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THE
AFRICAN SERVANT.

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An authentic narrative.

DURING a residence of some years' continuance in the neighbourhood of the sea, an officer in the navy called upon me, and stated that he had just taken a lodging in the parish for his wife and children; and, that he had an African, whom he had kept three years in his service. 'The lad is a handy fellow,' said the officer, 'and he has a great desire to be baptised; I have promised him to ask you to do it for him, if you have not any objections.'

'Does he know any thing,' I replied, 'of the principles of the christian religion?'

'O yes, I am sure he does,' answered the captain; 'for he talks a deal about it in the kitchen, and often gets laughed at for his pains; but he takes it all very patiently.'

'Does he behave well as your servant?'

'Yes, that he does: he is as honest, and civil a fellow, as ever came aboard a ship, or lived in a house.'

'Was he always so well behaved?'

'No,' said the officer; 'when I first had him, he was often very unruly, and deceitful; but, for the last two years, he has been quite like another creature.'

'Well, sir, I shall be very glad to see him, and think it probable, I shall wish to go through a course of instruction and examination; during which, I shall be able to form a judgment, how far it will be right to admit him to the sacrament of baptism. Can he read?'

'Yes,' replied his master; 'he has been taking great pains to learn to read for some time past, and can make out a chapter in the Bible pretty well, as my maid servant informs me. He speaks English better than many of his countrymen, but you will find it a little broken. When will it be convenient that I should send him over to you?'

'Tomorrow afternoon, sir, if you please.'

‘He shall come to you about four o’clock, and you shall see what you can make of him.’

With this promise he took his leave. I felt glad of an opportunity of instructing a native of that land whose wrongs and injuries had often caused me to sigh and mourn; the more so, when I reflected *who had been the aggressors.*

At the appointed hour my African disciple arrived. He was a very young looking man, with a sensible, lively, and pleasing turn of countenance.

I desired him to sit down, and said, ‘Your master informs me, that you wish to have some conversation with me, respecting christian baptism?’

‘Yes, sir, me very much wish to be a Christian.’

‘Why do you wish so?’

‘Because, me know, that Christian go to heaven, when he die.’

‘How long have you had that wish?’ I said.

‘Ever since me hear one good minister preach in America; two years ago.’

‘Where were you born?’

‘In Africa. Me was very little boy, when me was made slave by the white men.’

‘How was that?’

‘Me left father and mother one day at home, to go to get shells by the sea shore: and, as I was stooping down to gather them up, some white sailors came out of a boat, and took me away. Me never see father nor mother again.’

‘And what become of you then?’

‘Me was put into ship, and brought to Jamaica, and sold to a massa, who keep me in his house to serve him some years; when, about three years ago, captain W——, my massa that spoke to you, bought me to be his servant, on board his ship. And he be good massa; he gave me my liberty, made me free, and me live with him ever since.’

‘And what thoughts had you about your soul, all that time before you went to America?’ I asked him.

‘Me no care for my soul at all before then. No man teach me a word about my soul.’

‘Well, now tell me farther about what happened to you in America. How came you there?’

‘My massa take me there in his ship, and he stop there one month, and then me hear the good minister.’

‘And what did that minister say?’

‘He said me was a great sinner.’

‘What, did he speak to you in particular?’

‘Yes; me think so; for there was great many to hear him, but he tell them all about me.’

‘What did he say?’

‘He say, about all the things that were in my heart.’

‘What things?’

‘My sin, my ignorance, my know nothing, my believe nothing. The good minister made me see, that me *think* nothing good, nor *do* nothing good.’

‘And what else did he tell you?’

‘He sometime look me in the face, and say, that Jesus Christ came to die for sinners, poor black sinners, as well as white sinners. Me thought this was very good, very good indeed, to do so for wicked sinner.’

‘And what made you think this was all spoken to you in particular?’

‘Because me sure, no such wicked sinner as me in all the place. The good minister must know me was there.’

‘And what did you think about yourself, while he preach- ed about Jesus Christ?’

‘Sir, me was very much afraid, when he said the wicked must be turned into hell fire. For me felt, that me was very wicked sinner, and that make me cry. And he talk much about the love of Christ to sinners, and that make me cry more. And me thought me must love Jesus Christ; but, me not know how, and that make me cry again.’

‘Did you hear more sermons than one, during that month?’

‘Yes, sir; massa give me leave to go three times, and all the times me wanted to love Jesus more, and do what Jesus said; but my heart seem sometime hard, like a stone.’

