he seldom or never spent his vacant hours in the diversions that are every where allowed; he loved retirement and study from his childhood; and that his progress in learning was such as might be very well expected from one of so sagacious, so thoughtful, and so diligent a temper.

The fear of God appeared in him very early. One that was in his mother's family observed with pleasure, that when but a child, he was constant to his secret duties morning and evening: he had his closet, and he loved to be much there; and would come from it with that serious countenance which has been seldom known in one so young, and was judged by all that observed him, as a sign that he had a more than ordinary sense of God impressed on his soul, while he was thus waiting on him. When he was very young, he was much loved and admired by the best Christians, and particularly commended as making great conscience of his word, and redeeming his time.

After he had furnished himself with school-learning in his native city, he was sent to Taunton, in Somersetshire, and placed under the instruction of the learned and reverend Mr. Warren, who for many years, and with great success, kept a private academy, as the reverend and very learned Mr. Franckland did in the north of England; and I think those two venerable men were

the first that ran the risk of much trouble and persecution, that they might train up a rising generation of Ministers in those principles and ways which they themselves had suffered for, as really believing them to be most agreeable to the word of God.

By the best conjectures I can make, he entered upon his academical studies at Taunton about the age of fourteen ; so well had he improved the morning of his time : and here he went on with the same industry, gravity, and seriousness, very much beloved by his tutor, and esteemed by his fellow-students, and made a very good progress in rational learning, for which he had a particular relish.

After some considerable time spent at Taunton, he removed to London. His good mother was willing to have him and his brother placed in London, that she might be as near them, and as much with them, as she could ; and, accordingly, she removed with them to London, and there spent the rest of her days in holiness and comfort.

I have by me the form of a covenant drawn up with her own hand, and signed and sealed by her, July 23d, 1663 : it agrees very much with that in the Rev. Richard Alleine's *Vindiciæ Pietatis*, though with some variation. The preface to this her covenant I take to be the result of her own thoughts, and shall insert it in honour of

her memory, and for the instruction of all that read it. It begins thus:—

“DIRECTIONS HOW TO CLOSE SOUNDLY, SOLEMNLY, AND SAVINGLY WITH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST; WHICH I NOW DESIRE TO DO BY HIS GRACE ASSISTING ME.

“I AM willing to settle the state of my soul, and make sure and thorough work in covenanting with God, as a groundwork of salvation, and a business of unspeakable moment; and therefore I do beseech the Lord, through Christ, to help me by his Spirit, without which I can do nothing. Here I would lay before me these considerations.

“1. I would think seriously of my lost and undone condition by sin, and my utter inability ever to recover myself.

“2. I consider how freely God offers to me in his word to be my God in Christ, and accept of me if I will turn to him; and promiseth that I shall live and not die.

“3. I consider how desperate my condition will be if I turn not, and how happy and blessed it will be if I turn to God.

“4. I consider what is to be had in sinful ways, and what is to be had in the world; and how little they can do for me if I should sit down contented with them.

“5. I consider what Christ's terms are, and what Christ can and will do for me if I accept

him on his own terms, if I can but be content to forego all my sins for him, and submit to all his offices, and run all inconveniences with him.

“6. I would consider what the laws of Christ are; how holy, strict, spiritual; binding me to self-denial; and whether I can upon deliberation make choice of them as the rule of my life. Now, through grace, I can truly say I find the prevailing bent of my heart is for God and Christ against sin; and therefore now in the most solemn manner, as if the Lord were visible, I address myself unto him.”

Then follows her express covenant with God, in the close of which she adds, “I hereby testify to God, angels, and men, my acceptance of, and consent to, all the terms of the covenant of grace, made with poor sinners in Christ, as particularly made with me; and in testification thereof, I do set my hand and seal,

“DORCAS SHOWER.

“*In my closet in EXON, June 23d, 1663.*”

This good gentlewoman and her two sons, John and Bartholomew, being now at London, the elder was placed at Newington-green, under the education of that polite and profound scholar, Mr. Morton. Here he had a very agreeable society and great advantages, which, according to his wonted care and diligence, he faithfully improved, not declining but growing in grace as well

as useful learning. In the year 1674-5, the eighteenth year of his age, he solemnly renewed his covenant with God after the example of his good mother, subscribed with his own hand, and sealed with a double seal, which is as follows, *Ex Alleni Vindiciæ Pietatis primâ parte.*

“MY SOLEMN COVENANT WITH GOD.

“O MOST dreadful God, for the passion of thy Son, I beseech thee to accept of thy poor prodigal, now prostrating himself at thy door. I have fallen from thee by mine iniquity, and am by nature a son of death, and a thousandfold more a child of hell by my wicked practice; but of thine infinite grace thou hast promised mercy to me in Christ, if I will but turn to thee with all mine heart; therefore on the call of thy Gospel I am now come in, and, throwing down my weapons, submit myself to thy mercy; and because thou requirest, as the condition of my peace with thee, that I should put away mine idols, and be at defiance with all thine enemies, which I acknowledge I have wickedly sided with against thee, I here from the bottom of my heart renounce them all, covenanting with thee not to allow myself in any known sin, but conscientiously to use all the means which I know thou hast prescribed for the death and utter destruction of all my corruptions. And whereas I have formerly inordinately and idolatrously let out my

affections to the world, I do here resign my heart to thee that madest it, humbly protesting before thy glorious majesty, that it is the firm resolution of my heart, (and that I do unfeignedly desire grace from thee, that when thou shalt call me hereunto, I may practise this resolution,) through thy assistance, to forsake all that is dear unto me in this world, rather than turn from it to the ways of sin; and that I will watch against all its temptations, whether of prosperity or adversity, lest they should withdraw my heart from thee: beseeching thee also to help me against the temptations of Satan, by whose wicked suggestions, I resolve, by thy grace, never to yield myself a servant unto sin: and because my own righteousness is but filthy rags, I renounce all confidence therein, and acknowledge that I am of myself a hopeless, helpless, undone creature, without righteousness or strength. And forasmuch as thou hast of thy bottomless mercy offered most graciously to me, wretched sinner, to be again my God through Christ, if I would accept of thee; I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I do solemnly avouch thee for the Lord my God, and with all possible veneration, bowing the neck of my soul under the feet of thy most sacred Majesty, I do here take thee, the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for my portion and chief good, and do give up myself, body and soul, for thy servant, promising and

vowing to serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life : and since thou hast appointed the Lord Jesus as the only means of coming unto thee, I do here on the bended knees of my soul accept of him, as the only new and living way by which sinners may have access to thee, and do here solemnly join myself in a marriage-covenant to him. O blessed Jesus ! I come to thee hungry and hardly bestead, poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and a most loathsome, polluted wretch, a guilty, condemned malefactor, unworthy for ever to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord, much more to be solemnly married to the King of glory ; but since such is thine unparalleled love, I do here with all my powers accept thee, and do take thee for my Head and Husband, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, for all times and conditions, to love, honour, and obey thee before all others, and this to the death. I remember thee in all thy offices ; I renounce mine own worthiness, and avow thee to be the Lord my righteousness. I renounce mine own wisdom, and take thee for mine only guide ; I renounce mine own will, and take thy word for my law ; and since thou hast told me I must suffer if I will reign, I do here covenant with thee to take my lot as it falls with thee, and by thy grace assisting, to run all hazards with thee, verily supposing that neither life nor death shall part between me and thee. And be-

cause thou hast been pleased to give me thy holy laws as the rule of my life, and the way in which I should walk to thy kingdom, I do here willingly put my neck under thy yoke, and set my shoulder to thy burden, subscribing to all thy laws as holy, just, and good; I solemnly take them as the rule of my words, thoughts, and actions, promising that though my flesh contradict and rebel, yet I will endeavour to order my life according to thy direction, not allowing myself in the neglect of any thing I know to be my duty.

“Now, Almighty God, Searcher of hearts, thou knowest I make this covenant this day without any known guile or reservation; begging that if thou espiest any flaw or falsehood, thou wouldest discover it to me to do it aright. Now, glory be to thee, O God the Father, whom from this day forward I shall be bold to look upon as my God and Father, that ever thou shouldest find out such a way for the recovery of undone sinners! Glory be to thee, O God the Son, who hast loved me, and washed me in thine own blood, and art now become my Saviour and Redeemer! Glory be to God the Holy Ghost, who by thy almighty power hast turned my heart from sin to God! O dreadful Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou art now become my covenant God, and I through thine infinite grace am become thy covenant servant; and the covenant which I have

made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven!
Amen.

“JOHN SHOWER.

NEWINGTON-GREEN, *Jan. 31st, 1674-5.*

Ætatis anno 18.

Under these advantages he went on; and his profiting was so manifest to all, that before he was quite twenty years old, by the encouragement of no less a Divine than Dr. Manton, as well as his own tutor, he was encouraged to prepare himself to preach as a candidate for the ministry.

His intimate friend and fellow-labourer, Mr. Timothy Rogers, who lived to see many of his brethren go to heaven before him, and Mr. Shower among the rest, in a very affectionate letter informs me that the first sermon Mr. Shower preached was in the meeting-house of Mr. Thomas Vincent, in Hand-alley; that it was in the year 1677; and from Psalm cxix. 30: “I have chosen the way of truth.”

I have seen the very sermon under Mr. Shower's own hand; but it is such a mixture of long hand and characters, that it is very difficult to give a just account of it: this, however, is very plain,—

That he designed hereby to declare the solemn choice that he had made of divine truth, as the way in which, by the grace of God, he resolved to walk through this world.

That he chose the way of truth, not only as to

his general conversation, but in the course of his intended ministry.

That by the way of truth, he meant the way which God has prescribed in the Scriptures of truth, for religious worship, faith, and practice, in opposition to all false and erroneous ways, which have so many and such multitudes to walk in them.

And that he did not only consider the way of truth, as that by which the Christian religion in general is distinguished from Paganism and Mahometanism :

But the way of reformed Christianity, as distinguished from all the antichristian errors, and mixtures of Popery.

And, as he has explained himself more fully in discourse with his friends and brethren upon this his first sermon, he had respect to that further degree of reformation, which the good old Puritans and the ejected Ministers so earnestly pleaded and suffered for, and which he believed was necessary.

Thus Mr. Shower set out as a candidate for the ministry ; and he soon began to be taken notice of, and very much followed. He had lively affections, a grave and serious behaviour, great freedom of expression, and chose the most awful and affecting subjects : it was impossible for him to lie concealed in this great city, where there were many of the best rank that adhered to the

Dissenting way in that time of restraint, and some of them with much more affection and zeal than they afterwards discovered in the time of liberty.

In the year 1678, a year memorable for the discovery of the Popish plot, the body of Protestants in England, being justly alarmed with the danger to which their civil and religious liberties were exposed, laid aside their animosities against one another, and heartily joined against the common enemy. The Dissenters had the right done them to be owned true friends to their country; and there appeared a good disposition to take off the hardships they had laboured under. Their assemblies began to be more public and numerous; and the wisest and best of the established Church owned, (as they have done more than once on such occasions,) that the severities they had met with were owing to a Popish faction, whose stratagem was to attack the Protestant interest on that side, where it was least supported by human strength; that having made a breach there, they might the more effectually carry the whole.

At this time it was that an evening lecture was set up in a large room belonging to a coffee-house in Exchange-alley. It was supported and attended by some of the most considerable merchants in London. "Several of them," says my author, "have since that time filled the most eminent posts of the city of London."

The Ministers chosen to preach this Lecture were Mr. John Shower, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Dorrington, Mr. Thomas Goodwin. Mr. Lambert was some time after chosen Pastor to the congregation in Southwark, belonging to that very holy, excellent Minister, Mr. Wadsworth. Mr. Dorrington thought fit to leave the Dissenters, and go over to the Church. Mr. Thomas Goodwin, a person of great and universal literature, and of a most genteel, obliging temper, removed to Pinner, where he kept a private academy, and lived handsomely and usefully upon his estate for many ye

Their preaching in the lecture I have mentioned was very acceptable: the novelty of the thing brought many hearers; the good performances of the lecturers gave a reputation to it; and God was pleased to give it the sanction of his gracious presence and blessing. Many remembered it, and spoke of it with pleasure, how lively and zealous those young Ministers were in their work; how serious and attentive the hearers; how much good was done to young people especially: and in this good work none will think I show disrespect to the rest of the Ministers, when I say that Mr. Shower was in some superior degree acceptable and useful.

The accounts which I have from different persons, relating to this part of Mr. Shower's life, do not all exactly agree in point of time. By

the best conjectures I can make in collating them, I suppose it was about this time that Mr. Shower, besides his turn at the evening lecture, was assistant to the learned and most ingenious Mr. Vincent Alsop, and continued with him for some considerable time, by which he had an opportunity of making himself known at the court-end of the town; his good sense and genteel temper and manner, and his modest and discreet behaviour, recommended him to some persons of good quality.

In the year 1679 he was ordained. I suppose his ordination was private; for about this time the Popish interest at court had recovered some strength, and was struggling to turn the odium of the plot upon the best Protestants in the kingdom. The certificate given by those that ordained Mr. Shower is drawn up in such cautious and general terms, as make me conclude they were under some apprehension of danger. It runs thus:—

“These are to certify whom it may concern, that Mr. John Shower, of London, was ordained Minister of the Gospel in our presence; and in testimony of it we subscribe our names, this 24th of December, 1679.

“RICHARD ADAMS,

“M. SYLVESTER,

“S. SMITH,

“RICHARD STRETTON,

“O. HUGHES.”

When he had spent two or three years more in his ministerial work in London and Westminster, he was desired by that eminent patriot, Sir Samuel Barnardiston, to be the companion of his nephew, the late Sir Samuel, in his intended travels. This he was the more inclined to accept of, because the temper of the court and Church was not now so favourable to those of his persuasion; and his great honour and esteem for that worthy family determined him to comply with what was so much desired by them.

I have obtained the favour from a very worthy gentleman, and true friend to Mr. Shower, who was for some part of the time his companion abroad, to draw up some account of his travels; and am glad that I shall be able to gratify the more curious reader with the following narrative.

CHAPTER II.

THE Rev. John Shower, partly to satisfy a worthy curiosity in gaining a more extensive view of the world by visiting foreign countries, and partly to comply with the relations of the late Sir Samuel, then Mr., Barnardiston, who earnestly entreated him to be a companion, assistant, and adviser to that gentleman, determined to enter upon his travels.

In pursuance of this scheme, he went from London in or about the year 1683, in company with Mr. Barnardiston, Mr. Cornish, Mr. Thomas Goodwin, son of Dr. Thomas Goodwin, embarked for France, and soon after safely arrived at Paris. After Mr. Shower had made his observation on all things remarkable and entertaining to strangers in that populous and magnificent city, and had seen the palace, the beautiful gardens, the curious water-works and canal at Versailles, he and his friends, Mr. Cornish excepted, continued their journey to Lyons, a fair city seated on the confluence of the Soane and the Rhone, and the centre of commerce on that side of France. He stayed not long in this pleasant place, but proceeded to Geneva, with intention to reside there, till the heats of the summer were past, and the rains began to fall in Italy, which they commonly do about the beginning of September, and then his resolution was to visit that delightful country.

