

THE
LIFE AND LABOURS
OF THE LATE
REV. JOHN VALTON:
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

AND NOW EDITED, WITH MANY ADDITIONS AND LETTERS,

BY JOSEPH SUTCLIFFE, A. M.

“ They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.”—Dan. xii. 3

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LIFE OF REV. JOHN VALTON.

It is a remark of a judicious minister, that he read books in general to enlarge his knowledge and improve his mind; but he read Christian experience with a view to bring his heart into a good frame. He was, certainly, correct; for nothing can excite and revive our piety more than models of the most enlivened piety. A personal knowledge of the subject of the following memoir enables me to say, with confidence, that he was such a model, while he remained in private life, as well as when he moved in a sphere of great usefulness and an enlarged acquaintance with the church of God.

In the present age, our magazines and religious periodical narratives abound with experiences which sometimes fail to excite that interest which is desirable in the religious world, because of the sameness of sentiment and expression which predominates in those accounts. And, with regard to virtuous persons recently deceased, those who collect the narratives are apt to overlook instructive deviations, and flatter the piety of the dead to please their families. The author of the following narrative will not, I think, be accused of this: we here see the man, the Christian and the minister, as he was.

On this delicate subject, a noble lady on the continent being importuned to favour the church with some account of the great things which God had done for her soul, replied, "I could have wished that they had required me to publish, with the same exactitude, the greatness of my sins, and the dissipations of my life. This to me would have been much more consolatory. My hands being tied on this head, nothing remains but to conjure the reader ever to remember that among all the saints converted to God, I do not remember one who is a greater debtor to redeeming grace. When I consider the resistance which I made to the grace of God, and the pleasure I seemed to take in resisting, I am overwhelmed at the idea of the patience and long-suffering of God toward me, who so long opposed his Spirit by the resistance of my nature."

Mr. Valton felt similar sentiments on the same occasion. Prior to his entrance on the ministry, he wrote his experience, in six volumes, but very much diminished his journal, amid the laborious avocations of a Methodist preacher. This defect is in some sort supplied by a synopsis of his labours and experience, in the seventh volume. He left an additional manuscript, containing an account of his life and labours for the last ten years. This volume commences by a letter to the venerable Wesley, in these words:—

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I have long resisted your importunate desire to give you a short

account of my experience, being desirous to conceal my insignificant life till I was no longer interested in the honour or dishonour that cometh of man. But your last letter on the subject, connected with the same opinion of Mr. Fletcher, [vicar of Madeley,] have at length convinced me that I owe it to God and his church. I therefore humbly submit an extract to the perusal of candid people, imploring the benediction of God to accompany it."

Mr. Valton, respecting his family, observes a delicate silence. Though they were reduced, and in a dependant state, yet we gather from several circumstances, that they were the remote branches of a noble house. Some of them had been distinguished in church and state. On the invention of printing, when valuable manuscripts were eagerly sought for the press, one of the Valtons was possessed of an ancient copy of the Greek Testament, which contained the remarkable verse on the Trinity, (1 John v. 7,) and which is denominated in our books of Biblical literature, *Codex Valtoni*. In a compendium of theology, by Professor F. Turrentine, reprinted at Amsterdam, in 1695, 4to. edition, we have the following reply to the Arians, who say that the verse was foisted into the text:—"Nay, it was extant, as St. Jerome affirms, in the most ancient Greek copies: (*Hieron. in Epist. canon.:*)"—and he notes farther, copies of the best repute:—"and Erasmus

confesses it was extant in the most ancient copy of Britain, and in the most laudable editions; the copy of the Complute, of Antwerp, of Arias Montanus, of Valton, which are the best in use, have the place.” *Imò in antiquissimis codicibus Græcis extitisse notat Hieron. in prologo in epist. canon. : et Erasmus fatetur, extare in codice Britannico vetustissimo; et laudatissimæ editiones Complutensis, Antuerpiensis, Ariæ Montani, Valtoni, quæ optimis codicibus usæ sunt, hunc locum habent.*

Respecting the family of the Valtons, when at Midsomer-Norton, I learned from Mrs. Rooke, that Mr. Valton had once told her in free conversation that his father had come to England as page in the suite of George the Second. We shall now hear his own words:

My parents were natives of France, and of the Roman Catholic communion. They came to London in the year 1738, two years before I was born;* so that it was my providential lot to be born and brought up in England. I was first put to a day school to learn English; and then removed to the school of a priest, where a French woman was employed to teach that language. During my early years I was trained to a regular attendance at the Romish chapels in London, as were also my brother and sister.

* In the sixth volume he names his birthday, Nov. 23, 1740. He was baptized John Francis, but never used the second name.

When I was nine years old, my mother took me over to Boulogne, in France, and placed me under an abbot, who had a few boarders ; giving him a particular charge to perfect me in the French language. The abbot used to say mass two or three times a week, at an adjacent chapel, and to employ two of his pupils to assist at the altar. In a while, I was allowed to participate of that honour, and was not a little proud to wear a surplice. In this school I remained six months, bowing to images of wood, and stone, and wax, and imbibing the baneful potions of idolatry and superstition. My mother, now coming over, took me with her from Boulogne to Paris ; and being once in the church of Notre Dame, I was so delighted to hear the little choristers chant and sing, that I used my earnest endeavours with my mother to procure me a place among them ; and she seemed willing to comply, but had no friend in the place to procure me the situation. As the priest with whom I had been intrusted rigorously observed all the fast days of the saints, which half starved the boys, I shrunk at the idea of returning, and prayed my mother to have me removed. She complied, and endeavoured to place me in a convent of Jesuits. Not, however, agreeing on the terms, I was placed for three months longer at a private school, while she went to visit her friends in France. Here I can once remember with pain and praise making auricular

confession, and receiving the absolution and benediction of my confessor. What a mercy that all this had not irrevocably grounded me in the errors and principles of the Romish church, and indelibly stamped me a papist! But God had determined otherwise, as the sequel will show.

My mother now brought me home to London, where, having been for three months, my father was persuaded to place me at a grammar school, in Yorkshire, to perfect me in the rudiments of the Latin tongue. The clergyman who was head of the school, not knowing that I had been rigorously educated a Roman Catholic, sent me to church with his own sons. And I have often marvelled that I should so readily comply. However, I can well remember that serious impressions were made very early on my mind; but I had no one to guide me in the way that I should go.

When about thirteen years of age, the bishop of Chester came and confirmed between two and three hundred young persons. I attended with these, and the bishop laid his hand on my head; but the next day my conscience sorely reproached me, and I thought I should be damned for what I had done, having been baptized a papist. I was sorely troubled for a time; but it wore away.

In my fifteenth year, I happened to meet with Hervey's "Meditations;" and cast my eye on that part which treats of the resurrec-

tion of the dead. I was now sensibly affected, and resolved to amend my life, and to pray that the resurrection might be a welcome day to me. For several days I had a deep impression on my mind, and was careful not to offend God ; but, alas ! this also was soon effaced.

At seventeen years of age, I returned to London, and was placed in an academy to learn book-keeping. While here, I was appointed a clerk in the office of Ordnance, and sent to Portsmouth, where God, in the midst of temptations, was pleased to restrain me in an extraordinary manner.

While here, a carpenter often came to heat his glue-pot at the office fire. He being a Methodist, the clerks used to surround the fire, to have a little diversion with him. They would say, "Well, John, is there yet any hope for us? Shall we all be damned?" This would sometimes bring on a serious discourse ; but we, like the swine, trampled the pearls under our feet. He one day said, when I was out of the office, that he had some hopes of John : but though I then laughed at his words, I have since found that the bread* cast on the water was found after many days.

After residing for two years in Portsmouth,

* *לֶחֶם* *Lechem*, Eccles. xi, 1, signifies corn, and all kinds of provisions, as well as bread. The reference is to the custom of husbandmen, who, after the rivers overflowed with tropical rains, waded into the retiring waters, and sowed their corn to procure an early vegetation.

I was removed to Greenwich, still ignorant of the things which belonged to my peace. But I had not been there long before I was ordered to embark with the army for Portugal, as clerk of the stores, and assistant to the paymaster of the artillery. Though a high martial spirit had made me a volunteer in embarkation, many fears soon assailed me, lest I should perish at sea, or fall in battle, and my soul become a prey to the worm that never dies. What a pity that the good impressions on the minds of youth should be hid so much from the eyes of the church, and escape her fostering care!

After being in Portugal for nine months, peace being restored, the army was ordered home. During my stay in that country, I became intimate with some of the priests; and having a passion for splendour, the decorations of their churches, and the brilliant dresses of their images, occasioned my frequent visits; yet the issues were, that I felt no sorrow for having escaped "the mother of harlots."

On my return to England, a desk was again assigned me at Greenwich. I had not been here long before a sore trial made me think of God, and drove me to prayer for some days. In these exercises I found happiness, and a prospect of heaven, to which I thought I was then hastening.—[This is understood to have been a love affair, which greatly affected his health, and laid the foundation of

that nervous complaint which more or less followed him to the grave.]—At this time Mr. Romaine's "Sermon on the dry Bones" providentially fell into my hands. It seemed fraught with impossibilities, that I should live conformably to what was there required, being surrounded with gay companions; and the odious epithet of Methodist was so revolting, that my Babel religion soon fell to the ground. In short, by associating with the officers of the army, I had contracted a habit of swearing, and indeed most other vices of the army, and was become quite a libertine. For swearing I was often reprov- ed by my friends, which happily operated, in the issue, in a total renunciation of that vice.

Providence, whose designations are always gracious, now interfered to remove me from a dangerous group of companions. In December, 1763, I was ordered to the King's Magazines, at Purfleet, to do duty there. This seemed cruel, that I, who was but just returned from foreign service, during the campaign in Portugal, should be ordered to this isolated station, while two younger clerks were allowed to stay! When I arrived, I expected to meet with a kind reception from the young engineers; in which, however, I was disappointed; and remained for some time almost a solitary stranger.

[Mrs. Weaver, mother of the venerable Mr. Weaver, clerk in the king's works at Wool-

wich, and local preacher, was then living at Purfleet. She told me that Mr. Valton came there quite a gay and pleasant young gentleman ; and as he excelled on the violin, they rented a room, where he played in the evenings, and the young people danced. But, she added, when he turned Methodist, we turned Methodists ; and the room, which had been shut up for some time, was reopened for prayer and reading. In a while, he procured Mr. Wesley's "Sacred Harmony," and began to use the fiddle again in teaching us these new and engaging tunes. Of the rise and progress of this work of God Mr. Valton gives the following account.]

There was at Purfleet a lady of the name of Edwards, whose husband was an officer in the king's service. Soon after my arrival, they invited me to dine, and treated me with many civilities. Mrs. E. was a member of Mr. Wesley's society in London, and the only Methodist in that part of the country. I often spent a leisure hour at their house. One evening the conversation turned on religion. I threw in my mite, probably, more from complaisance than inclination : it made, however, a strong impression on her mind in my favour. This conversation became, what God willed it to be, less tiresome to me in some succeeding evenings, and I went so far as to join the family in singing hymns. This pious woman, persevering in her good designs, lent me Baxter's "Saints' Rest ;" Ruther-

ford's "Letters;" and Law's "Serious Call." By her conversation, and by the reading of those books, I began to see my soul as the moth fluttering about the flame. Fear now prompted me to pray, sometimes with and sometimes without a form. I left off my grosser sins, and sacrificed my accustomed amusements, as a sort of atonement for my past transgressions. To these, some little charities were added, and acts of self-denial; which I considered as highly meritorious, and as tending gradually to blot out the handwriting which stood against me in the book of God.