‘Have you ever heard any preaching since that time?’

‘Never; till me hear sermon at this church last Sunday, and then me long to be baptised in Jesus’ name; for me had no christian friends to baptise me, when little child.’

‘And what have been your thoughts all the time since you first heard these sermons in America; did you tell any body then what you felt?’

‘No; me speak to nobody, but to God then. The good minister say, that God hear the cry of the poor; so me cry

to God, and he hear me. And me often think about Jesus Christ, and wish to be like him.'

'Can you read?'

'A little.'

'Who taught you to read?'

'God teach me to read.'

'What do you mean by saying so?'

'God give me desire to read, and that make reading easy. Massa give me Bible, and one sailor show me the letters; and so me learn to read by myself, with God's good help.'

'And what do you read in the Bible?'

'O! me read all about Jesus Christ, and how he loved sinners; and wicked men killed him, and he died and came again from the grave, and all this for poor negro. And it sometime make me cry, to think that Christ loved so poor negro.'

'And what do the people say about your reading and praying, and attention to the things of God?'

'Some wicked people, that do not love Jesus Christ, call me great fool, and negro dog, and black hypocrite. And that make me sometime feel angry; but, then me remember, Christian must not be angry for that. Jesus Christ was called ugly, black names, and he was quiet as a lamb; and so then me remember Jesus Christ, and me say nothing again to them.'

I was much delighted with the simplicity and apparent sincerity of this poor African; and wished to ascertain what measure of light and feeling he possessed on a few leading points. St. Paul's summary of religion* occurred to me. I said, 'Tell me, what is faith? What is your own faith? What do you believe about Jesus Christ, and your own soul?'

'Me believe,' said he, 'that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; and though me be chief of sinners, yet Jesus will save me, though me be only poor black negro.'

'What is your hope? What do you hope for, both as to this life, and that which is to come?'

* Now abideth faith, hope, charity; these three; but the greatest of these is charity. 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

‘ Me hope, Christ Jesus will take good care of me, and keep me from sin and harm, while me live here : and me hope, when me come to die, to go and live with him always, and never die again.’

‘ What are your thoughts about christian love or charity ? I mean, whom and what do you most love ?’

‘ Me love God the Father, because he was so good to send his Son. Me love Jesus Christ, because he love me. Me love all men, black men and white men too ; for God made them all. Me love good christian people, because Jesus love them, and they love Jesus.’

Such was my first conversation with this young disciple : I rejoiced in the prospect of receiving him into the church, agreeably to his wishes. I wished, however, to converse somewhat further, and inquire more minutely into his conduct ; and promised to ride over and see him in a few days at his master’s lodgings.

When he was gone, I thought within myself, God hath indeed redeemed souls by the blood of his Son, ‘ out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation.’ If many of them for a season are devoted to earthly slavery, through the cruel avarice of man : yet, blessed be God, some among them are, through divine grace, called to the glorious liberty of the children of God ; and so are redeemed from the slavery of him, who takes so many captive at his will.

It is a happy thought that ‘ Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God. Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth. O sing praises unto the Lord !’

Not many days after the first interview with my African disciple, I went from home on horseback with the design of visiting and conversing with him again at his master’s house, which was situated in a part of the parish near four miles distant from my own. The road which I took lay over a lofty down or hill, which commands a prospect of scenery seldom equalled for beauty and magnificence. It gave birth to silent but instructive meditation.

I cast my eye downwards a little to the left, towards a small cove, the shore of which consists of fine hard sand. It is surrounded by fragments of rock, chalk cliffs, and steep banks of broken earth. Shut out from human intercourse and dwellings, it seems formed for retirement and contemplation. On one of these rocks I unexpectedly observed a

man sitting with a book which he was reading. The place was near two hundred yards perpendicularly below me; but I soon discovered by his dress, and by the black colour of his features, contrasted with the white rocks beside him, that it was no other than my African disciple; with, as I doubted not, a Bible in his hand. I rejoiced at this unlooked for opportunity of meeting him in so solitary and interesting a situation. I descended a steep bank, winding by a kind of rude stair case, formed by fishermen and shepherd's boys in the side of the cliff down to the shore.

He was intent on his book, and did not perceive me till I approached very near to him.

'William, is that you?'

'Ah! massa, me very glad to see you. How come massa into this place? Me thought nobody here, but only God and me.'

'I was coming to your master's house to see you, and rode round by this way for the sake of the prospect. I often come here in fine weather, to look at the sea, and the shipping. Is that your Bible?'