Being arrived at Geneva, and designing to spend the rest of the summer in that temperate climate among a people very acceptable to him, he took lodgings; and with great application to his studies at home, and observations abroad, he improved his knowledge as a Divine, his virtues as a Christian, and his manners as a gentleman. So fine and amiable were his humanity, condescension, and benevolence, so easy and courteous was his behaviour, and so agreeable his demean-

our in making and receiving addresses, that he gained the love and esteem of all with whom he conversed. Particularly he was much valued by the Pastors of the churches in that city; among whom was Mr. Turretine, famous for the eloquence of the pulpit, and his theological writings.

It was here that he met with Mr. Richard, afterwards Sir Richard, Blackmore, who arrived at this city in the latter end of the spring, 1683. He came in company with Mr. George Smith, a gentleman of Nibley, in Gloucestershire, from the province of Languedoc, where he had spent the winter, in the same view of continuing in this city, till the air of Italy should become moderate enough to encourage their journey to that country. Mr. Shower and this gentleman soon contracted an acquaintance, and afterwards an intimate friendship, to their mutual satisfaction and advantage, which continued without interruption, diffidence, or diminution, as long as the first lived. They passed the summer with delight and improvement at Geneva; a season so hot in Italy, that the air is not only suffocating by reason of the scorching sun, but likewise so unwholesome and dangerous, that no traveller can sleep within thirty miles of Rome, without great hazard of being seized with a malignant and fatal fever. The reason of this, as they were informed, is, that the country within that compass about Rome is so dispeopled, that hands are wanting to cultivate the land; so that the

fields, lying neglected and unlaboured, as well as undrained of stagnant and corrupted waters, engender putrid ferments, and the seeds of pestilential diseases. But in September following, when the autumnal rains use to cool and mitigate the immoderate heat of that region, Mr. Shower and his friends prepared to pass the Alps, and make their way to Turin.

In the beginning of September they set forth from Geneva, and took the road to Chambery, the capital city of Savoy; thence they pursued their journey by the most practicable way, that of Mount Seni, to the vale of Piedmont, and soon arrived at Turin. Nor did they stay long in that agreeable and polite place; but finding empty calashes of return, that had brought passengers to this town from Rome, they laid hold of this convenience, and went forward to Florence, by the road that leads to Milan, Cremona, Piacenza, Parma, and Bologna. Being come to Florence, they quitted their *voiturins*, and having made some stay to see what was most remarkable in this beautiful and stately city, and the various curiosities, especially the admirable pictures and statues in the court of the Great Duke, they went by the way of Pisa, and the pleasant vale of Pistoia, to Leghorn; intending to embark there for Naples, if they should find any English vessel bound thither; that by this means they might save the trouble and expense of a long journey by

land. According to their wishes, there lay in the road an English vessel, called the Scipio, Captain Dare, Commander, designing to put to sea in a few days for Naples. They agreed with the Captain for their passage, and waited till he was ready to sail. Mr. Shower, during his stay at Leghorn, by his obliging demeanour and agreeable conversation, made himself very acceptable to the English factory in that port, who received him and his companions with all marks of respect and civility. A fortnight being gone, they embarked on board Captain Dare's ship, and by a favourable wind soon landed at Naples, where the English Consul and merchants entertained them with great expressions of kindness and esteem.

Mr. Shower and his friends were much delighted with the curiosities peculiar to this place; namely, the Grott Lucullus, which is a road of considerable length, cut with immense labour through the bottom of a high hill, at a little distance from the town, for a shorter and more easy reciprocal passage; and the pleasant hill Pausilippo, covered with trees of various kinds, and famous for the tomb of Virgil, who, as tradition reports, was buried there. Mr. Shower and his friends were pleased with the extensive and charming prospect which this eminence affords. Turning their faces to the south, they saw with pleasure the bay of Naples spread beneath, and ships under sail making to the port, or coming

from it. Beyond the bay rises high in the air Mount Vesuvius, vomiting from its hollow peak clouds of smoke and cinders. On the right hand they viewed the isles of Ischia and Caprea; on the left the beautiful city of Naples, stretching along the shore towards this place. They were informed that the gentlemen and ladies, during the hottest seasons, constantly in their pleasure-boats pass hither from the city in the evening to breathe the refreshing air, as those of London spend the evenings in the ring of Hyde-park.

Mr. Shower was no less pleased to visit the antiquities of *Baiæ* near this place, particularly the vapour-baths of the ancient Romans, and the fish-ponds of Julius Cæsar. In another place, he was surprised with the sight of *Solfatara*, famous for its stores of brimstone, where he was amazed to observe, that when he trod on the level ground that was bare of grass, it shook under his feet at every step, and if pierced with the point of his sword, that it let forth smoke and hot vapours; so he viewed with admiration the hot and yellow mouths of the volcanoes, that glowed in the sides of the rising ground which encompasses the place. He was informed, that frequent bellowings under ground, heaving earthquakes, and terrible eruptions of melted minerals happened here; and that not many years before so vast a heap was raised, carried through the air, and set down at about a mile's distance, that it formed a new hill, now called

Montagna Nuova. Mr. Shower, accompanied by his fellow-travellers, was so curious and hardy as to visit the top of the famous burning hill, Vesuvius, whose head is a towering heap of cinders, difficult to ascend. Approaching near the wide and smoking mouth, to gratify his curiosity, he trod on cakes of sulphur, unformed ore, and hot cinders, and heard a terrible noise issuing from the bowels of the hollow mountain. From this scene of horror he was relieved by another of as great pleasure, when, looking eastwards, he had a diffusive view of Campania Felix, the garden of Italy ; and beheld a wide and fruitful plain covered with beautiful cities.

After about fourteen days, he left this place, and took the direct way to Rome. Here Mr. Shower behaved himself with great decency and prudence, by declining all debates with the Papists, that might have embroiled him in difficulties, and by taking care not to affront the religion of Rome with derision and contempt, or by any public action which might have moved their resentment ; and therefore he avoided being present at their masses, and meeting their solemn processions, to which he could not pay the veneration which they expected. In the mean time he improved his hours, and made his travels beneficial, by informing himself of the customs, manners, and disposition of the inhabitants, as well as of the constitution of that ecclesiastical monarchy, and the polity of

their wise and celebrated court. At other times he contemplated with pleasure and improvement the numerous instructive antiquities of the place, as well under ground as above ; and at other times entertained himself with viewing the stately palaces of the Cardinals and Princes, richly furnished, and profusely adorned with pictures and ancient statues, by the most celebrated masters : and sometimes he amused himself with viewing their stately domes and beautiful temples, particularly the famous church of St. Peter, rich and magnificent with painting, gold, and marble, as well as admirable for their architecture. He took great delight amidst these exquisite curiosities ; and intended, as his friends did, to pass the winter in this city. Accordingly they continued here till the carnival, which was very entertaining, though not so splendid as that at Venice. He and his company were invited to the palace, where the instrumental and vocal music were superior to any that he had heard before. He had indeed soon discerned, that the Italian masters had a more delicate and exquisite taste for music, as well as for painting, sculpture, and building, than their neighbour nations ; but he never was so charmed with it as when he went to the house of the Prince of Colonna.

While he resided at Rome, Mr. Shower was very diligent in informing himself about their doctrines and worship ; and when he reflected on the immense treasure, costly ornaments, and pompous

decorations of their churches, on the ecclesiastical robes of state, and princely vestments of the Priests, on their ludicrous forms of devotion, especially on the festivals of their saints, and at Christmas, when some sacred story or other is represented by waxen figures on a theatre,—accompanied with fine music, that looked like a dramatic entertainment or a spiritual diversion,—when he saw every where an affectation of splendour in external rites and gaudy worship, he with reason concluded, that the simplicity and inward spirit of Christ's religion were turned into an empty show and shining illusion ; and he could not but think, that ceremony with them was become the substance of sacred things ; and piety and purity of heart changed to a mechanical devotion of the body. He did not see that this face of religion looked with the air of the Apostle St. Peter or his companions. And when he contemplated their adoration of images, their worship paid to saints, and their numerous real or pretended relics,—of which sacred trinkets and venerable trifles they have an immense collection,—he could not but reflect with wonder and compassion on so general a delusion of the people, and the sad fruits of an ambitious and designing Clergy. The more he entertained these reflections, the more he was confirmed in his own religion, and convinced of the unreasonable and absurd doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome.

Neither he, nor any of his fellow-travellers, had the curiosity to kiss the Pope's slipper. On the contrary, they declined it, as taking it to be too great an honour to be paid to the Pontiff, as a Bishop, or a temporal Prince; though he who then wore the triple crown was very popular, and well-spoken of by those of the Reformed religion. His name was Odiscalchi, called by some the Protestant Pope, because he was a hearty friend to the Austrian interest, and opposed the encroachments and exorbitant power of France.

Mr. Shower and his friends designed to stay in Rome till Lent was past, and then to travel by land to Venice; but those measures were broken by an unforeseen incident, that, happening about this time, obliged them to leave this city sooner than they intended. The incident was this: at this season of the year, according to an anniversary custom, the King of Spain presents by his Ambassador a fine hackney or gennet (by those names they call the horse to be presented) to the Pope, as a homage due from him to the church, or an acknowledgment of his dependent tenure of the kingdom of Naples. This solemnity is always performed with splendour and magnificence; and therefore all strangers are curious to see the ceremony. Mr. Shower and his friends, who had been always cautious to avoid occasions that might tempt or compel them to kneel at the mass, inquired diligently whether there would be any

consecration of the host that day, when the horse should be introduced into the Pope's chapel ; for so it was to be at that time, the Pontiff being indisposed, and not able or willing to receive this homage in St. Peter's church. All persons informed them, that there would be no such thing ; "for," said they, "it will be noon before the ceremony begins ; and no consecration can be performed at that time of the day." Our travellers therefore, satisfied with this account, after they had seen the pomp of the cavalcade pass by, went by a private way to the chapel, and crowded forward to the rails that enclosed the place before *the altar, where the Pope sat on his throne, and the Cardinals on their benches.* Soon after the procession, at least as many as could entered the chapel with the gennet richly adorned ; and when some parts of the devotion were performed, the Pope rose from his throne, and, supported by the *Spanish Ambassador on the one hand, and that of France on the other,* he went and kneeled before the altar ; when presently the host was elevated, and all persons called upon, by the Pope's guards that attended, to pay their adoration, which they did, except one of the English travellers, who was so determined and resolute, that he refused to kneel, as looking on that compliance to be interpretative idolatry. A little after the cup was likewise elevated, which it seems had been consecrated, as well as the bread, early the

same morning ; and a second time the same gentleman persisted in his refusal, and continued in a standing posture, not without apprehension, that he should have been seized and ill used by the armed officers. This action, Mr. Shower's friends concluded must have given great offence, and could not but be attended with bad consequences ; which opinion was confirmed the next day, when a noble English lord, then residing at Rome, made them a visit, and assured them, that the behaviour before mentioned was spoken of among persons of distinction with great resentment ; and advised his countryman that had shown so much courage, and as he thought so little prudence, to quit the place for his safety. Upon this consideration, the person that had given the public offence resolved to leave Rome ; and the rest, not willing to divide company, determined to go likewise.

They forthwith put their design in execution, and travelled by land to Loretto, where they saw with admiration the immense riches of the place, and the holy piece of old wall, that the credulous people are made to believe was brought through the air by two carrier angels, and set down at this place, where now it is enshrined, and worshipped with great devotion. They could not but with great surprise behold the inestimable presents heaped upon the Lady of Loretto, by the superstitious devotion of deluded Princes, and

people of quality and fortune. Mr. Shower and his company went from this celebrated church to Ancona, and intended to go by land to Venice ; but examining what money they were furnished withal, they found, that by their hasty departure from Rome, they had forgotten to take up so much upon their bills of credit, as would defray their charges by land to Venice. This obliged them to change their resolution, and determined them to go by sea, as the shorter and less expensive way. Upon which they agreed with the master of a large open boat to carry them to Venice.

Their design was to pass from Ancona, *terra a terra*, that is, to keep within sight of the shore, and to lodge each night at some convenient town on the coast. They embarked one afternoon, and intended to sail near the land till the next day. But at night when the passengers went to rest, the master and his crew fell so fast asleep, that they wakened not till the next morning, and then looking out they found themselves carried to sea out of sight of all land. It was with concern and some consternation that the travellers saw themselves in an open vessel amidst the waves of the Gulf of Venice ; and could not but apprehend, that if a fresh gale should spring up from the shore, they must be exposed to great hazard in the turbulent Adriatic sea ; or if they escaped this, that they should be in equal danger of falling

into the hands of Dalmatian pirates. In this affright they gave orders to the boatmen to steer such a course as they judged most likely to bring them again within prospect of the Italian shore ; and they directed right ; for after some hours they began to discover land, whither they made with great diligence.

It was with superior satisfaction, that they found themselves extricated from this difficulty ; and Mr. Shower particularly expressed his thanks to divine Providence for the deliverance. From this time they passed safe by the shore's side till they came to Venice. Here Mr. Shower was extremely pleased, not only with the particular situation of the town upon many small islands clustering in the sea, by which it is secured from any attack by land, but likewise with the stately domes, magnificent palaces, boats of pleasure and innumerable gondolas, in which the inhabitants pass constantly up and down their streets of water. When he had viewed the august senate-house, adorned with admirable paintings by the best ancient masters, the celebrated church of St. Mark, the bridge called the Rialto, a surprising piece of architecture consisting but of one extensive arch, the port, the arsenal, and other curiosities, especially the great variety of pictures by Tinctoret, Titian, Paul Veronese, Corregio, and other great artists, he left this famous city, and with his fellow-travellers went to Padua. In this Uni-

versity he stayed about a month. Mr. Shower was a great lover of learning, and a curious collector of valuable authors ; and by great diligence in the towns through which he passed, frequented and searched the booksellers' shops, and purchased the writers that he chiefly esteemed. But this place most favoured his design of laying the foundation of a library ; for the University of Padua, being a mart of arts and sciences, was well stored with all sorts of authors, ancient and modern, as well Greek as Latin ; the first of which are scarce in other Italian towns, as they are in Spain and Portugal. After Mr. Shower had well informed himself of the customs and manners of this University of such ancient reputation, and had satisfied himself by the conversation of the learned Professors, he with his friends determined to go through the Venetian territories, and the country of the Grisons, into Germany, and thence down the Rhine to Amsterdam.

In or about April, 1684, they went from Padua, and entered upon their journey, intending to visit Verona, Vicenza, and Brescia, in their way to Bergamo. It was in one of these towns that Mr. Barnardiston, who was a virtuous gentleman, but naturally subject to some uneasiness of temper, which was much increased by a valetudinary constitution, took a fancy that he was very ill, and incapable of proceeding in the journey,

which was not the first time he had entertained such imaginations. Mr. Shower, who was a prudent adviser and a faithful friend to this gentleman, being well acquainted with his humour, by his wise management and a skilful address, sometimes by accommodating himself to his fancies, and sometimes by reasoning and earnest persuasions, often set him right, and reduced him to a better temper. But he scarcely ever had a harder task than to remove the melancholy fit that seized his friend in this place. But at last, by long application, good arguments, and importunate entreaties, he prevailed with him to shake off his indolence and distrust of his ability to travel; which accomplished, they pursued their journey to Bergamo, and being arrived at that city, which is seated at the foot of those Alps, over which a difficult and almost impracticable road leads to Coire, the capital city of the Grisons, a message was sent to the hill, to fetch down oxen and sledges for six persons, which are constantly kept there, to a sufficient number, at the expense of the Government of Venice, and employed gratis to draw passengers up the mountain, by which a communication may be kept open between their territories and the country of the Grisons, by encouraging travellers to pass that way; for the road up the hill being extremely narrow, and covered deep with snow, horses are not able, or rather not cool and quiet enough, to pass along,

which oxen by more strength and patience can, though slowly, yet effectually perform.