But here, again, this good woman, whom I may call my soul's friend, beat me with much difficulty out of these papistical notions, which still floated in my mind, and convinced me that nothing would avail without faith in Christ; and that salvation was the free, unmerited gift of God, through the redemption that is in him. The books I was then reading confirmed all she said, and shone with increasing light on my beclouded mind.

I was now sorely embarrassed with notions in my head, conflicting with sins in my heart. I knew not what to do. In fact, I began to despair of salvation, and thought to recede; but this I could not well do, having, as it were, by the kindness of this family, taken the bounty money, if I may use a military term; and to retreat now would be shameful. I could not pray with devotion; my addresses

to the throne of grace were irregular and dissipated, and prayer seemed a burden. At length, encouraged by my friends, I unbosomed my whole heart to Mr. Wesley, in an anonymous letter, soliciting his advice. The answer I beg leave to transcribe for the benefit of those who may be in the same state.

“*London, Jan. 31, 1764.*

“It is certainly right with all possible care to abstain from all outward evil. But this profits only a little. The inward change is the one thing needful for *you*. You must be born again, or you never will gain a uniform and lasting liberty. Your whole soul is diseased, or rather dead,—dead to God, dead in sin. Awake, then, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light. To seek for a particular deliverance from one sin only is mere labour lost. If it could be attained, it would be little worth; for another would arise in its place. But, indeed, it cannot before there is a general deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. This is the thing which you want, and which you should be continually seeking for. You want to be justified freely from all things, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ. It might be of use, if you should read over the first volume of [my] sermons seriously, and with prayer. Indeed, nothing will avail without prayer. Pray, whether you can or not. When you are cheerful and when you are heavy, still pray. Pray with many or with few words, or with

none at all: you will surely find an answer of peace, and why not now? I am your servant for Christ's sake, J. WESLEY."

This letter seemed fraught with impossibilities, and I should have misconstrued the whole, had not Mrs. E. explained it, and very much to my satisfaction. I now determined fully to enter into the service of the Lord of hosts, and to seek the deliverance described in the letter. I saw now the gracious hand of God in removing me from Greenwich, and in my being unnoticed by the officers when I came to Purfleet; for had I contracted an intimacy with them, all this good might have been frustrated. Nearly at the same time, a little child, about seven years of age, came to drink tea with me: I happened to call her a little angel, and she rejoined, "O, sir, I dreamed last night that you was an angel, and that I saw you flying up into heaven, and that I called after you, but you would not stop for me; and I asked my father's leave to come and take tea with you, that I might tell you my dream." This little incident gave me, for a day or two, great comfort; because I received it as a token from God of what he was about to do for my soul, by fitting and preparing me for a better world; for since my trial and affliction at Greenwich, I had ceased to wish for length of life.

But all this was transient. Satan now began to assault me with skepticism in its most dreadful forms—that there was no God, else

he would hear my prayers. I was tempted also to disbelieve the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and almost every doctrine of revelation. In short, I quarrelled with every book I read, as dark, mysterious, and irrelevant to my case.

March 6, 1764.—I was to-day very unhappy, and thought that God had abandoned me. I sought for a form of prayer, but could find none that suited me. At last I drew up a form partly out of the Prayer Book, and partly out of Dr. Horneck's "Happy Ascetic," which I used for a few days; and then laid it aside, as not uttering the language of my heart. I now prayed, sometimes with words, and sometimes with none. But when I could utter a few words, I had sometimes a gleam of hope from an overclouded sun.

In the evening, a religious young man came to spend an hour at Mr. Edwards's, and I was invited to meet him. He related his experience, which very much agreed with mine, while groping the way to peace of conscience, as it were, over a dark mountain. We spent the evening in very profitable conversation, and closed with singing and prayer. I never in all my life enjoyed such happiness as this evening afforded me. I came home and offered up my addresses to Heaven with an unusual flow of words. My prayers were interrupted only with tears, the effect of heartfelt joy. I could have spent the whole night in praising God: my pillow was easy, and

when I awoke in the morning, I arose and prostrated myself before the God that never sleeps.

11.—This day being the Sabbath, I attended the morning service at church; and prayed very earnestly to God. In the afternoon I spent some time with Mr. Cawley, a carpenter, who had come from London, partly with a view to inquire after the welfare of my soul. Before I had been half an hour in his company, I loved the man, and became united to him in spirit. Alexander the Great once told Diogenes that if he were not Alexander the Great, he would desire to be Diogenes. But I could have said, I would rather be Mr. Cawley than Diogenes. We closed the interview with singing and prayer. Yet neither singing nor praying has any lasting effect to raise my mind. I ever sink back into that nervous gloom to which my constitution is inclined. My petrified heart seems unwilling that a tear should drop from my eye. Nay, such was the apathy I now felt, that had my relations been bleeding at my feet, I think it would not have moved me. I sometimes thought that God had entirely given me up.

On relating my feelings to my good mother, I observed that she shed tears. She assured me that I should soon receive comfort, notwithstanding the agonies of my mind. She encouraged me to look to the Saviour, adding, that “the vilest sinner should never despair.” These last words reached my heart, and

caused the tears plentifully to flow from my eyes. My heart swelled, and my eyes so overflowed, that I left the house ; a spark of celestial fire now kindled in my breast, which dispelled the gloom, melted the rock, and diffused divine love through all my heart. My soul exclaimed, “ What acknowledgments shall I make to thee, O Fountain of divine love, for thy goodness to a worm ! How incomprehensible is thy love to sinners, and how ready art thou to forgive and to meet them when they return ! How inexcusable am I to distrust thy goodness, seeing every object around me proclaims thy goodness and love.”

In the afternoon of this blessed day, I found the river of joy swelling in my breast by the influence of the heavenly shower. The Sun of righteousness has indeed risen on my soul with genial warmth, and called forth the enlivened seeds of gratitude. I was not disobedient to the heavenly influences, but instantly on my knees acknowledged the blessing, and prayed that the Lord would no more hide his face from me, but pardon my impatience, my pride, and unbelief. I could now bless God for the hidings of his face for my peevishness and distrustful reasonings ; for I found that without his gracious restriction, I should sink back into all the bad habits of my fellow sinners.

In prayer, also, I found that God had now loosened my tongue : I could pour out my

soul, and speak as the Spirit gave me utterance. I could now pray that the Lord would grant me such of my petitions as tended to the welfare of my soul, and at such times as he saw best.

21.—My soul for the last three days has been gradually sinking; but to-day the strong man rose upon me with uncommon violence. I discovered anew the latent evils of my breast. I felt pride, repining, and discontent. Ah! how is it that I, who but the other day had such overflowing peace and joy, should now sink so low!—"Ah! little did I think," exclaimed I, in my anguish, "that religion would bring me to this! Surely I never found evil passions so predominant in my career of worldly pleasure. Well! I shall now lay religion aside!" These were my words. But I reflected that I never found any real pleasure or lasting good in the world; and to return to it would be but to increase my misery in this world, and endless torments in that which is to come. A faint hope now shone upon me, that faith and hope would yet again spring up in my mind.

While in this weak and depressed state, I was asserting something of importance, which was disbelieved by the person to whom I spoke: I felt great anger—*et ira est furor*—and called God twice or thrice to witness the truth of what I said, and, in the agony of my mind, silently vowed to abandon religion. O how I was stung with my own words! I was

like a madman. I dropped on my knees to pray ; but could not. I fell prostrate, but could not remain so ; fearing lest God should strike me dead, and send me to everlasting fire. I could scarcely stand all the day, I was so greatly affected. I could but remark the difference in my feelings between this and the former conflict, after offending God. Then I was all apathy ; nothing moved me : now every thing heaped a mountain on my depressed spirits. I wished to hide myself in some dark retreat, being burdened with the light of the sun. At night I ventured to pray, but without much hope. In the morning I was much the same. However, about eleven o'clock the Lord gave me a token of his love and goodness in my heart. I exclaimed, "O God, let me never more offend thee by anger, nor despair of thy mercy and love ; but be always resigned to thy gracious will !"

April 6.—I went to London, and called on a gentleman, to whom I had once written on business, to direct me to hear a sermon. While I was there, Mr. Mark Davis (then stationed in town) came in, and I accompanied him to Wapping, and told him all my heart and state. I hid myself in this small and rough-looking chapel under the pulpit ; and though much annoyed with the people's coughing and noise, yet I was delighted with the discourse on, "Quench not the Spirit." It seemed to be wholly on my account. How happy are the Methodists who have ministers

that know how to speak a word to him that is weary !

Sunday, the 8th.—I attended at West-street, Seven Dials [bought for a chapel in the establishment since the purchase and rebuilding of Queen-street Chapel.] The great decorum and strict attention of the congregation inspired me with reverence and awe. The unaffected piety, the correct, uniform, and decent responses of the people were very moving, and I may say, to me, as a stranger, astonishing ! The singing was heavenly, and seemed to come from the heart. In the evening I attended at the Foundry, (Mr. Wesley's first chapel,) and heard an excellent sermon, which stirred me up to press toward the mark for the prize of my high calling ; and should have found more good if I could have retired for prayer ; but lodging with a great family, I had no opportunity. How favoured are the Methodists to enjoy such ordinances and sermons as these ! And yet my heart, my vain heart, is afraid to have it known that I am become a Methodist.

22.—To-day I went to Snowfields Chapel to hear Mr. Maxfield, and stayed the sacrament, but found the enemy so harassing my mind with temptations, that the reasonings with him took away much of the good. The sermon, however, was very affecting, and kept me in tears most of the time. Surely these are workmen who know their work, and know the hearts of men !

30.—Though I have been in a good frame of mind the last few days, I now found a return of old temptations. It has been my method at those times to fall down on my knees and pray ; that being the most advantageous posture in which to resist the enemy.

May 3.—To-day, Mrs. Edwards being sick, the severest trial of all my life came upon me : I was forbidden to go to the house of my soul's friend, the blessed mother in Israel, who, under God, had been the instrument of saving my soul. The enemy, for some weeks, had been stirring up the mind of Mr. E. against me. He was determined to prohibit my access to his house, and had, for some weeks, been secretly defaming me ; and in such sort, that the gentlemen in the king's service despised me. Among the rest he accused me of insanity, and thought that my religious conversation and prayers contributed to augment the rheumatic fever and affliction of his wife. " They laid things to my charge that I knew not of."

I went to my room full of anguish, and of the most horrible temptations. I spent the whole night in prayer, sometimes on the floor, sometimes on the bed. The reproaches of the ungodly brought all my sins to my remembrance, and seemed to overwhelm me with a sense of the wrath of God. While in prayer, the Almighty seemed clothed with angry aspects, and with thunder in his hand. Meanwhile, the Saviour presented himself in

his priestly garments, interceding for my soul. For a time the Almighty seemed inexorable, but at length dropped his vengeful arm, as though he had said,

“My Son is in my servant’s prayer,
And Jesus forces me to spare.”