'Yes, sir, this is my dear, good Bible.'

'I am glad,' said I, 'to see you so well employed. It is a good sign, William.'

'Yes, massa, a sign that God is good to me; but me never good to God.'

'How so?'

'Me never thank him enough: me never pray to him enough: me never remember enough, who give me all these good things. Massa, me afraid my heart very bad. Me wish me was like you.'

'Like me, William? Why, you are like me, a poor helpless sinner; that must, like yourself, perish in his sins, unless God of his infinite mercy and grace pluck him as a brand from the burning, and make him an instance of distinguishing love and favour. There is no difference; we have both come short of the glory of God: all have sinned.'

'No, me no like you massa; me think nobody like me, nobody feel such a heart as me.'

'Yes, William, your feelings, I am persuaded, are like those of every truly convinced soul, who sees the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the greatness of the price which Christ Jesus paid for the sinner's ransom. You can say in the words of the hymn

‘ I the chief of sinners am,
‘ But Jesus died for me.’

‘ O yes, sir, me believe that Jesus die for poor negro. What would become of poor wicked negro, if Christ no die for him. But he die for the chief of sinners, and that make my heart sometime quite glad.’

‘ What part of the Bible were you reading, William.’

‘ Me read how the man upon the cross spoke to Christ, and Christ spoke to him. Now that man’s prayer just do for me. ‘ Lord, remember me ;’ Lord, remember poor negro sinner : this is my prayer every morning, and sometime at night too ; when me caannot think of many words, then me say the same again, Lord, remember poor negro sinner.’

‘ And be assured, William, the Lord hears that prayer. He pardoned and accepted the thief upon the cross, and he will not reject you ; he will in no wise cast out any that come to him.’

‘ No, sir, I believe it ; but there is so much sin in my heart, it make me afraid and sorry. Massa, do you see these limpets,* how fast they stick to the rocks here ? Just so, sin stick fast to my heart.’

‘ It may be so, William ; but take another comparison : do you cleave to Jesus Christ by faith in his death and righteousness, as those limpets cleave to the rock, and neither seas nor storms shall separate you from his love ?’

‘ That is just what me want.’

‘ Tell me, William, is not that very sin, which you speak of, a burden to you ? You do not love it : you would be glad to obtain strength against it, and to be freed from it, would you not ?’

‘ O yes ; me give all this world, if me had it, to be without sin.’

‘ Come then, and welcome to Jesus Christ, my brother ; his blood cleanseth from all sin. He gave himself as a purchase for sinners. He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions ; he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Come, freely come to Jesus, the Saviour of sinners.’

* A kind of shell-fish which abounds in the place where we were, and which sticks to the rocks with exceeding great force.

‘Yes, massa,’ said the poor fellow weeping, ‘me will come, but me come very slow; very slow, massa; me want to run, me want to fly. Jesus is very good to poor negro, to send you to tell him this.’

‘But this is not the first time you have heard these truths.’

‘No, sir, they have been comfort to my soul many times, since me hear good minister preach in America, as me tell you last week at your house.’

‘Well, now I hope, William, that since God has been so graciously pleased to open your eyes, and affect your mind with such a great sense of his goodness, in giving his Son to die for your sake; I hope, that you do your endeavour to keep his commandments; I hope you strive to behave well to your master and mistress, and fellow servants. He that is a Christian inwardly, will be a Christian outwardly; he that truly and savingly believes in Christ, will shew his faith by his works, as the apostle says. Is it not so, William?’

‘Yes, sir, me want to do so. Me want to be faithful. Me sorry to think how bad servant me was, before the good things of Jesus Christ come to my heart. Me wish to do well to my massa, when he see me, and when he not see me, for me know God always see me.’

‘Me know that if me sin against mine own massa, me sin against God, and God be very angry with me. Beside, can me love Christ, if me not do what Christ tell me?’

‘Me love my fellow servants, though, as me tell you before, they not much love me, and I pray God to bless them. And when they say bad things, and try to make me angry, then me think, if Jesus Christ were in poor negro’s place, he would not revile and answer again with bad words and temper, but he say little, and pray much. And so then, me say nothing at all, but pray God to forgive them.’

The more I conversed with this African convert, the more satisfactory were the evidences of his mind being spiritually enlightened, and his heart effectually wrought upon by the grace of God.