They set forth early in the morning, each on his sledge, with a yoke of oxen. When they had ascended the hill, not a little terrified with the deep precipices that lay near their narrow path, they discovered nothing but spreading snows, whose immense and unexhausted stores continue undissolved through all ages. The sun shone exceedingly bright ; and the hill is raised so high, that no rain ever falls upon its head. No cloud or mists darkened the air ; and nothing was to be seen but blue skies and white lands. The dazzling glances of the sun-beams from the pure snows were so sharp and painful, that one of the company, of weaker eyes than the rest, complained that the suffering was too great to be endured ; and was apprehensive that it would have been fatal to him. Mr. Shower and his company passed over this plain of about two miles' extent on foot, and afterward descending the hill, they saw in the air below them a hovering fog : so it appeared ; but when they came down into it, they found it to be a plentiful shower of rain, which in the region whence they came never falls ; so that during some hours they had been above the watery clouds. After they had passed this mountain, they lodged in a little vale between the peaks of the hills, where they were alarmed in the night by the fall of a vast fragment of a rock ; an incident not

uncommon in that place ; and the next day they pursued their way by another of as difficult and sharp an ascent as the former : one of these they call Mount Splug, and the other St. Mark.

The passage over these Alps was accompanied with great labour, and not a little terror, by reason of the steep and rocky hills which the travellers ascended, through a narrow winding way, near deep and frightful precipices. This journey, however, was more desirable and entertaining to Mr. Shower and his friends than the sight of the most magnificent city in Italy. They were here amused and surprised with a curious observation of nature's wonders ; a great variety of towering peaks, and profound cavities, hanging abrupt rocks, and a constant and uniform sound of immense falls of waters, and the noise of interrupted torrents rushing down the sides of the hills in rude and unfashioned channels ; in short, innumerable scenes of terror and desolation conspired to form a perfect wilderness. But that which entertained them most was the contemplation of the origin of rivers, which at the bottom of the hills are made by the confluent streams of water, that from the melting treasures of snow on the top descend in various rills or torrents which are collected and joined in the valleys beneath. From the east side of these high mountains arise the Danube and the Rhine, and from the opposite the Rhone, which, besides many other of less note,

owe their origin to the snow-water that rushes down in distinct currents, which join below and are continually recruited with fresh stores. And because the snows dissolve in greater plenty by intense heat, these rivers are in summer full, and often overflow their banks; while in winter they are narrow, and near to the hills almost dry, their channels being defrauded of their supplies by melting snows.

Having passed these Alps, Mr. Shower and his fellow-travellers arrived at Morbegno, a fair town seated at the foot of the hills in the Valteline; which is the first considerable valley that opens itself on this side the mountains. It is long and narrow, and walled on each side with hills of great height, by the washings of which the soil is enriched, and becomes very fruitful. This country is subject to the Grisons, and governed by a civil Magistrate appointed by their authority. Hence he went to Choire, the capital city of that commonwealth; and thence he passed through some parts of Switzerland into Germany, and embarked on the Rhine for Strasburg.

That river in this place, which is so near its source, runs down with great rapidity; and without the help of sails or oars, the boat advanced with surprising swiftness. After they had stayed long enough at Strasburg to satisfy the curiosity of travellers, that they might pass down the Rhine to Amsterdam at leisure, and make what stay

they pleased at the great towns by the way, they resolved not to go in the common passage-boat, but to buy one for themselves; which project was soon put in execution. That done, they endeavoured to hire some native of the town, accustomed to the stream, that might sit in the vessel, and guide them down the Rhine to Manheim, in the Lower Palatinate; but the price demanded was so exorbitant, that Mr. Shower and his friends resolved they would embark without a guide hired at Strasburg, and take one, as they believed they might, for a more moderate reward at the next town or village they should see on either side of the river. In these views they one day departed near noon from Strasburg, being about six gentlemen and three servants, of whom a sufficient number were able to row; of which however there was little occasion, the Rhine at that place running with a swift stream; but to their admiration and disappointment, Mr. Shower and his friends could not discover one town or village on either side the river; but were obliged in the evening, not thinking it safe to advance farther without a guide, to fix their boat, and wait the return of day.

Early in the morning Mr. Shower and his company proceeded on their voyage; but they had not passed far, before they saw the river divide itself into two branches of equal breadth, which ran different ways. Here they were much per-

plexed ; and not being versed in the passage, they were at a great loss which stream to pursue. It happened that they guessed right, and came again into the channel, where the streams were re-united. A second time the tide was split, and then too they succeeded in their conjecture ; but at the third time they unhappily mistook, and chose the wrong current. Being caught in this error, they advanced not far before they perceived the stream run with great swiftness down a rocky declivity amidst a wood, where they expected often to perish by the bodies and great limbs of trees, that interrupted the boat, which at every turn was ready to upset. After they had passed the wood in this fright, they came into a wider water, and the river flowed with less rapidity. And now the travellers seemed to be delivered from their fears, and began to be at ease, as thinking the bitterness of death was over, when presently they descried a stone bridge over the river, with three or four arches ; and as they approached nearer, they were convinced that their greatest danger was yet to come ; for they manifestly discerned that the tilt of the boat, which was built of deals, had a roof too high for the arches, where, by reason of a full current, the space was too little to suffer the boat to pass through ; and, by consequence, that it must be certainly staved if they were obliged to go on to the bridge. Upon this they resolved, if possible, to row to the shore, to

avoid that imminent danger. Twice they used their utmost efforts to gain their point, but without success; being unable to cross the stream; which ran with such force, that it carried off the boat from land, notwithstanding all that the voyagers could do with their oars to prevent it.

By this time they came near the bridge, and all looked upon themselves as lost, when they discovered a gap between two trees on the banks, where they might thrust in their boat, if they could row it up to the side; and this being the only refuge left to save them from immediate drowning, they resolved once more to exert their whole strength to reach the shore in this place. While this was doing, and the rowers strained themselves for their lives, one of the company stood upon the keel of the boat, resolving to leap out into the river, if he found the rowers were unable to prevail. They strove with their utmost vigour to gain the land; but the tide again proved too strong for them, and the boat began to fall back; at which minute the person that stood at the keel, finding the vessel give ground, leaped with his greatest force towards the bank, and at the same time cast the rope of the boat into the river before him. Having done this, he found himself upon ground, and not above the waist in water; and immediately catching up the rope of the boat, drew it, by the help of the trees, with the company, safe to land.

As the travellers were before under the apprehensions of imminent and unavoidable death, excepting one, who was a good swimmer, their joy at their unexpected escape bore proportion to their danger. They all expressed their gratitude to the divine Being for their great deliverance; but none more than Mr. Shower, who upon this occasion acknowledged his thankfulness for so gracious a dispensation of Providence, in that pious and Christian manner which became his character. The company immediately sent for a carpenter to a small village adjoining, which was in the country of Baden, to take down the tilt or covering of deals, which was found to be near a foot higher than the roof of the arch was from the surface of the water. After the tilt was shortened, and made capable of passing through the arch of the bridge, they hired a guide to conduct them to Manheim, resolving no more to run so great a hazard as before they had done. From Manheim they passed down the Rhine, and visited all the great towns seated on the banks of that river, till they came, about June or July, to Amsterdam. Here the company parted, the greatest number embarking for England; while Mr. Shower stayed in Holland about two years longer.

Here the narrative ends, which Mr. Shower's worthy friend has obliged me with.

CHAPTER III.

I AM told by one that was long and intimately acquainted with Mr. Shower, that, after he had been thus visiting the neighbouring nations and churches for almost two years, he returned again into England, and was gladly re-admitted to his turn at the lecture in Exchange-alley; and presently made it to appear, that he had not (as too many) purchased his improvements in human knowledge and polite address, at the expense of a tender conscience and serious spirit; but seemed more raised above the world, the more he had seen of it.

Before he undertook the great and long journey, he had chosen to preach a farewell sermon on resignation, which was afterwards printed, from 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26: "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both his ark and his habitation: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." And when he was safely returned, his first sermon in that evening lecture was upon the vanity of the world, from Eccles. i. 8: "All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." Persons may please themselves beforehand with hopes of being greatly satisfied

when they have seen foreign courts and cities, but they find themselves disappointed. "All things are full of labour;" the mind feels some dissatisfaction, not because it would see more, but because it has seen so much, and met with so little worth the time and cost.

Some of Mr. Shower's friends have had a general account, that while he was in France he had the opportunity of discoursing with some of the Romish Clergy about the points in difference, which was managed with so much discretion, judgment, and good manners on his part, as gained him applause even from his adversaries, and was very much to the satisfaction of his friends; but the particular place and circumstances of this conference, I have not been able to get an account of, though I have much desired it.

Many remember, that he would often speak of his going to hear the sermons of the most celebrated Preachers among the Papists; and he observed some of them had a strange way of working up the passions of the hearers, especially in their discourses upon the sufferings of Christ; and that they might do it the more effectually, they would, in the midst of a very florid harangue, address themselves to Christ by way of a familiar dialogue, and take a small crucifix into their hands, and direct their discourse to it, as to Christ himself; and that with all the charms of pathetic eloquence and action, till the imaginations of the

people were all put into a flame, and the whole audience, by a kind of mechanism, dissolved in tears; and none more so, than those who at other times were the most vain and dissolute of them all.

In mentioning this, Mr. Shower would take occasion to lament the want of suitable affections to the blessed Redeemer in those to whom he is represented in the glass of the Gospel. What a pity it is, that the proper, rational, spiritual means of God's own institution should not work more powerfully upon the faith of Protestants, than these vain and superstitious inventions of men do upon the fancies of the poor deluded Papists!

Mr. Shower and his companions happened to be in France at that time when the French King began to break through the edict of Nantes, and other his most solemn engagements to his Protestant subjects. Those flourishing churches were then declining apace; most unjust encroachments were gradually made upon them; and it was manifest to them all a violent storm was coming. The Ministers of the famous church of Charenton thought it their duty to stir up themselves and their people to prepare to meet their God, and in the way of his judgments to wait on him. They kept many solemn days of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; and those days were spent in a very extraordinary manner. They met early in the morning, and continued till night; the numbers that attended were vastly great; and

both Ministers and people were under a very uncommon impression of godly sorrow and fear. On one of these occasions, when Mr. Shower was present, towards the close of the day, an eminent Minister came up into the pulpit, and in an affectionate discourse set before them the danger the ark of God was in among them; and in a very lively manner described the excellency of that pure and undefiled religion which they professed, and had so long enjoyed, and the dreadful loss they should sustain, if their church should be left desolate, and the daily oblation cease. The Minister's heart was so full, that he could proceed no further; there were floods of tears shed throughout the great assembly, and a universal outcry. After a considerable pause, the Minister resumed the awful subject; but was again interrupted by excess of sorrow. Upon which he turned his discourse into earnest prayer; and with wonderful enlargement and fervour wrestled with God for a lengthening out of their tranquillity; and then humbly confessing the sins of their churches, acknowledged the justice of God in whatsoever he should bring upon them; and by a very solemn resignation laid themselves and all their privileges at the foot of God; and proceeded most earnestly to beg, that if God saw it meet for his own honour to suffer the carcasses of that generation to fall in the wilderness, he would yet revive his work in the next, that it

might gloriously appear to their children; to which the whole congregation gave their assent by a loud Amen.

This account I had from Mr. Shower himself, with many particulars which I cannot recollect; and if I mistake not, he told me, this was one of the last of their public solemnities at Charenton. The court took umbrage at the numbers that resorted thither, and at the mighty concern which they discovered for their expiring religious liberties. And surely they had just reason for it; the thing they feared soon came upon them; and those famous churches still lie there in ruins. That generation on whom this great calamity first came is almost worn out, and another is risen up, waiting for the return of those earnest prayers that were so many years ago made for them. And as we hope God will appoint them a set time and remember them, and that the number of the years is drawing towards its accomplishment, it becomes all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, to join in prayer with them, that God would turn away his anger from his holy mountain, and cause his face to shine upon his sanctuary.

It is very evident, that his leisure time on his travels was not lost time. As it was a providential advantage of such a nature as few of his brethren have been favoured with, so he knew as well as any how to make a right use of it, both as a

gentleman, a scholar, and a Minister ; so that upon his return, the people to whom he preached, not only enjoyed the benefit of his further labours, but of the observations which he had made while absent from them.

But the court of England at that time being very much under the influence of the court of France, gave into measures agreeable to theirs. In France the Reformed churches were to be destroyed ; in England the Dissenting Protestants were to be run down and ruined, that they might be no longer capable of opposing the methods concerted between England and France, to establish Popery and arbitrary power.

Then it was that the vilest of men were encouraged to disturb the Dissenters in the worship of God, in those assemblies which their enemies thought fit to reproach with the term of “conventicles.”

For some time before, a Popish Prince ascended the throne ; and Popish counsels so far prevailed, that it was not safe for a Dissenting Minister to be seen in the streets of London. Many of them were thrown into common gaols ; their meetings, which for some years they held by connivance, were every where suppressed ; they chose in some places to meet in the night in small numbers, rather than be wholly destitute of the worship of God in that way of administration which they thought most conformable to his word.

The civil liberties of the people of England met with a violent shock at the same time. Some of the best blood that ever ran in English veins was then spilt as water upon the ground. Juries were packed; false witnesses suborned; corrupt Judges were upon the bench, and mercenary Lawyers were encouraged at the bar, with noisy insolence to hunt down the true friends of the English constitution.

In so deplorable a state of affairs, many Ministers, gentlemen, and others, thought fit to withdraw from their native country; such as Mr. Howe, Mr. Shower, Mr. Nathaniel Taylor, Sir Patience Ward, and that excellent citizen, Mr. Papillon, with many others. It leaves a reproach upon our nation, which will hardly be wiped off, that so excellent a person as the Rev. John Howe, whose unaffected piety, polite and profound learning, and most sweet, ingenuous, and gentle temper, entitled him to the high esteem of the greatest and best men in the land, of all persuasions,—that such a one at that time could not have a safe and quiet habitation in his native country.

These worthy persons retired to Holland. Mr. Howe chose to reside at Utrecht, whither several young gentlemen and students repaired to him, and had the advantage of his conversation and instructions, which some of them remembered with thankfulness to God to their dying day.

The States of Holland, our best neighbours and

friends in the times of our distress, showed a very particular respect to these English refugees, and gave them that double honour which they knew to be due to them.

Mr. Shower lived at Utrecht for some time, and then removed to Rotterdam, where he continued upwards of three years. He there found those reverend and very learned Ministers, Mr. Joseph Hill, and Mr. John Spademan, Pastors to the English church in that place. Here Mr. Shower and Mr. Spademan contracted a very intimate acquaintance and friendship, which never ceased to their dying day. Mr. Shower was chosen Evening Lecturer to the English church at Rotterdam, and had great reputation and success among them.