This view of God, and the mediatorial throne, continued with me for several days, and was followed with much peace.

4.—This day, by acute pains, Mrs. Edwards became delirious. The gout having reached her stomach, she was not expected to live; and, I believe, her affliction was much augmented by the grief of her mind. My prayer was, that God would not separate us, but cut short his work in me, and take me to the realms of bliss, whither I thought she was going. About ten o’clock I retired, and wrestled with the Lord, that he would ease her pain, and remove her delirium; and it pleased the Almighty that very hour to grant what I asked; which greatly increased my faith, and strengthened my hands in prayer. From this time, also, Mr. E. seemed reconciled to me. Perhaps it was the affliction of his wife which made him so angry with me; but, Lord, what is man?

10.—To-day I also was taken ill, and feared lest I should lose my senses. Great trials always augment the infirmities to which my constitution is inclined. I spent most of the morning in prayer, and in much distress of

mind. A plot had been laid to get me removed back to Greenwich, among all my old and wicked companions. Providentially, I was enabled so to remonstrate as to break the snare. I have, in this instance, realized the note of Mr. Wesley, Matt. iv, 1; that after the strongest consolations we may expect the sharpest temptations.

15.—This being the Sabbath day, I met Mr. Watkins at the church door, an officer who had served with me in Portugal. I was ashamed to say that I had turned Methodist; and yet I durst not let him go without telling him of the danger his soul was in. The ship was lying off Purfleet, in which he was going out to Peniscola. I took him to dine. Our conversation soon made him ready to exclaim, with the jailer, “What must I do to be saved?” We wept and prayed together, and sung hymns. He told me that he had a strong conflict, as the ship was to sail that evening, whether he should venture ashore to take leave of me; but something unaccountably said within him, “I must see him; I must see him.” I gave him all Mr. Wesley’s sermons and notes, and other books that I had, accompanied him about a mile, and was fully persuaded that God, who had begun a good work in his soul, would finish it to the day of Christ. My soul was knit to him in affection, as the soul of David to Jonathan. After parting from him, I cried, “O Lord, the keeper of Israel, into thy hands I commend him.

Save and defend him, that he may renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and be a true follower of the Lamb!" From this time I felt an unaccountable desire for the salvation of souls, and resolved to speak to individuals whenever I could find opportunity. A little fruit encourages the labour of the husbandman.

July 14.—I went to London to hear Mr. Charles Wesley on the ensuing Sabbath. His word was with power, and I thought my Saviour was at hand, never being so sensibly affected under a discourse before. In the evening I heard him again at the Foundry, and all seemed to be comforted or affected by his word. On returning, I lost much of the good by joining rather than reproofing the discourse of the passengers. My conscience severely accuses if I join in any unhallowed levity of conversation. Surely my heart is a composition of sin, at enmity with God, and subject to the prince of this world, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

31.—My father and my brother paid me a visit to-day, and my mind was much hurt by their conversation. My poor father inquired whether I did not sing Whitefield's hymns; assuring me, at the same time, that if I followed the Methodists, I might never more expect preferment. My brother is altogether averse to religion, especially to Methodism. The way is too narrow.

Aug. 4.—This morning, in consequence of reading certain books, I was more strongly tempted to believe in absolute predestination than ever; and to believe also, on account of the evils in my heart, that I was one of the reprobates. In the course of the day I named these thoughts to a friend, who replied, “If predestination be true, you ought to rejoice and be happy, because, being convinced of sin, you have one of the first marks of being elected.” This afforded me a momentary comfort. But, ah! I sink again into anguish and pain, and cannot believe that there is one saint in glory that ever was so wicked as I have been. Yet, bad as I am, the price which my Redeemer has paid is such as the Father can accept; therefore, I am encouraged to believe that I shall yet have a place in glory at the Saviour’s feet.

12.—This morning I had sweet communion with God on my way to the church. But, on thinking what I should say at night, when five of us met for Christian fellowship, several pertinent texts came into my mind. Here, again, Satan stirred up the latent pride of my heart. This may arise chiefly from my evil nature; but, from whatever source it may spring, it seems to contaminate all my thoughts, and words, and actions. I have not read or heard of any one who has had such sore and bitter conflicts with the evils of nature, and the temptations of Satan, as have fallen to my lot. Perhaps the Lord is, by these conflicts,

forcing me from seeking to be justified by the law, or preparing me to be useful to others. This thought gave me comfort.

15.—This morning Satan seemed to concentrate all his heavy artillery against my soul, in a way he had never done since I began to seek the heavenly kingdom. Pride appeared also in its strongest forms. I was shocked at the aspects of the temptation; and, falling down on my knees, resolved to surrender myself wholly into the arms of God—that, if he would save me, I would resist no more. Presently my eyes were bathed in tears; and now a concurring thought seemed to say within, that this was the very thing I ought to do.

16.—This was to me a happy day. I went to the office, having shaken off my legal chains, and sought no more to fulfil the law in my own strength. Leaning on my Saviour, I felt divine support, and entered on duty without fearing the seductive habits of company. I was obliged indeed to be social;—but all the while I was happy in God. He kept me as a little child, and showed me that I knew nothing as I ought to know. Here was a lesson I had never learned before.

17.—This was a sore morning of temptation to my soul. “Ay,” said the enemy, “you are now become light and trifling.” A messenger of Satan was allowed to buffet me with all the reasonings and excitements to unbelief. I walked the room in a state of distraction.

My cry was, "Save, Lord, or I perish." My soul chose strangling rather than life; and had not the Lord been on my side, I had fallen a prey to the enemy.

31.—During the whole of the last fortnight, I have passed through deep waters. Satan takes great and grievous advantages of the nervous infirmities of my constitution. He upbraids me with my past sins as a monster of wickedness; and tells me that all my religious intercourse with the friends is pride, hypocrisy, and deceit. If at any time I have enjoyed what they call "the drawings of the Father," he then assails me, that I am become light, trifling, and vain. Often I am assaulted to renounce religion altogether, and give up myself to despair.

Saturday, September 1.—This morning I was greatly comforted in reading the Holy Scriptures; and, going to London, I heard Mr. Wesley for the first time. Next morning I heard him at Snowfields, on Matt. iii, 2: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He observed that the unawakened sinner is under the power of evil, and sin prevails; the justified has grace and sin, but grace prevails. He thence proceeded to show the necessity of having the kingdom of heaven set up in our hearts, in order to sanctification. O how much I was blessed by hearing this discourse! I heard him again at Spitalfields, and twice received the sacrament to-day.

In the latter sermon, on 2 Kings v, 12, I was pleased with his criticism on Naaman's words. He said that our versions contained an egregious blunder, in reading verse 18 in the future instead of the past tense. It should be, "When thy servant *hath* gone into the house of Rimmon, and *hath* bowed," &c.* His conscience accused him of worshipping an idol, instead of the God of the whole earth.

3.—I attended preaching at the Foundry at five o'clock, and at ten a friend took me to Miss Marsh's meeting for Christian communion. The friends spoke their experience, and they greatly encouraged me by giving their opinion that I was in a justified state. At the close of the meeting, Mr. Maxfield [whom a good bishop had ordained, to prevent Mr. Wesley from preaching himself to death] administered the sacrament. While they prayed, I thought the Lord gave me the witness of his Holy Spirit.

[Miss Marsh was a lady of good education; and, having a small independent fortune, devoted her life, and all she had, in doing good. She sometimes made excursions to Bristol, and other parts of the country, where she met classes, &c.]

25.—Since the 8th of this month, I have been confined to my room by a fever; but, by the grace of God, I am now recovered.

* Dr. John Lightfoot makes the same remark.

O how good and gracious was the Lord to me in my affliction! My temptations were suspended. My cry was, "Father, take me to thyself!" I had a longing desire to depart, and be with Christ. I had no doubt but that I should see and enjoy the Lord for ever. God gave me such tokens of his love that I could not be silent. I once exclaimed, in the words of Addison, "Come, see a Christian die."

In the beginning of this affliction I had examined my heart, and seen myself as deserving the heaviest wrath of God, and knew not how to escape; but instantly I found a trust in Christ, which I thought would keep me from perdition. Satan again assaulted me with predestination. For six or eight hours my conflicts, accompanied by many tears, were so great that the sweat ran down me like water; but from this time I began to recover.

30.—To-day I came to London, but much harassed with the thought that I was flying from persecution, and leaving the cross behind. My design was to get food for my soul; and I was much blessed under Mr. Richardson's sermon, as also under Mr. Oliver's prayer.

Oct. 16.—I have had a relapse of my fever for the last ten days; but while under the chastisement of my heavenly Father, my mind was kept in peace. I tasted much of his presence and love in my affliction, and felt a longing desire to depart, to be with Christ.

I have held fast the promises in this illness, and wait to see them fully accomplished.

17.—I went to see my father, and found him low and dejected. He said it was chiefly occasioned by my being turned a Methodist; for my patrons would hear of it, and cast me off to provide for myself. I told him that since the late change in my views, I durst not now spend my time and money in taverns and theatres. I now neither dared to swear, nor lie, nor commit the least known sin. I asked, if he found me less obedient, or affectionate, or in any thing altered for the worse. He was silent, and seemed satisfied with my defence.

18.—I was this evening admitted into the band meeting, and was much blessed in hearing those pious and holy souls who have long walked in the way speak their experience. I went also to another meeting, where the Lord's supper was administered, as before.

23.—This day I returned to Purfleet, much refreshed and strengthened in my soul. Glory be to thee, O God! Do thou, O Lord, preserve my soul when I am distant from the Shepherd's tent! Supply from thy fountain such wisdom and knowledge as my soul may need; and make me a faithful steward of thy bounty, whether temporal or spiritual, that I may freely give of thy store, conformably to the designs of thy providence.

Nov. 7.—The Lord was pleased to suffer my ague and fever to return, and sometimes

to be accompanied with delirium : a disease which affects many in these low and marshy grounds. I have not been able to keep my thoughts stayed on the Lord, but have comforted myself with the thought, that I was in the wilderness state described in Mr. Wesley's sermon : and yet, all do not pass through that state to the promised land. I have also been much tempted to doubt of the pardoning love of God, which I received while in London. Because it was not incontestably clear, I feared it was not really the case ; and that my comforts were only the drawings of the Father.

20.—My fever and ague still continue, and my inward conflicts and temptations are unabated : I could scarcely think of God ; nay, I seemed angry with him, because he had not favoured me as some others who had not sought him half so long. I felt also many sins and foolish desires rising in my heart, but did not give way to them. My mind, however, was greatly relieved in hearing Mr. Wesley, on Luke xxii, 31, 32, in which he showed how Satan was allowed of God to sift his children, as wheat, that the chaff might be blown away. I saw that I had undergone that sifting, and much in the same manner as Mr. W. had described. I was, indeed, much edified when I heard that other believers had been assailed with the horrid temptations which had long pursued me.