I continued for a considerable time in conversation with the African, finding that his master was gone from home for the day, and had given him liberty for some hours. I spoke to him on the nature, duty, and privilege, of christian baptism; pointed out to him from a prayer book, which I had

with me, the clear and scriptural principles of our own church upon that head, and found that he was very desirous of conforming to them. He appeared to me to be well qualified for receiving that sacramental pledge of his Redeemer's love; and I rejoiced in the prospect of beholding him no longer a 'stranger and foreigner, but a fellow citizen with the saints, and of the household of God.'

'God,' said I to him, 'has promised to sprinkle many nations, not only with the waters of baptism, but also with the dews of his heavenly grace. He says, he will not only 'pour water on him that is thirsty,' but, 'I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and thy blessing upon thine offspring.'

'Yes, massa,' said he, 'he can make me to be clean in heart, and of a right spirit; he can purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; he can wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.'

'May God give you these blessings, and confirm you in every good gift.'

I was much pleased with the affectionate manner in which he spoke of his parents, from whom he had been stolen in his childhood; and his wishes that God might direct them by some means, to the knowledge of a Saviour.

'Who knows,' I said, 'but some of these ships may be carrying a missionary to the country where they live, to declare the good news of salvation to your countrymen, and to your own dear parents in particular, if they are yet alive.'

'O! my dear father and mother: my dear gracious Saviour;' exclaimed he, leaping from the ground as he spoke, 'if thou wilt but save their souls, and tell them what thou hast done for sinners—but—'

He stopped, and seemed much affected.

'My friend,' said I, 'I will now pray with you for your own soul, and for those of your parents also.'

'Do, massa, that is very good and kind, do pray for poor negro souls here and every where.'

This was a new and solemn 'house of prayer.' The sea sand was our floor, the heavens were our roof, the cliffs, the rocks, the hills, and the waves, formed the walls of our chamber. It was not indeed a 'place where prayer was wont to be made;' but for this once, it became a hallowed spot: it will by me ever be remembered as such. The presence of God was there.—I prayed.—The African wept. His heart was full. I felt with him, and wept likewise.

The last day will shew, whether our tears were not the tears of sincerity and christian love.

It was time for my return, I leaned upon his arm, as we ascended the steep cliff in my way back to my horse, which I had left at the top of the hill. Humility and thankfulness were marked in his countenance. I leaned upon his arm with the feelings of a *brother*. It was a relationship I was happy to own.—I took him by the hand at parting, appointed one more interview previous to the day of baptising him, and bid him farewell for the present.

‘ God bless you, my dear massa.’

‘ And you my fellow Christian, forever and ever. Amen.’

The interesting and affecting conversation which I had with the African servant, produced a sensation not easy to be expressed. As I returned home, I was led into meditation on the singular clearness and beauty of those evidences of faith and conversion to God, which I had just seen and heard. How plainly, I thought, it appears, that salvation is freely by grace through faith; and that, not of ourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. What but the Holy Spirit, who is the author and giver of the life of grace, could have wrought such a change from the once dark, perverse, and ignorant heathen, to this now convinced, enlightened, humble, and believing Christian? How manifestly is the uncontrolled sovereignty of the Divine will exercised in the calling and translating of sinners from darkness to light! What a lesson may the nominal Christian of a civilized country sometimes learn from the simple, sincere religion of a converted heathen!

I afterwards made particular inquiry into this young man’s domestic and general deportment. Every thing I heard was satisfactory; nor could I entertain a doubt respecting the consistency of his conduct and character. I had some further conversations with him, in the course of which I pursued such a plan of scriptural instruction and examination, as I conceived to be the most suitable to his progressive state of mind. He improved much in reading, carried his Bible constantly in his pocket, and took every opportunity which his duty to his master’s service would allow, for perusing it. I have frequently had occasion to observe, that among the truly religious poor, who have not had the advantage of learning to read in early youth, a concern about

the soul, and desire to know the word of God, have proved effectual motives for their learning to read with great ease and advantage to themselves and others. It was strikingly so in the present case.

I had for a considerable time been accustomed to meet some serious persons once a week, in a cottage at no great distance from the house where he lived, for the purpose of religious conversation, instruction, and prayer. Having found these occasions remarkably useful and interesting to myself and others, I thought it would be very desirable to take the African there, in order that there might be many witnesses to the simplicity and sincerity of real Christianity, as exhibited in the character of this promising young convert. I hoped it might prove an eminent means of grace to excite and quicken the spirit of prayer and praise among some, over whose spiritual progress I was anxiously watching.