It was not long before he came to Rotterdam that God provided a suitable yoke-fellow for him,—Mrs. Elizabeth Falkener, niece to Mr. Papillon, in whose family she then was, a very agreeable companion to them, and a voluntary sharer with them in all the inconveniences of their exile. The character given her by Mr. Spademan, one that knew not how to give flattering titles, is sufficient to show how happy Mr. Shower was in that relation. They were married at Utrecht, Sept. 24th, 1687; they lived together not full four years, in which time they had three children. Ann, the eldest, was born at Rotterdam. She lived to be a great comfort to her father, and very happily mar-

ried to Mr. J. Warner. The second was a son born at London, and died within the month. He was baptized John by Mr. Nathaniel Taylor. The third was a daughter, named Hannah. She was baptized by Mr. Spademan. The mother and child both died in less than a month's time.

The providence of God opened a new and a wonderful scene in England, which had a great influence upon all the affairs of Europe. The Popish Prince then on the throne, being pushed on by the Jesuits, and encouraged by his success against the Duke of Monmouth and his party in the west, and the Duke of Argyle in the north, thought it time to advance more openly, and with greater spirit, in the long-concerted design of changing our excellent constitution into an unlimited monarchy, and re-establishing Popery upon the ruins of the Reformation.

The large and bold steps which that Prince took to accomplish his design justly alarmed the whole body of Protestants in the nation, who now seemed entirely to have laid aside their little party quarrels, and united themselves firmly, and exerted themselves vigorously, in defence of all that was dear to them.

The cries of a sinking nation prevailed with the Prince of Orange to attempt their rescue; which by the signal blessing of God he effected in a little time, in a manner so easy and gentle, as was matter of wonder to us all.

Several of the English exiles returned with him; and the rest stayed not long after him. Some, indeed, of the Dissenting Ministers had taken the opportunity which King James's declaration for liberty of conscience had given them, and returned to their places and people before the Revolution.

Mr. Shower continued in Holland the longest of them. It was above two years after the Revolution, before he left Rotterdam; and he did it in compliance with an invitation which he had from the excellent Mr. Howe, and the people that attended his ministry.

I shall give an account, drawn up by Mr. Shower himself, of that invitation and the consequences of it, which is as follows:—

REASONS OF MY RESOLUTION TO LEAVE ROTTERDAM UPON THE CALL OF MR. HOWE'S PEOPLE AT LONDON, JAN. 19TH, 1690.

UPON the removal of Mr. Williams, who was wont to preach to Mr. Howe's people in the afternoon, one or more of the members of that congregation wrote to me, that if I were not resolved to spend all my days out of England, that people (who had desired my coming among them a year and a half before, but being so lately settled here by the countenance of the Magistrates, I refused) were likely to choose me again. I replied to this effect, that "now there was liberty

granted to Dissenters by law, and I had been near three years at Rotterdam, I should not be unwilling upon a call of such a people to remove." My own and my wife's relations very earnestly desired our living among them, and several of the many acquaintance I have at London (having formerly preached above six years in the city) often pressed my return.

Upon this they chose me; and after Mr. Howe and Mr. Taylor had acquainted me with it, and others, I went over to preach among them, and discourse with my friends before I came to a resolution. Having preached four or five times, I declared my acceptance of their call, and promised, upon my return to Holland, to hasten the removal of my family with what convenient speed I might. The acceptance I found among them, and their unanimous choice and desire of my coming, gave me full satisfaction that I ought to return; and with that resolution I left them.

It pleased God to give me a speedy passage back to Rotterdam as I had to London. Within a few days after, by the death of Mr. Hodge at Amsterdam, a Minister was wanted there; several wrote to me, whether I were not capable of accepting a call to a pastoral charge, as supposing I was to have none at London, &c. I wrote back, that I might leave Mr. Howe's people for a pastoral charge, as Mr. Williams before me did, but was altogether adverse to come to Amster-

dam; and mentioned many reasons; and not long after, in consideration of the college there, and the greater auditory at London, or here, than at Amsterdam, did positively declare, if they chose me, I should not accept it, and therefore wished them not to let my name be further mentioned, &c.; for I would tarry here, if I removed not to London, rather than come to them; though the maintenance there was larger.

The Magistrates of Rotterdam, in discourse with some English merchants and others, encouraged them to request to make me a third Minister here, if a pastoral charge would detain me. When it was made known to me, I had little against it, but rather liked it, as having a real affection and gratitude to this people, who have been so kind to me, and so diligently attended my ministry for three years; and under the apprehension I had of my work at London, I could not judge otherwise but that a pastoral charge might alter my resolution of removing, and had it been offered before I went over, very probably might have kept me here.

I thereupon declared my willingness that they should go forward with that request, provided my London friends could be satisfied; and that I should need their assistance in order to it, which was promised. I wrote to Mr. Howe the plain matter of fact, and desired his thoughts and counsel, and offered Mr. Sprint to write under my

letter that evening, or desired he would by next post, which he did, and mentioned what I consented to in the Consistory.

Mr. Howe answered those letters with that which satisfied me that I ought to remove from hence to London. He said, "that my call was to joint-work with him in the labours of the Gospel; that he told my electors he would assist me as well as I him; we would never disagree about sharing the work, but studiously avoided the name of a lecturer or assistant." This of my joining with Mr. Howe in the work of a Pastor doth alter the case, and had I so apprehended it when I came back from London, should not have permitted any offer or attempt for my stay in Holland to have gone so far. Considering persons will therefore, I hope, excuse me.

But the great question into which all the other must resolve is, In what place I may be most useful?

Mr. Howe urges for London, that the constant auditory is double there to what it is at Rotterdam; and many occasions will offer of preaching to larger auditories, and to a great variety of people in other congregations of the city, besides excursions now and then into the country, where are no fixed Preachers.

He adds farther, that my coming to England now hath a tendency to greater serviceableness hereafter, if God spare me; whereas by accepting

a pastoral charge here, I should cut myself off from any such things, and shall be confined for the rest of my life to a handful in a foreign country, where are two others already. So that he saith I am bound by a former obligation to Christ to come to London, as being devoted to his service, and bound to be where I may most serve his interest. My promise to that people was a supervening obligation to what I was under before unto Christ our common Lord. It only binds as succedaneous to that, and suitable to it. I only promised them that which was my duty before. Therefore, saith he, break off farther parleys, and hasten to your charge, where you are greatly needed and earnestly desired.

Upon this letter, seriously considering the contents of it, I am clear in my own thoughts, that I ought to go; and my brother Spademan is of the same mind, and others to whom that letter hath been communicated.

Being come to a resolution about my removal, as to matter of conscience, (having been far from determining hastily, or without seeking to God for counsel, or waiting for it,) there are many things that might be added to confirm me in this choice.

Not only is it my native country that I remove to, and among my relations, but at London I preached constantly for above six years, and I hope to the spiritual good of several young per-

sons, who are now masters of families, and will rejoice to hear me again; and I may hope to be serviceable to such, rather than others. On the contrary, here at Rotterdam, many have been so offended at my last voyage to England, and more since by my intentions to remove, that they would hear me with prejudice, if I should stay, and get less good than otherwise; and several would think the addition of four or five hundred above the settlement of the other English Ministers, so great and wonderful a thing, and talk of it in such terms, as make me think some prejudice against me would arise, as covetous and worldly, and this might lessen the success of my ministry here; neither is it certain how well both my colleagues might be able to take it, should it come to be a real case.

I might mention the advantages of the converse and preaching that is at London, for my own improvement and proficiency in holy knowledge and usefulness; the advantages also for the education of my children, if God should further increase my family.

I might urge the looking after some concerns in the country, both of my own and my wife's, which are now neglected to our prejudice very considerably.

And that it is the opinion of my most approved and faithful friends in England, if I come not now, I am never likely to come at all.

That the more rational and considering persons of the English here will not at all be disoblighd by my removal; the number of families and persons is but small, compared with those at London, which I should disoblige by staying here.

Lastly. That which sways much with me, the judgment of so judicious and holy a person as Mr. Howe, that my duty is plain and indispensable to come; and that he and others there have in public and private put up many a prayer to God, before I was chosen and since, with respect to my coming among them. To which I have joined my own for direction, and now do for a blessing on my designed remove, and on the people I leave here; hoping that God will send another in my room, whom he will own and bless, or double his Spirit on those of my brethren in the ministry who shall continue. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. SHOWER being now returned to his native country, and joined with one of the greatest men, for learning, gifts, and graces, that our age has known, and in a congregation of the most exemplary and judicious Christians, met with very great respect and encouragement; and yet he

continued not above a year in that relation : his preaching was so acceptable in London, and drew so many hearers, that some of his friends thought two such Ministers as Mr. Howe and Mr. Shower (though their talents were of a different kind) were too much to fall to the share of one people.

And there being a neighbouring congregation now at a loss, their Minister, Mr. Samuel Borfett, being under great indisposition, and incapable of going on with his work, they agreed to invite Mr. Shower to take upon him the pastoral charge over them. This congregation was gathered by that holy, humble Minister, Mr. Edmund Calamy the younger, and consisted of grave and experienced Christians. Though it was not very numerous, they rightly judged, that if they could obtain so popular and profitable a Minister as Mr. Shower, they should, by the blessing of God, be both edified and multiplied.

This invitation cost Mr. Shower some trouble, and many thoughts of heart. Mr. Howe was loath to part with him ; and the honour he had for Mr. Howe made it very difficult for him to do any thing that would grieve him. Those of the congregation that had been so earnest and industrious to gain him from Rotterdam took it unkindly that he should entertain any thoughts of leaving them, especially so soon after he was come among them. In a word, their affection for him and his ministry grew in some of them a

little passionate under the apprehensions of losing him, as it generally does in cases of that nature.

However, Mr. Shower was satisfied that it was his duty to accept this call, in which it is meet we should think he was determined by the prospect he had of upholding and building up a congregation that laboured under some disadvantages. He accepted their call, on the 8th of May, 1691, and preached at their meeting-house in Curriers'-hall the Lord's day following.

They were not disappointed in the hopes they had of a growing auditory ; and the vacancy at Mr. Howe's was very well filled by Mr. Thomas Reynolds, then a young man, and newly come from Holland, who after some years was, by a call of the like nature, prevailed with to take the pastoral care of a congregation that had been under the ministry of the Rev. Thomas Kentish ; and how much to the public benefit, as well as their own, I need not say. It is well known in the city and country.

Mr. Shower's congregation was in a little time so much increased, that the place was too strait for them. They soon quitted Curriers'-hall, and removed to a much more capacious and convenient place in Jewin-street, where they continued several years, in which time he passed through a great variety of providential events, and, in the midst of them all, went on with his work in a very zealous,

lively manner, with great diligence and remarkable success.

The first year of his ministry with Mr. Borfett's people, he was bereaved of the desire of his eyes, a suitable affectionate yokefellow, of whom Mr. Spademan has made very honourable mention in a sermon preached on that sorrowful occasion. He takes notice of "that holy wisdom which did shine in her conduct, and which she discovered both in leaving her native land, to enjoy the advantages of living in a religious family to which she was related ; and in the choice that she made when she changed her condition. Neither the prejudices of the age, nor the advantage of other offers, could hinder her from accepting one as the partner of her life, from whom she had reason to expect the best assistance in the service of God, and in the concerns of her soul ; and this she did at a time when there was no prospect of that tranquillity which now encourageth persons of his character and profession."

That very pathetic discourse which Mr. Shower himself preached on this occasion, and which is published, about "mourning for the dead," will make it evident how desirous he was, not only that his sorrow might be moderated, but his zeal for God quickened, by this awakening providence. I can hardly forbear reciting some very tender and lively passages.

Within the space of two years, God made up

to him this great loss, by providing for him another suitable companion. On the 29th of December, 1692, he was married to Mrs. Constance White, daughter to an eminent citizen of London. She was a person of a very meek and sweet disposition, and of exemplary seriousness and entire devotedness to God. I have seldom heard of a person more universally loved and valued for these excellent qualifications than she was. He was very happy in so tender and good a relation for the space of about nine years; for so long they lived together. This second marriage God was pleased to bless with several children; the three eldest, two daughters and a son, died very young; the three next, Martha, Bartholomew, and John, survived their father; the seventh, named William, died at nurse: and on July 18th, 1701, at Clerkenwell, this excellent gentlewoman died in child-bed, leaving a very affectionate, sorrowful husband, in a vale of tears, but supported by divine consolations under so great a trial. And what contributed very much to the comfort of the remainder of his life was the gracious presence of God with him in his ministry, and the numerous spiritual offspring who owned him as their father in Christ. And he did not want comfort in the children that were born to him in his house; one by the first wife, of whom mention has been already made, and three by the second, whom he lived to see looking towards

heaven, and choosing their father's God for their God, and behaving themselves with great affection and duty to their surviving parent, and with wisdom, and love, and tenderness one towards another.

In the same year, 1701, in which so great a breach was made upon Mr. Shower, as to the comforts of relative life, the congregation still increasing, and consisting very much of persons that lived in the centre of the city, and were successful in trade, they determined to build a new meeting-house, whose situation might be more convenient, and its dimensions more proportionate to so numerous an auditory as they were now so grown up to. They fixed upon a place in the Old Jewry, and there provided themselves with a very large and well-built meeting-house. In this place, as in the former, God was with them, and increased them more and more. It was some years (as I take it) before they left Jewin-street, that Mr. Shower had the assistance of Mr. Timothy Rogers, who was very acceptable both in his preaching and conversation; and though God has been pleased greatly to afflict him, insomuch that he has been ready to look upon himself as a lamp despised, a broken vessel, and as a dead man out of mind; yet I believe his work is with the Lord, and his judgment with his God. He is not forgotten by his friends, who are glad to hear that he is yet bearing witness for God,

though in a more private station, justifying God in all the dispensations of his providence, and waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

I own myself very much his debtor for several hints I have received from him concerning Mr. Shower's life and ministry; and much rejoice in the distinct and affectionate remembrance he hath of the many comfortable years of Sabbaths that they spent together, both in Jewin-street and the Old Jewry. Mr. Shower would often speak with pleasure of their Jewin-street opportunities to the last. It is now, I think, about eight years ago, that I heard him bear his part in prayer, on the solemn occasion of the choice of a Minister in that congregation that then possessed the meeting-house in Jewin-street; and I remember very well, towards the end of his prayer, he broke out into a most affectionate, thankful acknowledgment of the many tokens he and his friends had received of the presence of God with them in that place. It had been to them a Bethel, the house of God, and the gate of heaven. He enlarged upon this with great propriety of expression, and with many tears, which moved and melted the whole assembly.

We may very well suppose, when he preached in Jewin-street, he was in the prime and vigour of his days: I take it, that he must be about his forty-fourth year when he removed into the Old

Jewry : and I believe there are few men, especially few Ministers, but who find they are turned their zenith by that time ; that though their judgments may be more mature, and their experience much improved, yet the readiness of invention, and the liveliness of their affections, will suffer some abatement.

There was little or no appearance of any such decay in Mr. Shower's ministerial performances for several years after his removal to the Old Jewry. He went on with his usual vigour and zeal, and had not only the most decent place of worship, but one of the most considerable assemblies about the city. His labours were peculiarly agreeable and useful to the better rank of young persons, which gave him the pleasing prospect that God would continue his favourable presence with them for a great while yet to come.

The most remarkable breach that was made upon Mr. Shower's constitution was by a malignant fever that seized him at Epsom, May 12th, 1706. This he has recorded as a very memorable providence ; and he observes, that he was taken the very day that the illustrious Duke of Marlborough fought and won the glorious battle of Ramilies. The distemper came on with so much violence, that it was not without great difficulty that he was brought to London the next day, and confined to his chamber, and for the most

part to his bed, being attended by four Physicians and two Surgeons for three weeks together. His life was very much desired, and yet often despaired of, by all about him; many hours of prayer were spent for him in his meeting-house for several days, which, he has recorded with thankfulness, God was pleased to answer. It was then very evident how great an interest he had in the esteem and affections of his brethren of every denomination; and of what moment and consequence they took his life to be to the interest of religion.