21.—This morning my soul was very happy

in prayer, though my fever still continued. And when I am thus happy in God, my bowels most yearn after the souls of poor sinners. I have collected a few of these to attend our evening meetings, and pray and talk to them for two or three hours together, notwithstanding my fever. They have not been able to resist my words, but melt and weep under my feeble exhortations. While thus arguing and pleading with them, and seeing them unable to resist my words, I have myself found surprising comfort and joy; and my memory has become so retentive, that pertinent texts have poured in upon me with uncommon light and force.

Dec. 2.—This day I read over Bishop Taylor's "Rules of Holy Living," and fell down on my knees, praying that God would forgive all the loose speeches and slanders of my tongue. The book enlightened my conscience with regard to many of my sins. While in Portugal, I had wronged my deputy of £23. Had he complained to the board, it is probable that they would have given it in my favour. But I was not sure that they would not have given it against me. No matter; though several years had elapsed, my conscience now compelled me to pay him the money.

Sunday, 9.—Mr. Windsor met our little class in Purfleet. He was lively, and his words were blessed to us all. His words indicated earnestness of soul, strength of faith, and ardour of love. He greatly assisted me

in the method of pouring out my soul to God; and he was the instrument of many blessings conferred upon me, particularly in his method of thanksgiving in certain parts of his prayers: no wonder that David should delight in the society of saints.

Next day, in reading Mark xi, the 24th verse was much blessed to me. I said, "Lord, I do believe that all thy promises shall be fulfilled to me." And, indeed, in that hour it was given me to believe with the heart unto righteousness. God truly blessed my soul; and left not the least doubt of his then fulfilling his promise. The power of God rested so strongly on my soul, that I felt my bosom glow with love; and was ready to say, "Lord, it is enough. If thou givest more, take me to thyself!" The Lord is merciful and gracious. He will not chide for ever. He makes us to hear joy and gladness, and causes the bones which he has broken to rejoice. O my soul, remember his marvellous works, that in all future temptations thou mayest trust in him!

11.—This morning the Lord was pleased to give me fresh tokens of his love. He overwhelmed me with his goodness, and I felt that I could love him because he had first loved me. My prayer was, that he would renew me in his divine image, create in me a clean heart, and bring in his everlasting righteousness. Truly he has heard my prayer. When I had continually evil thoughts, and

took pleasure in many of them, I told those things to Mr. Windsor, and was much encouraged when he said that believers in general were assailed in the same way. I named also a temptation to pride: after giving an exhortation, I had overheard a hearer say, "What a wonderful young man is that! I hope God will bless him."

21.—My happiness has continued till to-day, when, alas! while talking to a man about the wolves in Portugal, I dropped a word that was not strictly true, with regard to my having seen those wolves. It was in a moment of confusion caused by his questions. I sighed and groaned most of the day for pardon; and next day felt my peace return, but not with the faith and confidence I had before. Thanks be to God, however, that this year, which began with so much bitterness and anguish, ends with days of sunshine and peace!

January 1, 1765.—O Lord, do thou grant that this year may be productive of universal holiness, and that all nations may acknowledge the Saviour of men! In an especial manner, do thou bless us of this nation; and make us a holy nation, a peculiar people. Let peace be within our walls, and righteousness in our dwellings. Fill our hearts with love, and let our lives show forth thy praise. Continue to us the means of grace, and grant that we may never provoke thee to withdraw thy favours. Glory be to thee, O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

O my soul, stay upon thy Saviour, and hang upon his word. Is it not music to thy ear and health to thy bones? Last year, at this time, thou sawest no beauty in thy Saviour, nor comeliness that thou shouldst desire him: nay, thou didst despise and reject him. Thou didst account his life folly and misery below. But now, O my soul, go forth with the voice of singing, and declare his righteousness to the ends of the earth. The Lord hath redeemed thee, and plucked thee as a brand from the burning. He hath brought thee out of darkness into marvellous light, and given “the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins,” through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

5.—Two days ago I felt much encouragement while praying for the prosperity of our little class; and this morning the Lord seemed to receive my prayers when I besought him for my relatives in London, and in France.

21.—This evening, being in London, I attended the bands, and happened to sit on the next bench to Mr. Wesley and the preachers. His eye caught me; and he asked me whether I found it good to attend the means of grace. I answered in the affirmative. He inquired again, whether I did not feel an anxious desire after preferment. I rejoined, “No;” my one desire being to love God. I then sat down; but was much harassed that I had not spoken my experience. The truth is, I was not then so happy as I had been in the begin-

ning of the year. But O ! before the meeting closed, I was much comforted to hear two or three souls praise God, and tell of his marvellous grace. O Lord, hasten the time when I shall praise thee without ceasing, and when all my heart “shall be holiness to the Lord !” What avails it that thou hast pardoned my sins, if thou dost not renew me in thy image, and give me that mind that was in Christ !

“Give me thy only love to know,
Give me thy only love !”

Feb. 3.—I have spent a comfortable hour with two or three persons who have a desire to save their souls. But pride began to rise in my heart from what one said of me. Alas ! it mixes itself with all I do. It is neither decent nor wise to praise men to their face. I was buffeted also with hypocrisy, for talking of the love of God, when I felt but little of it in my heart. Yet my conscience acquits me of doing this to seek the praise of men.

6.—I rose this morning at my usual hour, before five o’clock, and read the lessons and Psalms, and a sermon by Mr. Wesley ; which course I now always pursue. It happened to be the sermon on the witness of the Spirit. Some things in it staggered me, because I could hardly say that it was my experience. However, after reading, I went to prayer, and was much comforted.

7.—To-day I wrote to my father, and gave him an account of the change which grace

had wrought in my heart. I ventured also to point out to him some prominent errors of the Church of Rome. And being very happy in the love of God, I wrote also to Mr. Windsor, at whose band meeting my soul had been much refreshed.

27.—I have been in a deplorable state of mind for some days past, and felt all my former peevishness return. O my nature! my nature! I really believe, had not God directed me to the sermon of Mr. Wesley, on “We are not ignorant of Satan’s devices,” my spirit would have failed before the Lord, and I should have given up my hope as lost. My unholy tempers, and the men with whom I have to do, make me cry for entire renovation of heart.

March 6.—I have been exceedingly tried and tempted for the last four days. I have been too dead to God; and if I trifle but for a moment, I receive condemnation. The voice of God, by the secret influence of his Holy Spirit, warns me of the least danger. It seems as though the Lord were calling me off from terrestrial things to close communion with himself. Lord, I bless thee that thou hast put it into my heart to pray for this; and hast discovered to me my utter helplessness, that without thee I can do nothing.

I have lately read in “the Christian Library” a treatise on fasting, by Robert Bolton; a holy minister, and a skilful surgeon. It is either by fasting twice a week, or by

early rising, that I am so weak as not to kneel upright in prayer for any length of time. If it proceed from the latter, I am sure it will be a far heavier trial to lie in bed than to rise at an early hour.

10.—I heard Mr. Wesley preach a charity sermon at Spitalfields chapel, for the benefit of the poor weavers. He observed, that by giving one pound the Methodists might gain ten, and stir up the Church of England to charities. At night he kept a love-feast, and was in great spirits. Next morning he was about to set out on his long journey to the north of England and Scotland, till October. I believe there were few dry eyes in the place. My prayer was, “O Lord God, do thou accompany him wheresoever thou shalt call him; and make thy face to shine upon him! Do thou give him a mouth, and wisdom, that none of his adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist; and receive him at last to thy kingdom of glory!”

16.—This morning I made a bold, I do not say a wise, request to God: I asked, having a strong sensibility of his presence in my soul, that he would finish his work, and take me out of the world to my Redeemer's kingdom. The request was followed with so much peace and joy, that I thought he was about to take me away. O, with what rapture did I anticipate dying! My hope was full of immortality. I could sing the pilgrim's hymn with delight. I want no foot of land,

(unless it be under ground,) nor wife, nor children, nor honours, nor pleasures, nor preferments, nor any creature. Christ supplies all these to me, and ten thousand times more.

21.—I have not been so happy for the last three days as I was before. Notwithstanding, a friend to whom I had unbosomed my state, said, he believed that I had received the abiding witness of the Spirit. I believed his words, and felt happy; and prostrating myself before the Lord, I felt abundant joy to overflow my heart. But, alas! in the midst of my joys, a man from Greenwich came on business to spend the evening with me. His conversation was loose, jocular, and carnal, and much mixed with profane swearing. I often tried to divert the conversation to better subjects, but failed in courage to reprove him. O, how I was condemned for allowing him to take the name of God in vain, almost in every sentence! The Holy Spirit spoke once, yea, twice; but I did not obey the heavenly monitor. When he was gone, a cloud was left on my mind; and I besought a pardon with cries and tears. Having to breakfast with him next morning at an inn, I prayed the Lord to restrain him from those shameful words; and, blessed be the Lord, I do not remember that he swore once all the time I was with him.

April 5.—This being Good Friday, I fasted till near six in the evening. O that I had abstained also from sin! But in the course of the

day I gave way to anger against a person ; and it was nearly an hour before I could recover an even temperature of mind. O Lord, I fall every moment without thy special support. Root out of my heart every plant which is not of thy planting ! Sometimes, when I have been delivered from a temptation, I have thought that I would never distrust the Lord again. I find, however, that if Satan be driven from one retreat, he enters at another, and laughs at human resolutions.

7.—This being Easter-day, I had a gracious season at the Lord's table ; for the Lord was in the means. In the afternoon, I was both comforted and tempted. I have often thought that the Lord would send me out to publish his gospel to perishing sinners ; and yet I know I have not gifts for it, but am aware that I have pride enough ; and, I believe, zeal, but fear it is not "according to knowledge." I prayed for humility, and that God would never suffer me to speak in his name, no, not even privately, in my own spirit, or wisdom, or knowledge. Are there not murderers enough of souls already ? Surely there are special receptacles in hell for false teachers. These are the armour-bearers of Satan, the captains of his thousands. What a blow he strikes at the kingdom of Christ when he gets one of these into commission !

25.—O, how has the fear of losing my leg by amputation tormented me for the last four days ! [Mr. Valton told me that the com-

plaint in his ankle came at first with a chilblain. The complaint seemed to go away, and he walked for twenty years without any appearance of lameness. Sea bathing was recommended as an antidote. However, in the course of thirty years, the bone became carious, and ultimately, after suffering the severest of pains, it occasioned his death.]

28.—Mr. Windsor paid us another visit, and met us at Mr. Healey's. "As iron sharpeneth iron, so does the countenance of a man his friend." When in company with good men, all my fears and nervous agitations vanish away.

Saturday, May 4.—I went up to town to hear the gospel, and spend the Sabbath in the divine ordinances. In the passage-boat there were three common women. The miserable creatures swore bitterly; and one of them addressed herself to me,—from what motive I will not judge. I lifted up my heart to God for a word in season, and watched an opportunity to lay before them the greatness of their danger. I had scarcely begun to speak before one of them was pricked in her conscience. Another, the most daring of the three, was obliged to leave the cabin. The third wept once and again. I advised her to beg her bread, with assurance that in six months the Lord would direct her into a way of getting an honest livelihood.