I accordingly obtained his master's leave that he should attend me to one of my cottage assemblies. His master, although he did not himself appear to live under the influence of real religion, or to manifest any serious concern respecting his own state, yet was pleased with my attention to his servant, and always spoke well of his behaviour.

I set out on the day appointed for the interview. The house in which we were to meet was situated at the corner of an oak wood, which screened it both from the burning heat of summer suns, and the heavy blasts of winter south west storms. As I approached it, I saw my friend, the African, sitting under a tree, and waiting my arrival. He held in his hand a little Tract which I had given him; his Bible lay on the ground. He rose with much cheerfulness, saying,

'Ah! massa, me very glad to see you, me think you long time coming.'

'William, I hope you are well. I am going to take you with me to a few of my friends, who, I hope, are also the friends of the Lord. We meet every Wednesday evening for conversation about the things that belong to our everlasting peace, and I am sure you will be a welcome visiter.'

'Massa, me not good enough to be with such good people. Me great sinner. They be good Christian.'

'If you were to ask them, William, they would each

tell you, they were worse than any body. Many of them were once, and that not very long ago, living in a very openly sinful manner, ignorant of God, and the enemies of Jesus Christ by thought and deed. But divine grace stopped them in their wicked course, and subdued their hearts to the love and obedience of him and his gospel. You will only meet a company of poor fellow sinners, who love to speak and sing the praises of redeeming love: and I am sure, William, that is a song you will be willing to join them in.'

'O! yes, sir, that song just do for poor William.'

By this time we had arrived at the cottage garden gate. Several well known faces appeared in and near the house, and the smile of affection welcomed us as we entered. It was known that the African was to visit the little society this evening, and satisfaction beamed in every countenance, as I took him by the hand and introduced him among them, saying, 'I have brought a brother from Africa to see you, my friends. Bid him welcome in the name of the Lord.'

'Sir,' said an humble and pious labourer, whose heart and tongue always overflowed with christian kindness, 'we are at all times glad to see our dear minister, but especially so today in such company as you have brought with you. We have heard how gracious the Lord has been to him. Give me your hand good friend, (turning to the African,) God be with you here and every where: and blessed be his holy name for calling wicked sinners, as I hope he has done you and me, to love and serve him for his mercy's sake.'

Each one greeted him as he came into the house, and some addressed him in very kind and impressive language.

'Massa,' said he, 'me not know what to say to all these good friends: me think this look like little heaven upon earth.'

He then with tears in his eyes, which almost, before he spoke, brought responsive drops into those of all present, said, 'Good friends and brethren in Christ Jesus, God bless you all, and bring you to heaven at last.'

It was my stated custom, when I met to converse with those friends, to begin with prayer and reading a portion of the Scriptures.

When this was ended, I told the people present, that

the providence of God had brought this young man for a time under my ministry; and that, finding him very seriously disposed, and believing him to be very sincere in his religious profession, I had resolved on baptising him, agreeably to his own wishes. I added that I had now brought him with me to join in christian conversation with us; for, as in old times, they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another as a testimony that they thought upon his name, (Mal. iii. 16.) so I hoped we were fulfilling a christian and brotherly duty in thus assembling for mutual edification.

Addressing myself to the African, I said, 'William, tell me, who made you?'

'God, the good Father.'

'Who redeemed you?'

'Jesus, his dear Son, who died for me.'

'Who sanctified you?'

'The Holy Ghost, who teach me to know the good Father, and his dear Son Jesus.'

'What was your state by nature?'

'Me wicked sinner, me know nothing but sin, me do nothing but sin, my soul more blaek than my body.'

'Has any change taken place in you since then?'

'Me hope so, massa, but me sometime afraid no.'

'If you are changed, who changed you?'

'God, the good Father; Jesus, his dear Son; and God the Holy Spirit.'

'How was any change brought about in you?'

'God make me a slave, when me was young little boy.'

'How, William, would you say, God made you a slave?'

'No, massa, no: me mean God let me be made slave by white men, to do me good.'

'How to do you good?'

'He take me from the land of darkness, and bring me to the land of light.'

'Which do you call the land of light; the West India islands?'

'No, massa, they be the land of providence, but America be the land of light to me; for there me first hear good minister preach. And now this place, where I am now, is the land of more light; for here you teach me more and more how good Jesus is to sinners.'

‘ What does the blood of Christ do ?’

‘ It cleanse from all sin. And so me hope from my sin.’

‘ Are then all men cleansed from sin by his blood ?’

‘ O no, massa.’