His recovery from this dangerous illness every body took for a very remarkable return of prayer. His people and his friends received him as one raised from the dead; and that which yet endeared him more to them all was, the good frame of spirit he was in during the time of his sickness. Of this I am witness. I lived at that time very near him, and was seldom a whole day absent from him. He always seemed to me to be in an humble, calm, comfortable, resigned frame. I never could discern that he was afraid of death with any amazement.

Upon his first appearance in the pulpit after this fit of sickness, he preached his thanksgiving sermon from Psalm cxvi. 8, 9: "For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of

the living." He began his discourse in this manner :—

“I know it is matter of thankfulness, as well as wonder, to many of you to see me here this day, and to hear me read this passage of Scripture; but is there any thing too hard for the Lord? Is there any thing too hard for prayer,—humble, earnest, united, continued prayer, in public and private?”

Towards the conclusion of that sermon, he expressed himself in such moving words as these :—“Let me exhort you to help me to be thankful; join with me in praising the name of the Lord: and here I find my thoughts multiply; the springs of passion are touched so many ways, it would be easier to enlarge than to contract. My friends, you that have mourned for me, and so importunately prayed for life, assist me to offer a sacrifice of praise to the God of my life: if you and I should fail in this, how soon may all that is past be lost, either for want of continued health, or by provoking God to leave me to the power of temptation, to do some foolish thing that may spoil my public usefulness, spoil the credit, and hinder the success, of my ministry for the future! What dependent creatures are all of us! How humbly should we walk with God! What need there is of faith and prayer every day for wisdom and grace to preserve us! I need your prayers now, as much, it may be, as

when my pulse was thought to be gone; when my eyes were closed; and those about me said, 'He is dead or dying!'"

And in the close of all:—"I acknowledge all God's judgments to be just, and his ways perfect; that in wisdom and very faithfulness he has afflicted me. I judge and condemn myself before the Lord, for personal, family, ministerial neglects and faults, which have been many, very many; and yet I do this with the hope of finding mercy to be faithful. Who is sufficient for a duty of such a relation as I am in to so great a number? If God give strength and a better heart, if we have a fresh anointing from above, the Psalmist's resolution of double diligence, which I know is my duty, shall be my endeavour; but this engagement will never be well performed without your earnest prayers to heaven for me, joined with mine for you from day to day."

In this good frame Mr. Shower returned to his work, and went on comfortably in it; but his health and strength were much impaired, and never fully recovered to his dying day. Towards the end of the year following, Dec. 7th, 1707, God tried him with another great affliction, in the death of his eldest daughter, who has been already mentioned, after he had married her to his satisfaction. She was seized in child-bed with the small-pox; the child lived but a few hours; the mother died in a few days; and both

were buried together in Mercers' chapel. This providence made a deep wound in Mr. Shower's tender spirit, and in his broken constitution.

And yet it was evident to those that attended his ministry, that God was still with him of a truth; and in the last part of his life he was not without some remarkable seals of it. He was very much pleased under his growing infirmities, that after his old and intimate colleague, Mr. Rogers, was no longer able to sustain the weight of that part of the work that he had for many years so well performed, God provided for them the assistance of a person of so much judgment, prudence, and goodness, as Mr. Bennet, in whom Mr. Shower often declared a very particular satisfaction. This gave him new spirits, and fresh courage; and many an excellent, lively sermon we had from him in this part of his life, not only in his own congregation, but in his turn on the Tuesday lecture at Salters'-hall.

He was, however, followed with frequent scorbutic indisposition, and a failure of appetite from year to year; in which he received some present relief by drinking Tunbridge waters. But after two or three months' time his ailment returned, which made his public work more difficult to him; yet he went on in it, and was observed to be very frequent in secret duty; and so much the more as he saw the day approaching.

In the year 1713, in the month of September,

he went to Epping, to the country house of his good friend Mr. Samuel Cotton; and there, on the fourteenth day of that month, was suddenly seized with a paralytic fit, which gave him a mighty shock; and after, with some difficulty, he was brought to his own house, he continued some weeks under it; but, by the blessing of God upon the good skill and tender care of his Physicians, he got pretty well over it, and was restored to his pulpit and people again.

But from that time there were more evident tokens of an universal decay; which nobody was more sensible of than himself; and, being of a tender spirit, he was apt to be discouraged, fearing that his labours were not so acceptable as formerly they had been. But I have heard him preach many an excellent sermon after that time; and the very natural infirmities of one that had spent so much time and strength in the work of the Lord have something venerable in them.

Thus he went on, sometimes a little revived, sometimes down again; and at length found it necessary to retire to Stoke-Newington, where he was much pleased with the frequent opportunities he had of conversing with the truly Honourable Sir John Hartopp, Baronet, and Mr. Nathanael Gould, with other good friends; nor was his company less acceptable to them.

One of the last sermons he preached was from Proverbs xvi. 33: "The lot is cast into the lap;

but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord :” which nice and intricate subject he discoursed on very judiciously and profitably, notwithstanding all the disadvantages he then laboured under.

I think the very last sermon of all was at his own place in the Old Jewry, from Psalm xcvi. 1 : “ The Lord reigneth ; let the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.” And having from the former subject, in two or three discourses, treated of the extent of the divine Providence to the most casual and contingent matters ; he proceeded from this text to show the great blessings of God’s providential government. This was preached on the 27th of March, 1715.

From that time till the month of June, he was taken off from the work that he had so long, and with so much delight, been employed in. He would often bemoan himself as a broken vessel ; he had often that complaint of Job in his mouth, “ My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.” Job xvii. 11. But he did not murmur ; he was desirous to hope, and quietly to wait for the salvation of God. He was seized on the Lord’s-day evening, June 12th, following, with a nervous asthma. It pressed very hard upon him ; he laboured and languished under it for a fortnight, with much patience, comfort, and resignation to the will of God. He spoke sweetly to those about him of the goodness of God. “ My God is good ; he is good to me.

Though I am very bad, God is very good." He met death not only without terror, but with desire; and on Tuesday the 28th of the same month, he breathed out his precious soul into the hands of the Lord Jesus.

For some time before he died, he expressed a great satisfaction that he had lived to see the Protestant succession take place, and so wise and good a Prince fill the throne. He had a great concern for the continued unity and flourishing state of his beloved people; and they on their part showed a just esteem for him, by the decent and honourable funeral they made for him at Highgate, on Tuesday, July 7th, where they paid their general and solemn attendance.

After I have given this narrative of the general course of Mr. Shower's conversation, and the end thereof, it would be needless to draw up his particular character. All I shall farther attempt is, to touch upon some of the principal lineaments that distinguished him so observably in his ministerial capacity.

The temper of his spirit was peculiarly tender and affectionate. Something of this he had by nature, and more by grace; he was a very compassionate Minister and friend, and could truly say, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" He was sensibly affected with the infirmities of his friends, whether bodily or spiritual. This tenderness of spirit

showed itself not only in his private conversation with his friends, but in his public ministrations. The lively affections of his soul would often discover themselves in many tears, both while he was pleading with God in prayer, and with men in preaching; and as flame kindles flame, he had a natural, not an artificial, way of moving the hearts of the people.

The talent in which he seemed to me to excel was, that spirit of prayer which God had poured upon him. He had a wonderful freedom of thought and sweetness of expression in prayer; and this, joined with a holy, humble importunity, enabled him to lead the congregation with great inward pleasure and advantage in that duty; especially on more public and solemn occasions.

In preaching, he distinguished himself by a choice of subjects that had something in them more directly suited to strike the consciences of sinners and the experience of the saints. If any difficulty or criticism lay before him in the explanation of the text, he would very handsomely solve it without any toil or ostentation, and then, by a few short hints, hasten to the application, where one might easily discern he longed to be; and would there generally have something surprisingly useful, instructive, and affecting. If in some parts of the discourse he seemed to be on the level, or in the valleys, you seldom failed of having him in the mount before he had done;

and not in a noisy, empty, formal way, but so as to recommend himself to the consciences of all in the sight of God.

In the administration of the Lord's supper, what was more peculiar to him was, that, among other proper means to lead the communicants into the true and spiritual part of that ordinance, he frequently recited a serious and scriptural form of self-dedication at the table of the Lord, containing the substance of that covenant of grace which they were then to renew and seal. In this ordinance he would often apply the promises of the covenant to the particular state and circumstances that he knew any of the people to be under, while he delivered the elements to them ; which was the method that eminently holy Mr. William Bagshaw constantly used ; as hath been observed in the preface to his funeral sermon.

The printed works of Mr. Shower have met with good acceptance among sober and serious people of all persuasions ; for as he was a peaceable Minister, that never affected to differ with any, or engage himself in disputes about matters in difference ; so his company, his preaching, and his writings, have been as much approved, and as little censured, as those of most Ministers in our age.

THE LIFE
OF
MRS. AGNES BEAUMONT,
OF EDWORTH.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF:

AND

PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT
BY THE REV. SAMUEL JAMES, 1766.

THE LIFE

OF

MRS. AGNES BEAUMONT.

SINCE I was first awakened, the Lord has been pleased to exercise me with many and great trials ; but, blessed be his gracious name, he hath caused all to work together for my advantage, and given me occasion to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." Psalm cxix. 71. O, how great has the kindness of the Lord been to me in afflictive dispensations ! never leaving me without his teachings, and comfortable presence, when in the midst of them ! I have often observed, the more trouble I have had, either from within or from without, the more I have found of God's presence, when I have been helped to keep close to him by frequent, fervent prayer ; and, O, how sweet is his presence to a poor soul, when surrounded with sorrows on every side !

For my part, I can say, with David, I have found trouble and sorrow : God only knows the sore temptations which I have waded through,

some outward, but more inward. O the fiery darts which have been shot from hell against me ! But, on the other hand, none knows but God, that sweet communion and consolation which he hath graciously offered me, in those hours of trouble. I have experienced such comfort and enlargement of heart, such fervent desires after Christ and his grace, as hath often made me thank God for trouble, because I found it drove me nearer to himself, and the throne of his grace. The Lord has made such seasons praying, heart-searching, and humbling times.

But there is one thing more especially, in which I have great cause to admire the goodness of God; namely, that before a trial came, I usually had strong consolation from above, insomuch that I have expected some trouble would ensue; and it hath often proved according to my thoughts. One scripture after another would run in my mind, for several days together, suggesting something that I was shortly to meet with, and prepare for, which has driven me into some secret corner or other, to cry to the Lord to be with me; and, O how has he in such seasons, as it were, taken me into the mount! My soul has been so raised and comforted, as if for awhile out of the body. Many times in a day has he sent me into his banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love; under which indulgence, being still kept in an humble frame, I never was denied the presence of

my Lord, when waiting at the throne of his grace, which rendered those seasons so delightful, that I longed for their return. It cannot be expressed what sweetness there is in his presence, and in one promise applied by his Spirit to the soul. It turns weeping into rejoicing ; as, blessed be God, I have experienced, in that great and fiery trial of my father's death, which I am now to relate.

About a quarter of a year before the Lord was pleased to remove my father, I had great and frequent enjoyments of God, and he was pleased to pour out a spirit of grace and of supplication upon me in a very wonderful manner, both day and night. There was scarcely a corner in the house, barns, stables, closes, or hedges, where I did not pour out my soul to God. And sometimes, ere I have risen from my knees, I have been as if in heaven, and as if my very heart would break with joy and consolation, which hath caused floods of tears, with admiration at the love of Christ, to such a great sinner as myself ! I have frequently wept and cried for joy ; at which times some who saw me would say, "Why do you grieve so, Agnes ? Are you minded to kill yourself with sorrow ?" when, indeed, mine were tears of joy, and not of grief, flowing from a sense of the love of Christ to my soul. Before the Lord brought this approaching trial, I had many scriptures, to show me I had some difficulty to meet with ; at which I sometimes thought my heart would sink ;

but presently I had one promise or another to bear me up. I concluded I had some hard thing to meet with from the following word, which frequently darted into my mind: "And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Psalm l. 15. Wherever I went, this scripture followed me. I concluded it must point at something future, because for the present I found more joy than trouble. Also that word was much on my thoughts: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not over ow thee," &c., Isaiah xliii. 2; with many others of the same nature, in which I saw contained both bitter and sweet.

I had also many dreams, some of which I believe were from God.* In some of them I have had fears of losing my life, or narrowl escaping with it; in others, that men ran after me to murder me. And, in some others, I have thought myself tried before a Judge and jury, and barely came off with my life. One of the dreams was very remarkable, which I told to a friend, who reminded me of it after my father's death. I thought there grew an old apple-tree in my father's yard full of fruit; and one night, about midnight, there came a sudden storm of

* "For God speaketh once, yea twice. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed," &c. Job xxxiii. 14, 15.

wind, and blew down this tree. At the sight hereof I was sorely troubled, running to it, as it lay on the ground, in order to lift it up, that it might grow again in its former place ; but, though I lifted, first with one arm and then with the other, with all my might, I could not so much as stir it ; therefore, leaving it turned up by the roots, I ran to my brother, and called his men ; but when they came, they could not replant it ; and it sorely grieved me, to think this tree should be blown down, while others were left standing.

Soon after this dream, there was a church-meeting at Gamlingay,* about a week before which I was much in prayer, especially for two things : the one, that the Lord would incline the heart of my father to let me go, which he sometimes refused, and, in those days, it was like death to me to be kept from such a meeting. I have found by experience, that to pray hard was the most successful method of obtaining my father's consent ; for when I have not thus prayed, I have found it very difficult to prevail. The other request was, that the Lord would go with me, and that I might enjoy his presence there, at his table, that, as in many times past, it might be a sealing ordinance to my soul, and that I might

* Gamlingay ; a place where some good people lived, who were members of Mr. Bunyan's church of Bedford, and to whom he sometimes went to administer the Lord's supper.

have such a sight of a bleeding and dying Saviour as might melt my heart, and enlarge it in love to his name.

The Lord was pleased to grant me my requests. Upon asking my father, indeed, he seemed unwilling at first ; but upon my pleading with him, and telling him that I would do all my work in the morning before I went out, and return home at night, I gained his consent. Friday being come, I prepared every thing ready to set out. My father inquired who carried me. I told him I thought Mr. Wilson, of Hitchin ; to which he said nothing.* I went to my brother's and waited, expecting to meet Mr. Wilson ; but he not coming, it cut me to the heart ; and, fearing I should not go, I burst into tears ; for my brother had told me that his horses were all at work, and that he could not spare one more than what he and my sister were to ride on ; and, it being the depth of winter, I could not walk thither.