6.—Being in company with Mr. Henton, a preacher, he asked me if I had now the love

of God in my heart. I answered, that the Lord was very gracious to me ; thereby evading a direct answer, because my evidence of the direct witness was not clear. O Lord, why do I thus doubt ? If I am thy child, send forth thy blessed Spirit to bear witness with mine, that I may unceasingly cry, Abba, Father ! What variety of changes occurs in my Christian warfare ! Now borne aloft on the wings of faith, and then cast down with doubts : now one sin pushing sorely at me, and then another : one while the soul wrapped up into the third heaven, and then grovelling in the dust : one day experiencing much of the divine life, and then doubting whether it be a real work of grace. O, happy are they who experience a permanent sense of the divine favour, and can rejoice in assurance of glory, notwithstanding the daily exercises and temptations of life !

11.—O how dead and lifeless have I been for these few days, and yet no way troubled about it ! My thoughts were dissipated, my confessions unfeeling, my repentance verbal. I fear I have lost the substance of religion, and scarcely hold the shadow. I have often said, that if I lost ground, or abated my earnestness, I should be the most miserable being alive. In this I was mistaken. It is now plain to me that we may fall away, and yet not lay it to heart. It must be, O Lord, of thy tender mercy and unwillingness to part with a child of thine that thou layest, as the

last effort of thy Spirit, trouble and heaviness on his mind, and sendest a blast on all his endeavours, that peradventure he may recollect himself, and return to thee again.

19.—This evening, about six o'clock, I was at prayer, and felt so lifeless and forlorn that I resolved not to go to the class. My eyes were swollen with weeping, and I thought my friends were no way likely to quicken me. However, after prayer, I set out, and had a refreshing time. A woman expressed a desire to meet with us; and the next day her husband came and related how he had attended the ministry of Mr. Whitefield, Mr. Romaine, and Mr. Madan, in London, but had lost his good impressions by coming to Purfleet, and leaving the means of grace. She had opposed the truth in London; but now they both seem in earnest with God. Three are now added to our little flock. I read and prayed with them, and left them happier than I was myself.

June 1.—Company coming from London, I was aware that they would expect me to dine with them; and doubting how I could do it with safety, I hid myself in a garret for prayer. At length I resolved to set out for London; but the tide would not permit. In the evening, after calling the names of the labourers, I found a note requesting my attendance at the inn. So I was obliged to go, and had not been in their company long before they began to drink filthy toasts. I

avoided drinking them. At length they called upon me to give mine. This, also, I refused. One of the company gave a toast for me, and insisted on my drinking it. This, blessed be God, I refused, and took my leave. One of my most intimate acquaintances followed me, and entreated that I would not estrange myself from all my friends. Another of my old friends followed me; and seeing my views were changed, he very much approved of my steady adherence to my religious principles. Thus, through the blessing of God, my soul escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler.

Sunday, June 9.—A small party of us, taking our dinners in our pockets, walked to Bexley, to hear the good vicar, the Rev. Mr. Piers. He was one of the first clergymen that opened their churches to Mr. Wesley, and gave him the right hand of fellowship.* He preached an excellent sermon to a dull

* The first conference was held at Bristol, in the year 1744; attended by six clergymen and four lay preachers; viz., Messrs. J. and C. Wesley, Henry Piers, John Hodges, Samuel Taylor, John Merriton; and the lay preachers were, Thomas Maxfield, Thomas Richards, John Bennet, and John Downs. In 1747, the fourth conference was held in London, when Mr. Piers was again present, and he continued his attachment to the end of life. I joined a maternal great-grandson of his in the Dartford society, in 1817. Mr. P. incurred the common odium of Methodism. When preaching at the visitation at Sevenoaks, about the middle of the discourse the archdeacon walked out, and all the clergymen followed; but the congregation stayed to the end.

congregation, on Paul's description of charity. In the afternoon we walked to Wellen, and heard one of Mr. Wesley's preachers.

15.—Three weeks ago I went to the shop to visit our carpenter, who had lately joined the class ; and last night I was present at his departure, I would hope, to glory. He was cut off by a fever, in seven days. On being taken ill, he sent for me, and said he knew that his Redeemer lived. I doubted of this, as he had a quarrel with his neighbour. He bewailed his hasty temper, and I got them reconciled ; and they received the sacrament together. A day or two before his death, he said, “What reason I have to bless God that I ever saw you ! ay, to love you better than my father :” with many other feeling words. Yet I was suspicious that the wound was only slightly healed ; not so by me, for I preached the law to him, and applied but few gospel promises, and prayed a whole day for his salvation.

21.—I went again to London, that I might enjoy Christian fellowship in the classes and bands, and hear the word of God. Next day I paid a visit to my father. Alas ! how often did he take the name of God and Christ in vain in ordinary conversation ! How strong must that infatuation be, when one who lives in gross sin can be assured of his salvation, because he fancies that he belongs to the true church ; and that another, who prays and strives, cannot be saved, because he is not of his faith !

On *Monday, 24*, I heard Mr. Jones,* on Matthew iii, 8, 9. While expounding John the Baptist's sermon to the Scribes and Pharisees, a man wept aloud, and went out. We got him into the vestry, and prayed with him. My soul, blessed be the Lord, was much refreshed during this visit.

July 9.—This morning Jesus did anew most sweetly reveal himself to my soul. "All his garments smelled of myrrh, aloes, and cassia." I could rejoice in his salvation. Yet in the midst of these manifestations, it would be suggested that I was under a delusion. How was it possible that I, whose heart was so wicked, should be so happy in the love of God! Notwithstanding, I have strong assurances, that if the Lord take me out of the world, my departure shall be full of peace and joy. I can anticipate dying with great delight.

25.—This morning Brother Weaver came to tell me, with tears of joy, that he believed he had found the Lord last evening, after he went home from the class. We kneeled down to thank the Lord. My soul participated in his felicity. I exhorted him to hold

* Mr. John Jones was a medical man, of good learning and great abilities. When Erasmus, a Greek bishop, was in London, Mr. Wesley advised Mr. Jones to get ordained, that he might assist at the altar. But Mr. Charles, denying the validity of this ordination, would not allow him to officiate. The issues were, that Mr. Jones procured ordination from the bishop of London, and was afterward made vicar of Harwich, where he closed his career.

it fast : we embraced, and parted ; I being in haste to go to Chelmsford assizes. This intelligence did amazingly cheer and refresh me on the journey.

[About this time, Mr. Valton began to study physic, that he might give away medicine to certain poor people, who could not employ a medical man. He began also to instruct one or more of the children, by hearing their lessons at convenient hours. Here follows a plan how his day was spent.]

My present practice is, to rise at five, my constitution not allowing me to rise earlier. Before I dress, I offer up a short ejaculatory address to God. When dressed, I pray for nearly half an hour, and read the morning lessons, and a few pages of some other book. Sometimes I substitute one of the Epistles. When my scholar comes, we read the Psalms, verse for verse, and then use Mr. Wesley's form of prayer : (abridged and modified from Mr. Joseph Alleine.) Before eight, I pray in few words to God ; and at night I read another chapter, and sing a hymn, and then go to prayer. At twelve, after the office hours, I offer up a short prayer, imploring forgiveness of the sins of the day, and that God would preserve me the remainder of the day. I then hear my scholar, and add a few short petitions. At one o'clock, I dine ; and then with my scholar read the evening Psalm, and at three, utter a short prayer. At five, my scholar and I pray for pardon and protection

during the night. At six, I confess the sins of the day, and implore a pardon. I then attend some meeting, or walk. At eight, I use Mr. Wesley's form, in order to aid me the more in praying for others. I generally go to bed immediately after nine, when my prayer is but short, and presently fall asleep. Such is my daily walk with God, but much interrupted by journeys and business.

Yesterday I had a remarkable answer to prayer. A week ago, the soldier and his wife complained in the class, that they had no place of retirement for prayer; and that they were exposed to much ungodly language in the barrack. I was affected with their case, and led to assure them that the Lord would provide them a place; and yesterday the surgeon came to me in a considerable degree of warmth, some things having been stolen from the hospital: he insisted that the woman should be displaced. This enabled me to give the key of the room to the soldier's wife, where she and her husband could often retire for prayer.

Aug. 17.—This day I had a special trial, to humble my soul: one of the workmen under my care gave me very abusive language; and yet I did not report him, lest it should be prejudicial to his bread. It harassed me all the day; meanwhile I prayed for him, and felt nothing contrary to love.

21.—This morning I had a propitious hour while at morning prayer. My soul was

exceedingly happy in God. I thought I could now say, "Father, not my will, but thine be done." O Lord Jesus, I give thee my body, and soul, and every thing else which I esteem or value on earth. Claim me as thy right, keep me as thy charge, fight for me in all assaults, and revive me when I am cast down!

Sept. 3.—During the last few days I have had but little of the sensible comforts and overflowings of joy which I have before experienced. But peace I still enjoy; peace which the world cannot take away. I now perceive that we are all but learners in the school of Christ.

Oct. 4.—A nervous gloom and agitation seemed to seize me. Such a day surely I have never seen. O my God, why hast thou forsaken me? I prayed for death, life being a burden. No power to pray, no faith, no love.

5.—My cry was, "Save, Lord, or I perish!" I had a dreadful conflict with the enemy of my soul. Ah! Lord, I cannot drink this cup. O remove it, if it be thy blessed will! Yet not my will, but thine be done. I was ready to curse the day of my birth. Pity me, O Lord! for I would love thee with all my heart and soul. The Sabbath comes, but no rest, no peace; no comfort even at church. In the evening I met the class twice; but on kneeling to pray, was not able to raise my voice.

“From shore to shore why should I run ;
When none his tiresome self can shun ?”

17.—Yesterday I came to London for succour and comfort. I had prayed the Lord to open my way, which he was pleased to do. How good art thou, O my God ! what thanks are due to thee, the almighty Parent of good ! At the Foundry I heard Mr. Jones, at five o'clock in the morning, on 1 Cor. iii, 11–14. He comforted me much, by showing that a believer could not perish ; but that he who rests in justification, and does not seek for sanctifying grace, must be saved by fire.

18.—I heard Mr. William Darney, at five, expound the sixty-third Psalm. The dry and thirsty state of the wilderness suited my experience. I could say, “O God, thou art my God ; early will I seek thee.”

[This preacher was a native of Scotland, and educated in high Calvinistic opinions. On joining Mr. Wesley he professed a belief in the Methodist doctrine ; yet the doctrine of sanctification, as taught by Mr. Wesley, he did not believe ; and his favourite doctrine of the final and unconditional perseverance of the saints he never renounced. As a master encourages his workmen, and as a general animates his army, so we should ever encourage the saints to persevere ; yet this should not be done without all the strong and salutary cautions of the sacred writings.

With regard to indwelling sin, St. Clement, a companion of St. Paul, and Macarius and

all the primitive fathers, teach as the Methodists. But Augustine, though he had taught the same, yet, when aged and sick, fell into nervous infirmities, and became timid and fearful lest he should perish; he read the seven penitential psalms daily, with tears, and wrote his retractions; among which he contended that the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans was not, as he had formerly said, "delivered in a figure to bring over the Jews from legal bondage to the liberty of Christ, but was St. Paul's own experience." Notwithstanding these opinions, Mr. Darney was a most laborious missionary man for more than twenty years, chiefly in the manufacturing districts and in the north of England. It is true, he durst not preach these doctrines very openly; but he would do it with a friend, and in remote corners of the land. The Calvinists liked to hear him, and gave him the appellation of *Scotch Will*.