‘ Who are cleansed and saved ?’

‘ Those that have faith in him.’

‘ Can you prove that out of the Bible ?’

‘ Yes, sir, “ He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”’ John iii. 36.

‘ What is it to have faith ?’

‘ Me suppose that it is to think much about Jesus Christ, to love him much, to believe all he says to be true, to pray to him very much; and when me feel very weak, and very sinful, to think that he is very strong, and very good, and all that for my sake.’

‘ And have you such a faith as you describe ?’

‘ O! massa, me think sometime me have no faith at all.’

‘ Why so, William ?’

‘ When me want to think about Jesus Christ, my mind run about after other things: when me want to love him, my heart seem quite cold! when me want to believe all to be true what he says to sinners, me then think it is not true for me; when me want to pray, the devil put bad, very bad thoughts into me, and me never thank Christ enough. Now all this make me sometime afraid I have no faith.’

I observed a very earnest glow of attention and fellow feeling in some countenances present as he spoke these words. I then said,

‘ I think, William, I can prove that you have faith, notwithstanding your fears to the contrary. Answer me a few more questions.

‘ Did you begin to think yourself a great sinner, and to feel the want of a Saviour, of your own self, and by your own thought and doing ?’

‘ Oh! no, it came to me, when me think nothing about it, and seek nothing about it.’

‘ Who sent the good minister in America to awaken your soul by his preaching ?’

‘ God, very certainly.’

‘ Who then began the work of serious thought and feeling in your mind ?’

‘The good God: me could not do it of myself, me sure of that.’

‘Do you not think that Jesus Christ and his salvation is the one thing most needful and most desirable?’

‘O! yes, me quite sure of that.’

‘Do you not believe that he is able to save you?’

‘Yes, he is able to save to the uttermost.’

‘Do you think he is not willing to save you?’

‘Me dare not say that. He so good, so merciful, so kind to say, he will in no wise cast out any that come to him.’

‘Do you wish and desire and strive to keep his commandments?’

‘Yes, massa, because me love him, and that make me want to do as he say.’

‘Are you willing to suffer for his sake, if God should call you to do so?’

‘Me do think me could die for the love of him; he not think it too much to die for wicked sinner; why should wicked sinner think it much to die for so good and righteous a Saviour?’

‘I think and hope I may say to you, William, thy faith hath made thee whole.’

Thus ended my examination for the present. The other friends who were in the house listened with the most affectionate anxiety to all that passed. One of them observed, not without evident emotion,

‘I see, sir, that though some men are white, and some are black, true Christianity is all of one colour. My own heart has gone with this good man every word he has spoken.’ ‘And so has mine,’ gently re-echoed from every part of the room.

After some time passed in more general conversation on the subject of the African’s history, I said, ‘Let us now praise God, for the rich and unspeakable gift of his grace, and sing the hymn of “redeeming love”—’

Now begin the heavenly theme,
Sing aloud in Jesus’ name, &c.

Which was accordingly done. Whatever was the merit of the natural voices, it was plain there was melody in all their hearts. The African was not much used to our way of singing, yet joined with great earnestness and affection, that

showed how truly he felt what was uttered. When the fifth verse was ended,

Nothing brought him from above ;
Nothing but redeeming love ;

he repeated the words almost unconscious where he was,
'No, nothing, nothing but redeeming love bring him down to poor William ; nothing but redeeming love.'

The following verses were added, and sung by way of conclusion :—

See a stranger comes to view ;
Though he's black,* he's comely too ;
Comes to join the choirs above,
Singing of redeeming love.

Welcome, Negro, welcome here,
Banish doubt and banish fear,
You, who Christ's salvation prove,
Praise and bless redeeming love.

I concluded with some remarks on the nature of salvation by grace, and exhorted all present to press forward in the heavenly race. It was an evening, the circumstances of which, had they never been recorded on earth, were yet doubtless registered in the book of remembrance above.

I then fixed the day for the baptism of the African, and so took leave of my little affectionate circle.

In a few days the African was baptised ; and not long after he went on a voyage with his master.

Since that time I have not been able to hear any tidings of him : whether he yet wanders as a pilgrim in this lower world, or whether he has joined the heavenly choir in the song of redeeming love in glory, I know not. This I do know, he was a monument of the Lord's praise. He bore the impression of the Saviour's image on his heart, and exhibited the marks of converting grace in his life and conversation, with singular simplicity and unfeigned sincerity.—O ! give to God the glory.

* Song of Solomon, i. 5.

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