Now I was afraid that all my prayers on this account were lost ; my way seemed to be hedged up with thorns. I waited with many a longing look, and with a sorrowful heart, under my sad disappointment. O, thought I, that the Lord would but put it into the heart of some person

* This Mr. Wilson was the first Pastor of the Baptist church at Hitchin, suffered imprisonment for the sake of the Gospel, and was grandfather to the late Rev. Samuel Wilson, of London.

to come and convey me thither. Thus I still waited, but with my heart full of fears. At last, quite unexpected, came Mr. Bunyan. The sight of him caused a mixture both of joy and of grief. I was glad to see him, but was afraid he would not be willing to take me up behind him; and how to ask him I knew not. At length I desired my brother to do it, which he did; but Mr. Bunyan answered, with some degree of roughness, "No; I will not carry her." These words were cutting indeed, and made me weep bitterly: my brother, perceiving my trouble, said, "If you do not carry her, you will break her heart:" but he made the same reply,* adding, "Your father will be grievous angry if I should." "I will venture that," said I. And thus, with much entreaty, he was prevailed on; and, O how glad was I to think I was going!

Soon after we set out, my father came to my brother's, and asked his men, who his daughter rode behind. They said, "Mr. Bunyan." Upon hearing this his anger was greatly enflamed; he ran down the close, thinking to overtake me and pull me off the horse; but we were gone out of his reach.

I had not ridden far, before my heart began to

* A certain person in the neighbourhood, one Mr. F., who is often referred to afterwards in this relation, had slandered Mr. Bunyan, and set her father against him, endeavouring to make his vile calumnies pass for truth.

be lifted up with pride, at the thoughts of riding behind this servant of the Lord, and was pleased if any looked after us. Indeed I thought myself very happy that day ; first, that it pleased God to make way for my going ; and then, that I should have the honour to ride behind Mr. Bunyan. My pride soon had a fall ; for, in coming to Gamlingay, we were met by a Clergyman who knew us both. He looked very hard at us as we rode along, and soon after raised a vile scandal upon us, though, blessed be God, it was false.*

The meeting began not long after we got thither ; and the Lord made it a sweet season to my soul indeed. O it was a feast of fat things ! I sat under his shadow with great delight ! When at the Lord's table, I found such a return of prayer, that I was scarcely able to bear up under it. I was, as it were, carried up to heaven, and had such a sight of the Saviour, as even broke my heart in pieces. O how I then longed to be with Christ ! How willingly would I have died in the place, and gone immediately to glory ! A sense of my sins, and of his dying love, made me love him, and long to be with him. I have often thought of his goodness, in his remarkable visit to my soul that day ; but he knew the temptations I was to meet with the very same night and a few days after. I have seen the bowels of

* This Clergyman usually preached at Edworth, the place where she dwelt.

his compassion towards me, in these fresh manifestations of his love before I was tried. This was infinite condescension indeed.

The meeting being ended, I began to think how I should get home ; for Mr. Bunyan was not to go by Edworth ; and having promised to return that night, I was filled with many fears lest I should break my word. I inquired of several persons if they went my way ; but no one could assist me except a young woman, who lived near a mile wide of my father's house. As the road was very dirty and deep, I was afraid to venture behind her ; but at last I did, and she set me down about a quarter of a mile from my home, from whence I hastened through the dirt, hoping to be there before my father was in bed ; but, on coming to the door, I found it locked ; and seeing no light my heart began to sink ; for I perceived what I was likely to meet with. However, I called to my father, who answered, " Who is there ? " To which I said, " It is I, father, come home wet and dirty ; pray let me in. " He replied, " Where you have been all day you may go at night ; " and with many such sayings he discovered great anger, because of my riding behind Mr. Bunyan, declaring that I should never come within his doors any more unless I would promise never to go after that man again. I stood at the chamber-window pleading to be let in : I begged, I cried ; but all in vain ; for instead of yielding to my im-

portunity, he bade me be gone from the window, or else he would rise, and put me out of the yard. I then stood silent awhile, and that thought pierced my mind,—how if I should come at last when the door is shut, and Christ should say unto me, “Depart!” Matt. xxv. 10—12.

At length, seeing my father refused to let me in, it was put into my heart to spend that night in prayer. I could, indeed, have gone to my brother’s, who lived about a quarter of a mile off, and where I might have proper accommodations. “No,” thought I, “into the barn I will go, and cry to heaven, that Jesus Christ would not shut me out at the last day; and that I may have some fresh discoveries of his love to my soul.” I did so; and, though naturally of a timorous temper, and many frightful things presented themselves to my mind, yet one scripture after another gave me encouragement. They were such as these:—“Pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly,” Matt. vi. 6; and, “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” Jer. xxxiii. 3. With many such good words was I comforted.

Being thus in the barn, in a very dark night, I was again assaulted by Satan; but, having received strength from the Lord and his word, I spake out, as I remember, saying, “Satan, my Father hath thee in a chain; thou canst not hurt

me." I then returned to the throne of grace : and, indeed, it was a blessed night to my soul, a night to be remembered to the end of my life, and I hope I shall never forget it ; it was surely a night of prayer, yea, and of praise too, when the Lord was pleased to keep all fears from my heart. Surely he was with me in a wonderful manner. O the heart-ravishing visits he gave me ! and that spirit of faith in prayer which he poured out upon me ! It froze very hard that night ; but I felt no cold, although the dirt was frozen on my shoes in the morning.

Whilst thus most delightfully engaged, that scripture came with mighty power on my soul : "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you." I Peter iv. 12. This word, "beloved," made such melody in my heart as is not to be expressed ; but the rest of those words occasioned some dread ; yet still that first word, "beloved," sounded louder than all the rest, and was much in my mind the whole night afterward. I saw that I was to meet with both bitter and sweet ; when I directed my cries to the Lord, to stand by and to strengthen me, which he graciously did with many a blessed promise, before the morning light ; and to be the "beloved of God" was my mercy, whatever difficulties I endured. Nevertheless, I began once to be a little dejected, being grieved to think that I should lose my father's love ; but this led me to the Lord, to

beg that I might not lose his love too ; and that good word was immediately given me, "The Father himself loveth you." John xvi. 27. "O blessed be God," thought I, "then it is enough ; do with me what seemeth thee good !"

When the morning light appeared, I peeped through the cracks of the barn, to watch my father's opening the door. Presently he came out and locked it after him, which I thought looked very dark, apprehending from hence, he was resolved I should not go in ; but still that word "beloved," &c., sounded in my heart. He soon came into the barn ; and seeing me in my riding-dress, made a stand, when I thus addressed him : "A good morning to you, father. I have had a cold night's lodging here ; but God has been good to me, else I should have had a worse." He said, it was no matter. I prayed him to let me go in, saying, "I hope, father, you are not angry with me ;" and kept following him about the yard, as he went to fodder the cows : notwithstanding this, he would not regard me ; but the more I entreated him, the more his anger rose against me, declaring, that I should never enter his house again, unless I would promise not to go to the meeting as long as he lived. I replied, "Father, my soul is of too much worth to do this. Can you stand in my stead, and answer for me at the great day ? If so, I will obey you in this demand, as I do in all other things." Yet I could not prevail.

At last, some of my brother's men came into the yard; and, seeing my case, at their return, reported, that their old master had shut Agnes out of doors. Upon hearing of this, my brother was greatly concerned, and came to my father, and endeavoured to prevail with him to be reconciled; but he grew more angry with him than with me, and at last would not hear him; on which my brother said, "Go home with me, sister, you will catch your death with cold:" but I refused, still hoping to be more successful in a farther application. I therefore continued following my father in the yard, crying and hanging about him, and saying, "Pray, father, let me go in," &c. I have since wondered how I durst be thus bold, my father being of a hasty temper, insomuch that his anger has often made me glad to get out of his sight; though, when his passion was over, few exceeded him in good nature.

At length, I began to be faint and cold, it being a very sharp morning. I was also grieved, for being the occasion of keeping my father in the cold so long; for he kept walking about the yard, and declared, that he would not go into the house while I was there. I therefore went to my brother's, and obtained some refreshment and warmth; then I retired and poured out my soul to God, who was pleased to continue on me a spirit of grace and of supplication, and forsook me not in this day of great trouble.

About noon I asked my sister to go with me to my father's, which she readily did ; and finding him in the house and the door locked, we went to the window. My sister said, " Now, father, I hope your anger is over, and you will let my sister come in ;" entreating him to be reconciled, while I burst out with many tears to see him so angry. I do not think fit to mention all that he said ; but among other things he protested, that he would not give me one penny so long as he lived ; no, nor when he died neither ; but that he would sooner leave his substance to a stranger than to me, &c. These expressions were cutting, and made my heart sink : thought I, " What will become of me ? To go to service and work hard is a new thing to me, who am very young ; what shall I do ?" Yet still I thought I had a good God to go to ; and that was then a very seasonable word, " When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." Psalm xxvii. 10.

Perceiving my sister's strong pleadings were vain, I desired my father to give me my Bible, if he would not please to let me in ; which he also refused, saying, that he was resolved I should not have a penny, nor a penny's worth, as long as he lived, &c. On this I went home with my sister, bitterly weeping, and withdrew into her chamber, where the Lord gave hopes of a better inheritance. O now I was willing to go to service and

to be stripped of all for Christ ! I saw that I had a better portion than that of silver or gold, and was enabled to believe I should never want.

My inclination was to go to my father once more ; and since he was so very angry both with my brother and sister, I concluded to go alone. Upon coming to the door, I found it partly open, the key being on the outside, and my father within. I pushed the door gently, and was about to enter ; which he perceiving, ran hastily to shut it ; and had I not instantly withdrawn, one of my legs had been between the door and the threshold. I would not be so uncivil to my father, as to lock him in his own house ; however, having this opportunity, I took the key, intending when he was gone out, to venture in and lie at his mercy. After a while he came, and looking behind the house, and seeing me standing in a narrow passage by a pond, laid hold on me, saying, “ Hussy ! give me the key quickly, or else I will throw you into the pond.” I immediately resigned it with silence and sadness.

It appearing in vain to contend, I went down the closes to a wood side, with sighs and groans, and a heart full of sorrow, when the scripture came again into my mind, “ Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” Jer. xxxiii. 3. The night was dark ; but I kept on to the wood, where I poured out my soul to God with many

tears. And that word also greatly comforted me : “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.” Psalm xxxiv. 15. I believed his ears were open to a poor disconsolate creature, such as myself, and that his heart was towards me. And that was a wonderful word at this time : “In all their affliction he was afflicted.” Isaiah lxiii. 9.*

I stayed in this place so long, as gave great concern to my brother and sister, who had sent one of their men to know whether my father had let me in ; and, understanding he had not, they went about seeking me, but they could not find me. At length, having spread my case before the Lord, I returned to my brother’s, fully determined not to yield to my father’s request, if I begged my bread about the streets. I was so strongly fixed in the resolution, that I thought nothing could move me ; yet, alas ! like Peter, I was a poor weak creature, as will presently be seen.

This was Saturday night. The next morning I said to my brother, “Let us call on my father as we go to the meeting ;” but, upon his telling me

* Who can forbear to remark the passages which were, all along, brought to the mind of this good woman ? How exceedingly pertinent and seasonable ! No parts of Scripture could be better adapted to her case and circumstances, throughout the whole of her troubles. May not this be esteemed one evidence of their being applied to her heart by the Spirit of the Lord ?

this would but further provoke him, we forbore. As we went along, he said, "Sister, you are now brought upon the stage to act for Christ: I pray God help you to bear your testimony for him. I would by no means have you consent to my father's terms." "No, brother," I replied, "I will sooner beg my bread from door to door." While I sat at the meeting, my mind was hurried; as no wonder, considering my case; but the service being ended, I again made the proposal to call on my father in our way home. We did so; and found him in the yard. Before we came quite to him, my brother repeated his admonition to me; though I thought I stood in no need of his counsel on this particular. He talked very mildly to my father, pleading with him to be reconciled; but perceiving he still retained his anger, I whispered and desired my brother to go home. "No," said he, "not without you." I said, "I will come presently;" on which he went, though, as he told me afterwards, with many fears lest I should comply; but I then thought I could as soon part with my life.

My brother being gone, I stood pleading with my father; and said, "Father, I will serve you in any thing that lies in my power. I only desire liberty to hear God's word on his own day: grant me this, and I ask no more. Father," continued I, "you cannot answer for my sins, or stand in my stead before God. I must look to the salva-

tion of my own soul," &c. He replied, if I would promise never to go to a meeting as long as he lived, I should then go into the house, and he would provide for me as his own child ; if not, I should never have one farthing from him. "Father," said I, "my soul is of more worth than so. I dare not make you such a promise." Upon this his anger was greatly enkindled, and he bade me be gone, for he was resolved what to do ; "therefore promise me, that you will never go to the meeting again, and I will give you the key ;" repeating these words several times, holding it out to me, and urging me to promise, and I as often refusing, till at last his wrath increased. "What do you say ? If you now refuse to comply, you shall never be offered it more ; and I am determined you shall never come within my doors again as long as I live." While I thus stood crying by him, he repeated the same expressions : "What do you say, hussey ? Will you promise or not ?" Being thus urged, at last I answered, "Well, father, I will promise you never to go to a meeting again as long as you live, without your consent." Hereupon he gave me the key, and I went into the house.

But, O ! soon after I had entered the door, that awful scripture was brought to my mind : "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. x. 33. Also, "He that loveth father or

mother more than me is not worthy of me." Matt. x. 37. "O!" thought I, "what will become of me? What have I done this night!" I was so filled with terror, that I was going to run out of the house again; but I thought this would not alter what I had done. Now, alas! all my comforts were gone, and, in their room, nothing but grief, and guilt, and rendings of conscience! In this instance I saw what all my resolutions were come to; even nothing. This was Lord's-day night; and a black night it was to me.

In a little time my father came in and behaved with affection: he bade me get him some supper; which I did. He also told me to come and eat with him; but it was a bitter supper to me. My brother's heart ached when he saw I did not follow him, fearing I should promise; and not coming to his house, was ready to conclude I had done so. But no tongue can express what a doleful condition I was in. I hardly durst look up to God for mercy. Now I thought I must hear the word no more. What good would it do me, if my father could give me his house full of silver and gold? Thus I went about reflecting on my condition, and sorrowing till almost spent with my grief.

On Monday I withdrew into the barn, to pray and give vent to my sorrow; when, as I stood sighing, with my hand inclined to the wall, and crying out, "Lord, what shall I do?" those words

surprised me : " There shall be a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. x. 13. " Lord," thought I, " what way wilt thou make for my escape ? Wilt thou make my father willing to let me go to thine ordinances ? If thou dost, still, what a wretch was I thus to deny Christ !" In the evening, as we were sitting by the fire, my father asked me what was the matter. I burst into tears, saying, " O father, I am distressed at the thoughts of my promise ; not to go to a meeting again without your consent." He was so moved, that he wept like a child, bidding me not let that trouble me, for we should not disagree ; at which I was a little comforted, and said, " Pray, father, forgive me wherein I have been undutiful to you." He then told me with tears, how much he was troubled for me that night he shut me out of doors, insomuch that he could not sleep ; adding, it was my riding behind John Bunyan that made him so angry.*

The greatest part of the next day, being Tuesday, I spent in prayer and weeping, with bitter

* Some evil-minded men of the town, (as hinted before,) especially Mr. F., had set her father against Mr. Bunyan ; for in time past he had heard him preach, and had been much affected under the word : he would pray and frequently go to the meeting. Yea, and when his daughter was first under spiritual concern, he had very great awakenings himself ; and would say to some of the neighbours, " My daughter can scarcely eat, drink, or sleep ; and I have lived these threescore years, and have hardly ever thought of my soul," &c.

lamentations, humbling myself before the Lord for what I had done, and begging that I might be kept by his grace and Spirit from denying him and his ways for the future. Before night, he brought me out of this horrible pit, and set my feet upon a rock, enabling me to believe the forgiveness of all my sins, by sealing many precious promises home on my soul. I could now look back with comfort on the night that I spent in the barn; the sweet relish of that blessed word "beloved" returned, and I believed that Jesus Christ was the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and that scripture was much in my mind, "He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." Job v. 19. Also, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut. xxxiii. 27.