Once, indeed, he was detected in a very remarkable manner, as was related to me by an aged Baptist minister in the north. He preached in a yard, and stood on a hog'shead. In the discourse, he reverted to his favourite subject, perseverance: he declared that the saints could never fall; no, so sure as he stood there, they could never fall. The preacher here augmenting the powers of emphasis by a too heavy stamp of the foot, in went the head of the hog'shead, along with the preacher; and it was with difficulty, he being corpulent, that

his friends could extricate him. This may illustrate what Mr. Valton adds.]

Oct. 21.—This evening Mr. Darney drank tea with me at my lodgings, and the conversation proved very hurtful to me. I told him, that for some time I had been wrestling with God for a clean heart, and for an instantaneous deliverance from inward impurity. To my great surprise and discouragement, he said, there was no such thing attainable on earth; that the notion was quite unscriptural; that while we are on earth we must be growing in grace, and always receiving fresh supplies of strength; and, consequently, that the notion of an instantaneous deliverance was quite unfounded! This discourse threw me back into great discouragement. I retired, and wrote as under.

“Then, Lord, if this be true, I shall one day fall by the hand of Satan, who is ever following men for destruction. Great God! and can it be thy will that this cursed concupiscence should continue as long as there is life in man? Shall I always be in danger from this? Where, then, is thy great salvation? Ah! come, death, thou great sanctifier, thou joint saviour with Christ, thou that preparest us for glory, and deliver me from sin! Christ has done his part, in the purchase of redemption, and in preparing me for thy finishing hand. Come, O death, bring forth thy top-stone with shouting, Grace, grace unto it! Finish the work, and prepare me for the Lord.”

After this discourse I almost despaired of holding out to the end. I would have given a thousand pounds, had I so much money at command, not to have heard it. The consequences might have been worse, only a friend in the city had let me read a letter from Mr. Brandon, then in the Colchester circuit, giving an account how he had attained the grace of sanctification. I thought I should, situate as I was, one day be conquered. On naming this to Mr. Darney, he advised me to marry. What a variety of helps there must be, in addition to what thou, O Lord, hast done ! Nay, death must lend the finishing hand. I almost repent coming up from Purfleet.

24.—This evening my continual prayer was answered. Mr. Wesley arrived, in perfect health, just in time to step into the pulpit and preach on Psalm lxxxi, 10: “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.” What an extensive promise,—ask, and have ! This discourse, opportunely, removed my doubts about instantaneous salvation ; yet, otherwise, I was blessed under Mr. Darney’s sermons. I see, when we enter the field against the world, the flesh, and the devil, we must hang out the bloody flag,—to conquer or die ;—no quarter to the old man ;—and victory is sure to the persevering soul.

Dec. 25.—This morning I rose early, and met the society at four o’clock. At night we had buns, after the manner of the London love-feasts ; and God blessed us together. I

received a very comfortable letter from Mr. Wesley, in answer to mine of the 17th. But, O! my soul, for the last six weeks, has been greatly afflicted with nervous gloom, and sorely harassed with temptations, often more than I thought nature could have borne. This must be my infirmity, since I have peace with God.

26.—This morning I could almost believe that God had cleansed my heart from sin: not from any more comfortable communion I had with God; but I thought it must be near, and that I ought to enjoy it, as it were, by anticipation,—a sure way to bring it by believing. Lord, do thou confirm it by the testimony of thy Spirit! Amen.

Jan. 1, 1766.—By the mercy and goodness of God, I am brought safely to the beginning of the new year. May the Lord grant that I may improve the mercies of my added life and spend every hour to his glory! In the evening, I went to the renewal of the covenant at Spitalfields Chapel. It was a solemn and devout season, and God was eminently present. I now find an abiding sense of his love to my soul, and confidence to believe that my sins are blotted out; yet the enemy sometimes causes me to doubt a little, though not now with either pain or fear. The cause is, feeling some emotions of pride, and a desire of the esteem of men: I start at the thought, and pray to be delivered from them.

16.—I was much blessed this morning at

prayer, and felt encouraged to believe that the Lord had cleansed my heart from sin: yet, sometimes in the day, I felt fretfulness and wandering thoughts. Mrs. Smitton, a lady on a visit here, related her experience in the class. I truly rejoiced in spirit, in hopes of finding the same grace. Under such testimonies, I catch a flame from the celestial altar, which glows with hallowing influence. What, shall one member be blessed, and all the others not rejoice?

17.—While seeking a clean heart, and a right spirit, I have been much perplexed and misguided by some friends in London, of warm hearts, but less enlightened minds. They endeavour to force faith into me by saying, “Believe that the work is done, and it is done.” This has sometimes driven me almost to distraction, so that I have been ready to charge God foolishly for not honouring my acts of faith. If I am to ask the blessing, and expect it now, solely for the merits of Christ, this is the Scriptural way: but, if I am to expect it for the sake of my poor weak faith, what is this but to seek it by works? What is it, in fact, but to believe a lie, that the work is done when it is not done? Mr. Windsor, to whom I opened my mind on this point, greatly relieved me. Since then, I have had much peace and much comfort from the words of Habakkuk, “If it tarry, wait for it.” I am endeavouring to do so, and believe that I shall soon obtain it. How

valuable are spiritual guides and leaders who are divinely taught!

23.—O good Lord, what a day! and the day set apart to praise God for my conversion! I read books likely to give me light, but could find nothing relevant. I am always, either in thought, or word, or work, doing amiss. I long to please God in all I do; and yet, such is my behaviour, and such is my nature, that I am grieving and displeasing him continually. My life is a sore burden; I fear I shall be ruined. I cannot bear it; nor can I hold out much longer. But what can I do? for hell I cannot bear! I must bear one or the other. I am damned if the Lord help me not. O that he would pity me! Avaunt, Satan! “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” I believe he will deliver me, and that these sore conflicts are for my good. My prayers have been mixed with strange cries and tears. Surely this is a time of trouble, and such as I never had since I became a seeker of salvation.

Sunday, 26.—This morning I was much comforted in prayer, and felt an overflowing of peace and love. In the evening, at our meeting, I expounded on the woman who had lost her piece of money, and a woman cried aloud for mercy while I was in prayer, and in a short time was enabled to praise the Lord. Her soul was so filled with a sense of God’s pardoning love as not to be able to contain her joys. This mightily encouraged me, and,

indeed, all the class. And we were the more encouraged, because she afterward retained her peace and joy. These are marks of the power and presence of God, which cause the angels to rejoice.

Feb. 8.—Through the mercy of God, I still enjoy peace, and have continued to do so for many days. Yesterday we spent in fasting and prayer, in our little class, for sister Edwards, whose life was thought to be in danger.

11.—William Thompson, a labourer, has joined our little class, and next evening brought his wife, and his brother and wife also, to our meeting. The latter had said she should not meet again. Thank God, our little flock is now increased to nine.

23.—At the class this evening, I had great faith for those that had not found peace. While at prayer, the room was filled with tears and cries. My soul pleaded, saying, “Lord, whom wilt thou bless?” “Ah!” cried one, “it will not be me, I am so unworthy.” “O no,” cried another, “I am more unworthy.” We continued in prayer till every one was made happy, except the soldier who had lately joined the class. He complained of the hardness of his heart, and seemed the more distressed to see others made happy while he was not so. I was much tempted, after I had returned home, to think that I should have faith for others, and almost none for myself. For the last fortnight I have

sunk back into my nervous gloom of agitation and inquietude, fearing I shall be lost at last. God only knows the conflicts and temptations through which I have passed. Yet, in the midst of my greatest agony, I thought I heard a soft whisper through my heart, and a whisper thrice repeated, "I have blessed thee; yea, and thou shalt be blessed."

April 14.—In the morning, while at breakfast, I felt my soul melted into tears of joy. In the evening of this day, it was suggested to me that I had not lost my Saviour, but that the terrible aspects of Satan and of hell, and the thought that I was quite fallen away, were only a taste of that bitter cup which some souls are called to drink, and which good Mr. Thomas Walsh found on his death-bed. These considerations greatly encouraged me.

18.—This evening, brother Weaver called me out to pray with two matrosses, (privates in the artillery,) who were committed for the murder of a man the preceding evening. The guard-room was full of soldiers. I trembled a little at first, but soon my nervous fears vanished away. I read part of Ezekiel xviii, "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness," &c.; sung and prayed, then talked to them; but, alas! they made efforts to deny the crime. The soldiers seemed deeply impressed, and behaved with the greatest seriousness: so I closed by singing and praying a second time. Next morning I

was with them again, and continued most of the time till they were taken away to the jail at Chelmsford. We collected them a little money, and I forwarded hymns and prayers for them soon after. I wrote to them during their confinement; but the case proving to be one of manslaughter, their repentance vanished away.

28.—I had written to Mr. Pennington to come and spend a Sabbath with us at Purfleet: and felt no misgiving after I had written the letter. However, yesterday, Mr. Mark Davis, a preacher in the London circuit, came and preached, at seven o'clock, on the roadside, to a pretty large congregation; and at six the congregation was very large. Next morning, at five, he preached in brother Weaver's house. Here a storm of high words rose on me and brother Weaver. He must, with a wife and four children, be turned out of bread, and I dismissed; the store-keeper and the commanding officer being incensed against me for bringing a stranger to preach close to the magazine. Mrs. Edwards interfered, and a soft answer turned away wrath. By this visit of Mr. P. five persons were added to the society; which was a happy circumstance, as part of the class were presently removed to Woolwich. During this conflict and storm, I was sick at home of a fever and ague; and my medical attendant was little aware that it was the agitated state of my mind which occasioned the fever.

During this fever, I was seized, as I thought, for death: my breathing ceased. My cry was, "O Lord, prepare me for dying!" In this state, I felt no condemnation for past sins, and had peace in my soul; but I expected that the Lord would have manifested himself to me in that glorious manner which he is often pleased to do to his dying saints. Such, indeed, were my peace and joy after this crisis, that I really thought the Lord had cleansed my heart from sin: my warm and hasty tempers seemed all subdued. If it be so, may the Lord bear his witness to the work!

29.—Walking to-day with brother Windsor, I told him my experience: he thought that God had indeed given me a clean heart; and I was not aware of feeling any wrong temper till, this afternoon, a degree of resentment rose in my heart. This good and happy frame has been connected with much enlargement in prayer, and an overflowing of tears, and praise, and joy.

June 3.—O what deadness have I experienced for the last two days! Terribly afraid of falling from grace, and of being borne away with wandering thoughts! Full of peevishness, anger, envy, and jealousy! Weary of life, and sorry for my birth! I really thought it was impossible for me ever to gain heaven. I know this is my infirmity, ever excited anew by crosses and trials. My cry was,

Hide me, O my Saviour, hide
Till the storm of life is past !
Safe into the haven guide ;
O receive my soul at last !”