My father was as well as usual this day, and ate his dinner as heartily as ever I knew him: after supper he smoked a pipe, and went to bed seemingly in perfect health. But while I was by his bed-side, laying his clothes on him, those words ran through my mind, "The end is come." Amos viii. 2. I could not think what to make of these words, they seemed so very mysterious to me.

As soon, therefore, as I quitted the room, I went to the throne of grace, where my heart was wonderfully drawn forth, especially that the Lord would show mercy to my father, and save his

soul; for which I was so importunate, that I could not tell how to leave pleading; and still that word continued on my mind, "The end is come." Another thing I entreated of the Lord was, that he would stand by me and be with me, in whatever trouble I had to meet with; little thinking what was coming upon me that night and the week following.

After this I went to bed, thinking on the freedom which God had given me in prayer; but had not slept long before I heard a mournful noise, which at first I apprehended had been in the yard, but soon perceived it to come from my father. I immediately arose, put on a few clothes, ran and lighted a candle, and, coming to him, found him sitting upright in his bed, crying to the Lord for mercy, saying, "Lord, have mercy on me; for I am a miserable sinner! Lord Jesus, wash me in thy precious blood!" &c. I stood trembling to hear him in such distress, and to see him look so pale, and inquired how long he had been ill. He said, "I was struck with a pain at my heart in my sleep, and shall die presently." I then kneeled down by the bed-side, and (which I had never done before) prayed with him, in which he seemed to join very earnestly.

This done, I said, "Father, I will go and call somebody; for I dare not stay with you alone." He replied, "You shall not go out at this time of night: do not be afraid," still crying aloud for

mercy. Soon after, he said he would rise and put on his clothes himself. I ran and made a good fire, and got him something hot, hoping that it might relieve him. "O," said he, "I want mercy for my soul! Lord, show mercy to me; for I am a great sinner! If thou dost not show me mercy, I am miserable for ever!" "Father," said I, "there is mercy in Jesus Christ for sinners: the Lord help you to lay hold on it." "O," replied he, "I have been against you for seeking after Jesus Christ: the Lord forgive me, and lay not this sin to my charge!"

I desired him to drink something warm which I had for him; but his trying to drink brought on a violent retching, and he changed black in the face. I stood by, holding his head, and he leaning upon me with all his weight. Dreadful time indeed! If I left him, I was afraid he would fall into the fire; and if I stood by him, he would die in my arms, and no one person near us! What shall I do? Lord, help me. Then came that scripture: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; I am thy God: I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee," &c. Isaiah xli. 10.

By this time my father revived again out of his fit of fainting, for I think he did swoon away: he repeated his cries, as before, "Lord, have mercy upon me, for I am a sinful man! Lord, spare me one week more! one day more!"

Piercing words to me ! After he had sat awhile, he felt an uneasiness in his bowels, and called for a candle to go into the other room. I saw him stagger as he went over the threshold ; soon followed him and found him on the floor, which occasioned me to scream out, " Father ! father ! " putting my hands under his arms, lifting with all my might, first by one arm, then by another, crying and striving till my strength was quite spent.

I found all my attempts to raise him in vain ; and therefore, though not without fears of rogues who I thought waited at the door, ran, like some distracted creature, through deep snows, to my brother's, where I stood crying in a deplorable manner. The family being alarmed, my brother came immediately with two of his men, and found our father risen from the ground, and laid upon the bed. My brother spake to him ; but he could not answer, except one word or two. On my return, they desired me not to go into the room, saying he was just departing. O dismal night ! Had not the Lord wonderfully supported me, I must have died too of the fears and frights which I met with !

My brother's man soon came out, and said he was departed. Melancholy tidings ! But in the midst of my trouble I had a secret hope that he was gone to heaven ; nevertheless, I sat crying bitterly, to think what a sudden and surprising change death had made on my father, who went

to bed well, and was in eternity by midnight! I said in my heart, "Lord, give me one seal more that I shall go to heaven when death shall make this change on me." Then that word came directly: "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads," &c. Isaiah xxxv. 10. O, I longed to be gone to heaven! Thought I, "They are singing whilst I am sorrowing! 'O that I had the wings of a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest!'"

Quickly after, my brother called in some neighbours; among whom came Mr. F., my bitter enemy, who inquired if my father was dead. Somebody replied, "Yes, he is." He then said, "It is no more than what I looked for;" though no notice was taken of those words till afterwards. This was Tuesday after the Friday night that I lay in the barn, when that scripture was so frequently in my mind, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you." I thought now I had met with fiery trials indeed, not knowing that I had as bad or worse to come; which I shall now proceed to relate.

The day that my father died, the Clergyman who met Mr. Bunyan and me at Gamlingay town's end, reported at Baldock fair, that we had been criminally conversant together; which vile report I heard the next day; but that scripture came

with much sweetness, and bore me up: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." Matt. v. 11.

On Thursday we had agreed to bury my father, and accordingly invited our relations and friends to the funeral. But, on the Wednesday night, Mr. F. sent for my brother, and asked him whether he thought my father died a natural death; a question which amazed my brother, who readily answered in the affirmative, "Yes, I know he died a natural death." Mr. F. replied, "But I believe he did not; and I have had my horse out of the stable twice to-day to fetch a Surgeon, but considered that you are an officer of the parish, therefore leave it to you: pray see and do your office." Upon my brother's asking him, how he thought my father came to his end, if he did not die a natural death, he answered, "I believe your sister has poisoned him."

My brother returned with a heavy heart, not knowing but I might lose my life. On acquainting my sister, she was likewise distressed; when they sent for a godly neighbour to pray with and counsel them, who advised them to keep it from me that night; but early in the morning my brother came and told me; to whom I immediately said, "O, brother, blessed be God for a clear conscience!" We deferred the funeral; and, sending for a Surgeon, told him the case, who

examined me how my father was before he went to bed, and what supper he ate, &c. I told him all the particulars; and when he had surveyed the corpse, he went to Mr. F. and told him, that he wondered how he could entertain such thoughts concerning me, assuring him there were no just grounds for his suspicion. Mr. F. replied, he verily believed it was so. The Surgeon perceiving that no arguments would convince him, told us we must have a Coroner and jury. I readily agreed to this proposal; saying, "Moreover, Sir, as my innocency is known to God, I would have it known to men; therefore pray be pleased to open my father." This he declined, saying, there was no need for it; but promised to meet the Coroner and jury the next day.

Now I had new work cut out; therefore went to the Lord and prayed that he would appear in this fiery trial. I saw my life lay at stake, as well as the name of God struck at; but that word was sent for my support and comfort, and it was a blessed one to my soul: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." Isaiah liv. 17. Also, "All that are incensed against thee shall be ashamed." Isaiah xlv. 24. Encouraged by these precious promises, we sent for the Coroner the next morning. Mr. F. hearing it, told my brother he would have him meet the Coroner and jury and agree it; "for," continued

he," it will be found petit treason, and your sister must be burned." "No, Sir," replied my brother, "we are not ashamed to let them come through." Upon hearing this, I said, "I will have them come through, if it costs me all that my father has left me." I did not know how far God might suffer this man and the devil to go. It also troubled me to think, that, in case I suffered, another as innocent as myself must suffer too; for Mr. F. reported that I poisoned my father, and Mr. Bunyan gave me the stuff to do it with; but the Lord knew our innocency in this affair, both in thought, word, and deed.

Whilst thus surrounded with straits and troubles, I must own that at times I had many carnal reasonings, though I knew myself clear. I thought, "Should God suffer my enemy to prevail to the taking away of my life, how shall I endure burning?" O the thoughts of burning were indeed terrible, and made my very heart to ache within me. But that scripture which I had often thought of before my father's death, came now into my mind: "When thou passest through the fire, I will be with thee," &c. Isaiah xliii. 2. I said in my heart, "Lord, thou knowest my innocence; therefore, if thou art pleased to suffer my enemies to take away life, yet, surely thou wilt be with me; thou hast been with me in all my trials hitherto, and I trust wilt not now leave me in the greatest of all." At last I was made to believe,

that if I did burn at a stake the Lord would give me his presence; and, in a solemn manner, resigned myself to his disposal, either for life or death.

That forenoon in which the Coroner was expected, some Christian friends from Gamlingay paid me a visit, and spent the time in prayer; and pleaded earnestly with the Lord on my behalf, that he would graciously appear for me, and glorify his name in my deliverance. This done, I retired, and was much encouraged in begging the divine presence this day, and that I might not have so much as a dejected countenance, or be in the least daunted before them. I thought, to stand before a company of men for the murder of my own father, though I knew my innocence, would make me sink, unless I had much of the Lord's presence to support me. I thought, "Should I appear dejected or daunted, people will conclude that I am guilty;" therefore I begged of God that he would carry me above the fears of men, devils, and death, and give me faith and courage to lift up my head before my accusers. Immediately that scripture darted into my mind: "The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." Job xvii. 9. Then I broke out, "Lord, thou knowest my heart and my hands are clear in this matter." This was such a suitable word, that I could hardly have had such another; and

the Lord made every tittle of it good before the sun went down, so that I was helped to look mine enemies in the face with boldness.

Presently word was brought that the Coroner and jury were come. I sat with some neighbours by the fire as they passed through the house into the room where my father lay; some of the jurymen came, and, taking me by the hand, with tears running down their cheeks, said, "Pray God be thy comfort: thou art as innocent as I am, I believe:" thus one and another spake to me, which I looked upon as a wonderful mercy, to find they believed me not guilty.

When the Coroner had viewed the corpse, he came to warm himself by the fire where I sat; and, looking steadfastly at me, he said, "Are you the daughter of the deceased?" I answered, "Yes." He replied, "Are you the person who was in the house alone with him when he was struck with death?" "Yes, Sir, I am she." He then shook his head, at which I feared his thoughts were evil towards me.

The jury also having taken their view, they went to dine at my brother's; after which they proceeded to business, and sent for me. As I was going, my heart went out much to the Lord, that he would stand by me. Then came those words, "Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed." Isaiah liv. 4. And before I came to my brother's house, my soul was made like the chariots of

Amminadab, being wonderfully supported, even above what I could ask or think.

When I got there, my brother sent for Mr. F., who not coming soon, he sent again : at last he came. Then the Coroner called the witnesses, being my brother's men, who were sworn. He asked them, whether they were present when my father died ; what words they heard him speak, &c. ; and when they had answered, he called Mr. F., and gave him his oath. " Come," said he, " as you are the occasion of our meeting together, we would know about this young woman's murdering her father, and on what grounds you accuse her." Mr. F., but in a confused manner, told the Coroner of the late difference between my father and me ; how I was shut out of doors, and that my father died but two nights after I was admitted. Nobody knew what to make of this strange preamble ; but I stood in the parlour amongst them, with my heart as full of comfort as it could hold, being raised above the fear of men or devils.

The Coroner said, " This is nothing to the matter in hand ; what have you to accuse this young woman with ?" To which Mr. F. replied little or nothing to the purpose, and, at the same time, returning cross answers, was directed to stand by. Then I was called. " Come, sweetheart," saith the Coroner, " tell us, where was you that night your father shut you out ?" I answered,

“Sir, I was in the barn all night.” “And was you there alone?” “Yes, Sir; I had nobody with me.” He shook his head, and proceeded: “Where did you go to the next morning?” “Sir, I stayed in the yard till nine or ten o’clock, entreating my father to let me come in; but he would not.”

At this he seemed concerned, and asked where I was the remaining part of the day. I said, “At my brother’s, and lay there the following night.” “When did your father let you come in?” “On the Lord’s-day evening.” “Was he well when you came in?” “Yes, Sir.” “How long did he live afterwards?” “Till Tuesday night, Sir.” “Was he well that day.” “Yes, Sir, as well as ever I saw him in my life, and he ate as hearty a dinner.” “In what manner was he taken, and at what time?” “Near midnight, complaining of a pain at his heart. I heard him groan, and made all haste to light a candle, and, when I came, I found him sitting up in his bed, and crying out of a pain in his heart; and he said he should presently die; which frightened me much, so that I could scarcely get on my clothes; when I made a fire, and my father rose and sat by it. I got him something warm, of which he drank a little; but, straining to vomit, he swooned away while I held his head, and could not leave him to call in assistance, fearing lest in my absence he should fall into the fire.”

The Coroner further proceeded: "Was there nobody in the house with you?" "No, Sir," I said, "I had none with me but God. At length my father came a little again to himself, and went into the other room, whither I soon followed him, and found him lying upon the floor; at which sight I screamed out in a most dismal manner: yet I tried to raise him up, but in vain; till at last, being almost spent, I ran to my brother's in a frightful condition."

Having given him this relation, the Coroner said, "Sweetheart, I have no more to say to you;" and then addressed himself to the jury, whose verdict being given, he turned himself to Mr. F., and said, "You, Sir, who have defamed this young woman in this public manner, endeavouring to take away her good name, yea, her life also if you could, ought to make it your business now to establish her reputation. She has met with enough in being alone with her father, when seized with death; you had no need to add to her affliction and sorrow; and if you were to give five hundred pounds, it would not make her amends."

He then came to me, and, taking me by the hand, said, "Sweetheart, do not be daunted. God will take care of thy preferment, and provide thee a husband, notwithstanding the malice of this man. I confess these are hard things for one so young as thou art to meet with; but thank God

for this deliverance, and never fear but he will take care of thee." Then, addressing myself to the Coroner and jury, I said, "Sirs, if you are not all satisfied, I am free my father should be opened: as my innocence is known to God, I would have it known to you also; for I am not afraid of life." "No," replied the Coroner, "we are satisfied: there is no need of having him opened. But bless God that the malice of this man broke out before thy father was buried."

The room was full of people, and great observation made of my looks and behaviour. Some gentlemen who were on the jury, as I was afterwards told, said that they should never forget with what a cheerful countenance I stood before them. I know not how I looked; but this I know, my heart was as full of peace and comfort as it could hold. The jurymen were all much concerned for me, and were observed to weep when the Coroner examined me. Indeed, I have abundant cause to bless God that they were deeply convinced of my innocence; and I have heard that some of them were so affected with my case, that they would long after speak of me with tears.

When the Coroner and company were gone, we sent again to our friends to invite them to the funeral, which was on Saturday night. I now thought my trials on this account were over, and that Mr. F. had vented all his malice; but was

mistaken ; for, seeing he could not take away my life, his next attempt was to deprive me of that substance my father had left me. Accordingly, he sent for my brother-in-law from my father's grave, and informed him how things were left in the will ; telling him that his wife was cut off with a shilling, but that he could put him in a way to come in for a share.*

This was a new trouble. My brother-in-law † threatened, if I would not resign part of what my father had left, he would begin a suit at law. Mr. F. prompted him on, saying, " Hang her ; do not let her go away with so much more than your wife," &c. And to law we were going ; to prevent which, and for the sake of peace, I satisfied my brother with a handsome present.