July 11.—For the last six weeks I have had great and sore conflicts with the enemy of my soul. My cry now was, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?” Surely I cannot hold out beyond to-day. I prayed so often that my knees were sore, and ate nothing, except a little bread and cheese in the morning, till four o’clock. Some of my past sins were thrust in my face. Yet, thank God, I am kept from murmuring. Much of this is nervous infirmity, for when engaged for God, and meeting with his people, this dejection is altogether removed.

20.—This Sabbath morning, while at prayer, great encouragement was afforded me, accompanied with a strong persuasion “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, should ever be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.” I could talk with my Maker, and he graciously refreshed my soul. He now shows me that my depression and my wanderings are occasioned very much by want of faith in the promises. O gracious Saviour, enable me to rely solely on thy wisdom and strength ; and strip me of all dependance on an arm of

flesh! Glory be to thee, my ever faithful Lord!

Aug. 12.—I have received great light by reading “the Gospel Glass,” in “the Christian Library:” a very searching book. I discovered many spots, but was persuaded the Lord would wipe them all away; and I saw so many marks of a sound conversion as to afford me great comfort, and, especially, as I was assured that what I had discovered amiss should all be done away. O how manifold are the mercies of God to me! To recount them would be as impossible as to number the sands on the seashore. God is love: and they that have most love are most in the divine favour; for God loves his own image.

O Lord, I beseech thee, enable me to glorify thee in my body and my spirit, which are thine; make me willing to be spent for thee in thy service, upright and honest in thy sight! Let thy glory only be my aim, thy cross my boast and joy, and thy crown my final portion! I long to serve thee for thy own sake, to be wholly thine, and ever abased, as a poor thing, at thy feet.

24.—Being in London, I heard Mr. Wesley with great comfort, and was delighted to find that Mr. Whitefield and he, though divided in connections, were nevertheless of one heart and one soul.

29.—This being my intercession day, which I spent much in prayer, I kneeled down at twelve; and no sooner was I engaged

with God, than I felt a strange and silent alteration, and, for nearly five minutes, began to cry, "Glory, glory, glory be to God!" Then, after a moment of calm, I said, "Thou hast delivered me from all my sin. Thou hast not failed of all that thou hast promised in thy word. Glory be to thee, thou hast given me the desire of my heart over all my enemies, whom, I trust, I shall see no more for ever." "O Lord," my cry was, "I am sure thou hast destroyed my sin, and made me holy; I am sure thou hast; I am sure thou hast performed the work. O give me the seal, and let me, if it please thee, depart hence, and be for ever with the Lord!"

It was, however, suggested by the enemy, "You see now the fruit of much prayer and of walking closely with God." Grace in my heart replied to the tempter with shouting, "Grace, grace upon it!" My words were, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." The Lord, I believe, has removed the stone from my heart, and will perfect his work with acclamations of grace and glory. Being now very happy, I prayed that the Lord would not suffer me to be high-minded or vainglorious, but ever keep me lowly at his feet, and never suffer me to lose the blessing. I fell down on my face, and praised the Lord; for my efforts to pray failed. I was lost in wonder, love, and praise. I now felt

“The sacred awe which dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love.”

Yea, I felt it, and rejoiced in the Lord.

I next, according to custom, sat down to read the Psalms and lessons for the day ; and falling down on my knees, a much greater portion of love flowed into my heart.—O, how I then began to praise the Lord for Mr. Wesley, for raising him up to preach the whole gospel ! I prayed earnestly, not only for him, but also for Mr. Whitefield, that the Lord would give him to see the truth of what Mr. Wesley preached. I felt a great desire to write to him an account of what God had done for my soul, but was deterred by the fear of vain glory.

30.—Glory be to God, I have still reason to believe, and hold fast my confidence, that the Lord has delivered me from all my inward foes ; and that sin shall no more have place in me. I am lost in amazement at his mercy, when I consider how often he has delivered me from the most imminent dangers. O, verily, thou art God, loving and gracious : I see thy hand in all my ways. O the many snares which have been laid for me, and yet the Lord has preserved me !

Sept. 1.—Various doubts have crossed my mind to-day, whether the work which the Lord has wrought in me be real ; but I have endeavoured all in my power to resist them. And, blessed be the Lord, I do not know that I have felt any thing in my heart contrary to

the divine change. O, I never could have imagined that there were such condescension, love, and parental tenderness in the great JEHOVAH toward worms of dust and corruption !

While writing as above, O how the fire of love did kindle in my soul. I long to be prostrate at the Saviour's feet ; my soul is ravished with his love. What I have read in Mr. Wesley's " Plain Account of Christian Perfection," tended to comfort me, where he observes that " most of those who found the blessing in London, a few years ago, were delivered from sin before they were filled with love." This was much the same with me.

3.—I have been most sorely beset to-day, by the enemy of souls darting old temptations across my mind. But, in the presence of God, I believe that they come not from my own heart ; and I got rid of them as fast as they came ; yet they were very troublesome, and sorely afflicted me. I find many fears, also, lest I should lose the blessing ; but, by the help of God, I will believe as long as I can. I find myself so weak and tender, that a very little thing will discourage me. O, Saviour, do thou ever save me, and may thy will be done ! The enemy often suggests, " What if such and such things were to happen, you would soon see an end of all your perfection." The Lord rebuke thee, Satan.

9.—This has been a day of sore and dread-

ful temptations. While in Mr. Healey's house, after dinner, I sunk down on the floor. I requested them to leave me that I might wrestle with the Lord. My conflicts were hard with flesh and blood. Yet, the temptations coming from without, and being resisted, I felt no condemnation. I fled from them to visit the sick soldiers in the hospital.

11.—Lord, I am in great distress: my sorrow is great, and my temptations are strong. In some moments, when the billows go over my head, I am ready to say, “O that I had never been born! or, being born, that I had speedily made my exit!” O, Jesus, hear my complaint, and bear with me! O forgive my past and my present unfruitfulness, and lay it not to my charge! Deliver me, I pray, from the fear of man! I desire, were it possible, to spend my soul for thee, and yet am afraid to spend the body! I desire to help the thousands that are about me; I see I want more love to constrain me to do good. O, make it my meat and drink to do thy blessed will!

19.—This morning I heard, at Spitalfields, a most close and searching sermon: it came home like the address of Nathan to David, “Thou art the man.” In the evening I attended the select band, and, no preacher being present, I was requested to open the meeting. The enemy afterward tried to excite pride in me, because I had met the band. Yet I still believe that I have the blessing, though

the evidence be not so discernible as at the first.

23.—To-day I visited my sister, just returned from France, where she has resided for eighteen years, quite a gay lady, dressed *à la mode de Paris*. Having presently after to visit in a family where they were all Roman Catholics, I feared to suffer loss in my soul, and besought the Lord; and was heard in that I feared. I spoke pointedly against theatres, novels, and the prevailing follies of the age. And when mauled for Methodism, and leaving the true religion—as the pope's supremacy, the infallibility of the church, *cum multis aliis*—I was, by the grace of God, enabled to make such replies as they could not answer. But I saw their resolution was, "Thou shalt not persuade me, though thou dost persuade me." I stood firm against my dear sister's prayers and entreaties to return to the Romish religion. By-and-by she and others got angry with me, dropping delicate hints that I was a hypocrite, and that religion had made me mad. One young girl, however, seemed affected, and resolved to search the Scriptures, and with prayer, as I had advised her. Lord, I bless thee for preserving me in this day's fight! I am, therefore, the more encouraged to believe that the Lord has cleansed my heart.

29.—Yesterday, being Sunday, I attended at Spitalfields; and after service, having retired for prayer, the Lord did, in a most won-

derful manner, bless me. He poured his love so plenteously into my soul, that I hardly knew how to contain myself. I thought I must have cried, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin!" I never was so overpowered before, and my strength was well nigh spent in praising God. O how did my soul exult, and gasp to breathe the purer air of heaven! The saws and racks, the pope and purgatory, of which we had been talking a few days before, were now as nothing to me; all were trifles light as air. Christ is mine, and I am his.

Oct. 5.—The Lord abundantly poured his love into my heart this morning. I went to church very happy, and experienced much of the Almighty's presence. I do not know that I ever had a clearer testimony of the Spirit that my sins were forgiven, than I now have of being cleansed from sin. When I calmly put the question to myself, "Yea, has the Lord indeed destroyed my sin?" I felt the Spirit strongly answer by an inundation of love.

8.—The Lord still blesses me with an increase of love. I scarcely ever go on my knees but I find fresh manifestations of his goodness. I feel no doubt, no unbelief, nothing but love, unless it be now and then a fear lest my evil tempers should return. I feel no desires after the flesh, my sole wish being to live more and more to the glory of God. Yet I am tried with our little society.

Since some of our brethren were removed, they have not met well; and they find fault with me for reproving them too harshly when I hear that they do amiss.

I have lately paid three visits to Tilbury Fort, where I found two or three that have formerly been awakened under the word, but are now in a dark state: I have exhorted and prayed with them, in hopes of seeing the work revive. Four soldiers have now joined our class at Purfleet, who I hope will enliven our meetings.

Nov. 16.—Being in London to enjoy the means of grace, I read Mr. Walsh's Life a second time; and was much comforted by finding that, for many days, he experienced sore temptations, and at the time deep consolations. I find it has been exactly with me as it was with him. After reading the account of his death, I went to prayer, and had a remarkable sense of the presence of God. O, how sweetly did he deluge my soul with his love! But having caught a cold, I was violently seized with pain, and quite unable to walk; so I called a coach, and reached the barge. The next day I was worse, and looked for death every hour. But O with what transport was I filled! my joy was unspeakable, and full of glory. Like Stephen, I saw, as it were, the arms of Jesus open to receive me. I exclaimed, "Truly, his blood cleanses from all unrighteousness!"

17.—This day was as yesterday. The

thought of the Saviour, and of being with him, did so move and elevate my soul, that I thought the vessel must break, and that the love of God would kill me. My tongue was fully employed all the day in declaring the loving kindness of the Lord.

27.—My health is so far restored that I went to the class. Two of those who left us are now dead. I hope we are clear of their blood. I am rather low in my spirits. The enemy harasses me about neglecting the sick and the souls at Tilbury. How can I, under these temptations, “rejoice evermore?”

Dec. 11.—I have had a relapse of my fever, and much depression in my mind. But though there was no praise on my tongue, yet there was peace in my heart. I fell back in my chair at brother Healey’s; and, with uplifted eyes and extended arms, could bless the hand that chastened me. In all this affliction and dejection I have been kept from murmuring. I have great need to add to my faith, courage; then, under all my afflictions, I should be far more comfortable.

31.—O, Lord, what great and sore trials hast thou brought me through in the year past! Yea, thou hast brought me through all, and didst truly deliver me from the stony heart. O, God, there is no end of thy goodness and mercy; and if I never live to write another journal, let this last page speak my heart—GOD IS LOVE. I now know the meaning of that text, “Whom the Lord loveth, he

chasteneth." He purgeth us that we may bring forth more fruit. Glory be to thee, O Lord, most high, Three in One, and One in Three! Hallelujah, Hallelujah! Amen.