About a month after my father was buried, another report was spread at Biggleswade, that, now, Agnes Beaumont had confessed she poisoned her father, and was quite distracted. " Is it

* Mr. F. was an attorney, and made the will about three years before her father's death, at which time he put her father forward to give her more than her sister, because of a design he then had of marrying her ; but upon her going to the meetings and becoming religious, he turned to be her bitter enemy, was filled with implacable malice and hatred, and did all in his power to prejudice the mind of her father against her.

† The reader is desired to take notice, that this was not her own brother, who attended the meeting, and sympathized with her under her sufferings, as before related, but her sister's husband.

true?" said some. "Yes, it is true," said others. "I have heard the defaming of many. Report, say they, and we will report it." Jer. xx. 10.

But I was determined, if it pleased God to spare me till next market day, I would go and let them see I was not distracted; and accordingly went; and when the market was at the height, I showed myself among the people, which put a stop to their business for a time; for their eyes were upon me, while I walked through and through with this thought, "If there were a thousand more of you, I would lift up my head before you all." That day I was well in my soul, and therefore exceedingly cheerful. Many people came and spake to me, saying, "We now see that you are not distracted."

Some I saw cry, but some others laughed: "O," thought I, "mock on: there is a day coming that will clear up all." That was a wonderful scripture, "And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." Psalm xxxvii. 6.

After this, another report was raised, in a different part of the country, that Mr. Bunyan was a widower, and gave me counsel to poison my father, that he might marry me; which plot was agreed on, they said, as we went to Gamlingay. But this report rather occasioned mirth than mourning, because Mr. Bunyan, at the same time, had a good wife living.

“Now,” thought I, “surely Mr. F. has done with me:” but the next summer a fire broke out in the town. How it came to pass no one could tell; but Mr. F. soon found a person on whom to charge it; for he affirmed that it was I who set the house on fire; but, as the Lord knoweth, I knew nothing of this fire till the doleful cry reached my ears. This malicious slander was not much regarded.

Thus have I related both the good and evil things I have met with, in past dispensations of Providence, and have reason to wish it was as well with my soul now as then. And one mercy the Lord added to all the rest, which I cannot but mention; namely, that he kept me from prejudice against Mr. F.; for, notwithstanding he had so greatly injured me, I was helped to cry to the Lord, and that with many tears, for mercy on his soul. I can truly say that I earnestly longed after his salvation, and begged of God to forgive him, whatever he had said or done to my hurt.*

AGNES BEAUMONT.

N. B. Mrs. Beaumont survived these trials many years, and was twice married; her last husband's name was Story, a person of considerable

* A most excellent spirit, which every Christian should aim at, being perfectly agreeable both to the precept and pattern of our great Lord and Master. See Matt. v. 44, and Luke xxiii. 34.

property and of great seriousness. She died at Highgate, November 28th, 1720, aged sixty-eight years. Her remains, by her order, were brought to Hitchin; where they lie interred in the Baptist burying-ground, and her funeral discourse was preached by the Rev. Mr. Needham, from 2 Cor. iv. 17: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

THE LIFE

THE REV. SAMUEL NEWELL,

AMERICAN MISSIONARY.

THE LIFE

THE REV. SAMUEL NEWELL.

SAMUEL NEWELL was born at Durham, Cumberland county, Maine, July 24th, 1784. His parents were both natives of Newton, Mass. His father, Ebenezer Newell, was married at Newton, to Mary Richards, about the year 1767. They had seven sons and two daughters. The father spent the greater part of his life in the instruction of youth. He is represented to have been a man of great firmness and integrity, but somewhat reserved in his manners. The mother, with a disposition naturally amiable, an education superior to that of most among whom she lived, and an ardent, active piety, lived beloved, and died lamented, by an extensive circle of acquaintances.

Of the nine children, Samuel was the youngest but one. He was about two years and a half old when his mother died ; an event which, he said some months before he sailed to India,

he could distinctly remember. At the age of ten, he became a destitute orphan. When about fourteen years of age, he conceived a desire to see something more of the world ; and, accordingly, having obtained the consent of his friends, he filled his pockets with provisions, and set out on foot for Portland, distant from Durham about twenty-six miles. He arrived at Portland a stranger to every body, and was much amused by the new objects which struck his eye. His attention was particularly attracted by the vessels in the harbour ; and, although he had never seen a ship before, he had little difficulty in deciding what was the object of those "odd machines." Curiosity led him to inspect them more closely ; and, while thus engaged, a Captain of one of the vessels observed him, and was struck with his appearance. "What is your name, my boy?" Samuel made a civil reply. "What do you want?" was of course the next question. Samuel told him he had come to "seek his fortune." "Well," said the Captain, "I shall sail to-morrow for Boston: how would you like to try your luck with me?" Samuel was delighted with the idea of so romantic an adventure as this then appeared to him, and readily assented to the proposal. On arriving in Boston, the Captain happened to meet Judge Lowel, father of the Rev. Dr. Lowel of Boston, who was wishing to obtain a boy to live in his family. The Captain named to him young

Newell ; and being pleased with Samuel's appearance, he took him home to live with him in Roxbury. Judge Lowel proved to Newell a faithful friend, and continued his patron until his death, which happened in May, 1802.

Some time in 1800, Samuel went to live in the family of Mr. Smith, of Roxbury, who was to give him three months' schooling in a year. Mr. Smith soon perceived that Samuel was more inclined to get a book and read, than he was to work. If he sent him to the barn to feed the cattle, and went out afterwards to see if he did his work faithfully, he often found him on the hay-mow studying. If he sent him to cut wood, he often found him sitting on the wood-pile, reading a book. Mr. Smith tried to convince him that he must leave this course of living, and work more faithfully ; but it was all in vain.

In 1801 Mr. Smith sent Samuel to the academy in Roxbury, under the instruction of Dr. Nathanael S. Prentiss. He could then scarcely write his name, but could read very well. Having attended the school about two weeks, he one night stopped till all the scholars had gone, and then came to his Teacher with the question : " Do you think it possible for me to obtain an education ? " He was told it was possible, but it would be well to wait a week or two, and think of the subject. At the expiration of the time specified, he stopped again after school, and said, he had concluded to

try to get an education. His Teacher showed him the greatness of the work ; and then asked him if he was resolved to persevere and go through every difficulty. He answered, "I am resolved to try ; for I cannot bear the idea of living and dying in ignorance." He seems at this time to have been urged on by an ardent desire to obtain an education, without reference to any particular profession.

Having a few cents, he obtained a Latin Grammar, but he soon became discouraged at the very appearance of the book. One day he said to his Teacher, "I am discouraged, and believe I shall give up the idea of getting an education." His Teacher simply reminded him of his resolution ; and he was never afterwards known to think of giving up his object.

While studying the Greek Testament, he frequently went to hear John Murray, the Universalist Preacher ; and would afterwards be found making inquiries into the meaning of certain passages in the Bible. He was often prying into religious subjects ; and would ask questions of a theological nature, till his Teacher would tell him, that was no time nor place to study theology. Says his Teacher, "I was obliged to oppose him on these subjects, and tell him to let them alone, and attend to the idiom of the Greek language ; but he would not be stopped ; he persevered in his theological questions."

At an evening party in Roxbury, soon after Samuel began to study, the conversation turned upon young Newell. Some of the most literary men in Roxbury were present. Mr. Smith observed, "Samuel is a good honest boy; but he tries to read and study so much, that he is good for nothing else." His Teacher spoke well of him as a scholar; a paper was at once started, and money enough subscribed to defray the expense of his board while fitting for College.

Having spent two years at the academy in Roxbury, he entered as Freshman in Harvard College, in the autumn of 1803. Soon after he entered College he appeared to be serious; he often attended Dr. Stillman's meeting in Boston; but whether he indulged a hope at that time, is not known. However, he joined Dr. Porter's church in Roxbury, October 14th, 1804. He entered College as a Regent's Freshman; that is, he was to ring the bell, &c., for which he received his board and tuition. His character as a scholar was good; and at his graduation he was appointed to a forensic dispute. By teaching school part of the time, and by various services while at College, he defrayed most of the expense of his education. He borrowed a small sum, but paid it after he left College.

Towards the latter part of his collegiate course, his mind was very deeply affected on religious

subjects: he felt that he had done wrong in making a profession; and for some time he was in such darkness, as to absent himself from the communion. At length, however, he obtained peace of mind.

After leaving College, Mr. Newell spent the following winter in Roxbury, as an assistant to his former Teacher; and then went to take charge of an academy in Lynn, Mass. Here he intended to remain several years; but Providence had otherwise ordained, and he entered the seminary at Andover, in the autumn of 1809, in the class with Hall, Judson, and Nott. It was here in the company of these men, with Mills and others, that he decided upon the life of a Missionary. He left the seminary in 1810, and afterwards preached for some time in Rowley, near Newburyport, Mass.

In October, 1810, he was first introduced to Miss Harriet Atwood of Haverhill, Mass., a very devoted young lady, at that time seventeen years of age. A few months afterwards, Mr. Newell proposed to her to accompany him, as the partner in his Missionary labours. The anxiety and distress which this proposal occasioned were very severe; but after much deliberation, she decided to accompany him; and on the 9th of February, 1812, they were married.

On the 19th of the same month, Mr. and Mrs. Newell, with Mr. and Mrs. Judson, sailed from

Salem for Calcutta, and arrived on the 17th of June. They were immediately invited to Serampore, about fifteen miles up the river, by the Baptist Missionaries, with whom they remained four or five weeks. While there, Mr Newell wrote the following letter to Dr. Prentiss, of Roxbury, his former Teacher.

“SERAMPORE, *July 14th*, 1812.

“DEAR SIR,

“THE interest you have always taken in my welfare, and in my plans and pursuits in life, and particularly since I have devoted myself to the work of the ministry, leaves me no room to doubt, but that a letter from this distant land would be interesting and acceptable to you. While I am writing to you, I cannot but go back in thought to the year 1801, when you found me, a poor, ignorant, and friendless boy; and I cannot but acknowledge again, as I have often done, that the encouragement and friendly aid which I then received from you was that which, under the providence of God, gave a new turn to all the succeeding events of my life. To you, probably, as the instrument of God, it is owing that I am now a Minister of Christ in heathen lands, and not a day-labourer in America. How wonderful are the dispensations of Providence! Permit me, dear Sir, to renew my professions of gratitude for all the kindness you have shown me. It is with

sentiments of real pleasure that I recollect the continued and increasing friendship that has subsisted, and I hope still subsists, between us. I hope and trust, it is built on a foundation that will render it perpetual, on those feelings which are peculiar to such as have felt the bitterness of sin, and have found relief only from the Saviour's blood. If so, though we may meet no more on earth, yet we shall meet in a better world, where it will only increase our joy, that we have been separated for a few days on earth."

Being ordered by the Bengal Government to leave the country, Mr. and Mrs. Newell sailed for the Isle of France, (a small island in the Indian ocean, east of Madagascar, and under the British dominion,) August 4th, 1812. By contrary winds and bad weather, they were driven about in the bay of Bengal without making much progress during the whole of that month. About the 27th of the month, it was discovered that the vessel had sprung a leak; and on the 30th, the leak had increased to such an alarming degree, as to render their situation extremely perilous. A consultation of the officers was called, and it was determined to put about immediately, and make the nearest port, which was Coringa, a small town on the Coromandel coast, about five hundred miles from Calcutta. They arrived safe in port, Saturday, September 5th. After a fort-

night's detention, they re-embarked ; and on the 8th of October, Mrs. Newell became the mother of a daughter. In consequence of a severe storm of wind and rain, the child took cold, and, on the evening of the fifth day, expired in its mother's arms. The next day, they buried it in the ocean. On the 31st of October, they came to anchor in the harbour of Port Louis, the capital of the Isle of France. Mrs. Newell was now much reduced by consumption. Every effort was made for the restoration of her health ; but in vain. She died on Monday, November 30th, 1812, aged nineteen years. In writing to her mother, giving an account of her death, Mr. Newell says, " Come then, and let us mingle our griefs and weep together ; for she was dear to us both ; and she too is gone. Yes, Harriet your lovely daughter is gone, and you will see her face no more ! My own dear Harriet, the wife of my youth, and the desire of my eyes, has bidden me a last farewell, and left me to mourn and weep. Yes, she is gone. I wiped the cold sweat of death from her pale, emaciated face, while we travelled together down to the entrance of the dark valley. There she took her upward flight, and ascended to the mansions of the blessed ! O Harriet ! my heart bleeds afresh at the sound of thy name ; and yet I love to repeat it, and to dwell upon the sound. Thy last sigh tore my heart asunder, and dissolved the charm which tied me to the earth "

Mr. Newell remained at the Isle of France about three months after the departure of his beloved companion to her heavenly rest. On the 24th of February, 1813, he embarked for Ceylon; whence, after a year spent in doubt and uncertainty as to his future movements, he sailed for Bombay, and joined his Missionary brethren, Hall and Nott, March 7th, 1814. There being a prospect that he might here pursue the objects of his Mission without interruption, he immediately commenced the study of the Mahratta, which is the vernacular language of Bombay. In September of the following year, Mr. Nott was compelled by the state of his health to leave the Mission; and Messrs. Hall and Newell were left alone, the only Protestant Missionaries to the millions of that region, with the exception of a single Armenian brother at Surat. In November, 1816, Mr. Bardwell and his wife joined the Mission, and were received with great joy.

On the morning of March 26th, 1818, Mr. Newell was married to Miss Philomela Thurston, who went out with Messrs. Graves and Nichols in 1817, and arrived in Bombay on the 23d of February following.

Mr. Newell continued a faithful Missionary in Bombay until his death. He was seized with the epidemic, spasmodic cholera on the morning of May 29th, 1821, and died at one o'clock the next morning, aged nearly thirty-seven, after seven

years' residence in Bombay. The following account of his sickness and death is contained in a joint letter of the Missionaries at that station :—

“What shall we say? Our dear brother Newell is no more! On the 30th of May, at one o'clock, A.M., he breathed out his soul, we trust, in the arms of his Saviour. His disease was the cholera, which has raged awfully in this region for some time past. This dreadful disease, within four years, has swept over India, Burmah, and the Asiatic Islands, and hurried millions to the tomb. The scythe of death is sweeping all around us. From sixty to a hundred are dying daily in Bombay. On Monday evening, May 28th, Mr. Newell was somewhat indisposed, and his rest was disturbed that night. He was worse on Tuesday morning; but it was not till nine or ten o'clock that there was any apprehension that it was the cholera. At that time, the disease had made so much progress, that no medical treatment could avail. The victory of the disease was so rapid and complete, that his last hours were quiet, and he sunk into the arms of death without a struggle or a groan. Brother Newell's remains were deposited in the English burying-ground, on the afternoon of Wednesday, May 30th. In his sickness, his head was early affected. He made but a single remark, by which it appears that he knew what his disease was. When asked by his agonized wife, if he could not bid her farewell, he answered

by shaking his head, and affectionately pressing her hand."

The following character of Mr. Newell is contained in the Report of the American Board for 1822:—"As a Missionary, Mr. Newell was distinguished by great tenderness of feeling, uncommon modesty, and a low estimate of his own attainments. The woful condition of the Heathen oppressed him much; and a view of the magnitude and responsibility of the work in which he was employed, weighed heavily upon him. Though generally enjoying comfortable health, he had many presentiments, as his letters testify, that he should continue but a little while in his allotted station. But whatever might be the divine will concerning himself, and the termination of his labours, he earnestly desired the prosperity of the Mission, the triumphs of divine truth, and the exaltation of his Redeemer."

END OF VOLUME IV.