January 1, 1767.—"Blessed be the Lord my God, who hath brought me safe to the beginning of a new year: glory be to God, that I am not yet cut down! May I now "reward the tiller's toil," and become fruitful and faithful to the grace of God!

In the presence of God, I have no doubt that the Lord did deliver me from all sin; but whether it be so now or not, I cannot so clearly tell. If I were assured it was not so, I should be truly miserable. I cannot say when crosses come, and afflictions are to be borne, that I find either murmuring or impatience. I am content to suffer, so that I may be found blameless at the coming of the Lord. I hate all praise, feeling that I am vile, ignorant, and helpless; yea, "a dead dog" in the sight of Heaven. O, my God, make me an honest man, a true and upright Christian, such as thou wilt own in the day of thy coming!

Shine on thy work, that I may know the things that are given me of God. Make me a pillar in thy house, to go out no more for ever; and seal me to the day of redemption.

8.—A scrutiny took place in my breast this morning, whether I had lost the evidence of my sanctification. Did I really feel, and in some degree give way to, anger? I believe I did. O, how unhappy I am! Some time ago

a text was powerfully applied to my mind : “Gad—a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at last.” The first part of this text is fulfilled in me : I am overcome. O that the second may also at last be accomplished in me ! I feel unaccountable reluctance to visit the sick in the hospital, and the classes are all discouraged on my account.

[For about two months Mr. Valton had a return of his nervous fever, accompanied with ague, as he himself states. A gloom of discouragement overspread his mind, but not without intervals of sunshine ; and he was able most of the time to attend to the duties of the office. In three or four places his journal is painted in the strongest language of anguish ; and which none can fully sympathize with but those who have drunk of the same bitter cup. Hear what he says in his own abridgment which was published in the *Arminian Magazine*. It may be useful to others ; for God who delivered him can deliver them.]

19.—This day my miseries became insupportable. I was only fit for Bethlehem hospital. No demoniac could be worse. Cries, tears, groans, and moanings issued from my heart. I uttered words which I ought not, and yet could not help it. Like Job, I cursed the day of my birth, and concluded the day in an agony of prayer. My language was, “O I am damned, I am damned ! I am fully overcome. Poor unfortunate young

man! My poor soul, thou must perish at last. Farewell all hope. O my God, for Christ's sake take away my life! Lord Jesus, call me home, and deliver me from the evil to come, else I shall finally perish!"

20.—This morning I arose at five, and was till eight in utter despair. Tears, and groans, and stretching out my hands were part of my morning sacrifice. Yet I was kept from murmuring; but earnestly besought the Lord to take away my life. In the course of the day, I was comforted by a letter from a lady in London. She encouraged me to hold fast the promise I had received, "Gad—shall overcome at last." It is not one temptation, but a troop which have vanquished me. For the time I had power given me to pray, and to believe that I should at last overcome. O God, I bless thee for this consolation; and I beseech thee to forgive what in moments of anguish I have said amiss.

24.—This morning, after praying with much deadness, I soon became quite another man; all my trials and temptations were suspended. The transition so delighted me, that I scarcely knew how to utter the sentiments of my heart. I was so happy that I could scarcely pray, not so much from sensible comforts as from an apprehension of the removal of my temptations and trials. I thought the Lord had answered the prayers of some one who had been engaged with him on my account.

February 4.—Being in London for the last six days, and among Christian friends, my temptations have vanished away. Mr. Wesley comforted and encouraged me very much. On Monday I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Harle, at Mr. Windsor's. These have both been touched by the gospel within the last few weeks. I found, to my astonishment, that Mr. Harle lives at Rainham, but five miles from me. He took me home in his chaise to sleep, and next morning went with me to visit sick people. Like the young ruler, mentioned Mark x, he has great possessions and much zeal.

6.—Returning to Purfleet, my temptations seem to return. Yesterday I was in Bunyan's iron cage, terribly harassed by the enemy. This afternoon Mr. Harle came to see me; he is full of peace and joy, and imagines he shall see war no more. He stayed to attend our meeting, and was much blessed; but my fleece remains dry. What augments my present trials is, the remembrance of what I enjoyed after the 29th of last August, when for many weeks I walked in the light of the Lord, and talked with my Maker, as it were, face to face.

March 12.—I went to Mr. Harle's, to hear Mr. Glascock, whom he had invited to preach in his house. Soon after the text was read, Mr. Dearsby came in, the father of Mrs. Harle, dressed like a country squire, with a large horsewhip in his hand. He was a tall and

powerful man. He, and two more, began the fray by calling wicked names. He then endeavoured to strike the preacher, who evaded the blow by slipping up stairs. I sat still, expecting no farther harm. He then came up to me, and asked, "Who do you belong to?" I replied, "To the king." "No; you are that dog," &c., &c.; "and I will write and get two or three of you turned out of your places." On saying that, he drove me out of the room. I slipped into the kitchen; and, while engaged in praying for him and others, he followed me, violently swearing that he would broil me on the fire; and, seizing me by the breast and thigh, he laid me on the bars. The two, thinking, perhaps, that he was going too far, rescued me, and drove me out of doors into the hands of a mob of thirty or forty men. The mob, merciless as their employer, pulled me about various ways, crying out, "This is the clerk: pull him to pieces!" They tore my shirt from the top to the bottom. Some held me by my long hair; others by my cravat, which they called my bands; and one nearly succeeded in getting my watch. At length, through the mercy of God, the man who would have broiled me rescued me from their fury. Mr. Harle's brother conducted me through the yard; and at a small distance I met the vicar, the Rev. Mr. Walters, and his lady, come to see the after game, who saluted me with "Villain!" &c., &c. Three of the

mob followed me with execrations, intending to put me in the pool at the end of the town. Suffice it to say, I reached home to thank the Lord for having escaped fire, and water, and blood.

14.—For the last two days, since the storm at Rainham, I have enjoyed much of the presence of God, and find my faith in Christ much increased. In the course of the day, having besought the Lord for guidance, I wrote to Mr. Walters, in vindication of my conduct in visiting the sick ; for he had bitterly reproached me for this ; adding, that I should say, they would be damned. Four more of our class, and the more pious too, are ordered on foreign service. May the Lord be with them where their lot shall be cast !

16.—For the last month I have been sorely depressed with nervous dejection and temptations : but this morning, though weak, I was enabled to meet my friends, and my mouth was opened to pray and to speak with great power in the class. I found, by waiting upon the Lord, that my strength was much renewed. On examining my heart, I have found in myself three kinds of prayer : *first*, an impetuous, earnest, and violent desire that others might be blessed ; that is chiefly man's prayer : *secondly*, an humble, earnest, pleading prayer, proceeding from a broken heart, bleeding with compassion ; there is much of the Spirit of God in this,—it is generally much blessed to others : *thirdly*, the prayer of God,

or praying in the Holy Ghost. This consists in short phrases and sentences, chiefly in Scripture language; the soul feasts on the answer while one petition slowly succeeds another. This is the prayer which God emphatically inspires. It is often not relished by lukewarm professors; but on the purified, it leaves behind the mantle of Elijah. Lord, evermore teach me thus to pray! Since this depression has rested on my spirits, I have had much more life and spirits when I have prayed in the meetings, than in my closet.

22.—Being in London, I dined with a Roman Catholic party, consisting of my father, sister, and a young lady of well cultivated mind. This young friend and myself had rather a protracted disputation about Catholicism. My father was very attentive; but my sister, like Gallio, “cared for none of these things.” I perceived that my father approved of my arguments: the lady could not answer me with any degree of plausibility. After my father and I were left alone, he became very serious; and we parted with kind affection. I yielded to him in sitting for my portrait, to be sent to my brother, in South Carolina; but on this condition, that I should appear in a plain dress, and my Bible in my hand, with this inscription on it, “IN CHRISTO SPES MEA.”

July 7.—To-day I went to Sevenoaks for the re-establishment of my health; and found benefit soon after I got out of London. I

spent my evenings mostly with a few brethren at the preaching room, and once had much liberty in meeting a large class. The communion of the saints is known to none but pious souls.

August 14.—Being returned to Purfleet, I find my health better, and my soul refreshed. I had many good times in London, and led a sort of angelic life, frequently visiting the sick in St. Thomas's Hospital and the Marshalsea prison. I begin now to find more comfortable assurances of my salvation, but have not been without temptations. My discouragements and want of power to pray have surely been owing chiefly to an infirmity which affects the nerves.

24.—At our public meeting this evening we had two strangers, who are hearers of Mr. Whitefield. After singing, I felt enlargement in prayer; and, after a little circumlocution about setting up for a preacher, I ventured, for the first time, to take a text: Matt. v, 25, "Agree with thine adversary," &c. The Lord opened my mouth beyond all that I could have conceived, and enabled me to speak as the Spirit gave me utterance. I sung and prayed three times, and yet was afterward better in health than I have been for some time.

29.—This is the anniversary of the day on which the Lord put my inward enemies under my feet, and entirely destroyed them; and though I have been sorely afflicted with temp-

tations and nervous depressions, yet, glory be to God, he has preserved me, amid all the ills which have assailed my soul. I find on those days on which I am the most employed for God, in the hospitals and among friends, that I have the most humbling views of myself. I loathe myself, and regard my life as a mere blank. God be merciful to me a sinner! Some days I am so much engaged that I have scarcely time to eat.

Nov. 19.—The Lord of late seems to have favoured me as Job, by giving me twice as much in the end as in the beginning. He has enlightened my mind, made my memory retentive, and given me amazing power of utterance, in which I was before very defective. In expounding the parable of the dry bones this evening, I was enabled to speak convincingly. In these bones we have a striking emblem of the natural man, dead in sin. In the noise and shaking, we have a figure of the awakened sinner, going about for help, and inquiring what he must do to be saved. By the flesh and sinews we see the state of one using the means of grace, and gaining the form of godliness; and by the breath coming into them, we see the Spirit of life, as in regenerate souls.

Dec. 23.—I begin now to comprehend, in some degree, the height and depth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. When I am not watchful, for two or three days, the Lord rebukes and chastises me, but

yet does not change his gracious countenance toward me. I have power imparted simply to commit my soul into his hands, that God may give or withhold temporal or spiritual good, as seems right to my heavenly Father. I seem to live in sweet communion with angels and saints, and on the borders of paradise. Surely I taste the powers of the world to come, and long to depart and be with Christ.

Dec. 25.—This being the festival of the nativity, thirteen of us met at five in the morning, and I explained 1 Tim. i, 15: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." In the evening we joined ourselves to the Lord and to his people in the more regular form of a class.

26.—This was to me a most remarkable morning. My soul was favoured with sweet assurances of honour, glory, immortality, and eternal life. In general, I now feel a kind of heaven; and in prayer, I have such displays of the love of God as astonish and abase me. I hide myself as in the dust, and say, "Lord, I am nothing, and Christ is all." Often I have watered my books, while writing, with tears of joy. O blessed be the Lord for redeeming grace, and for all that he has laid up for us in Christ Jesus the Lord!

January 1, 1768.—O my God, how manifold have been thy mercies to me, the chief of sinners! Thou hast performed thy mercy promised, by delivering me out of the hands of all my enemies, that I might serve thee

without fear all the future days of my life. Thou hast given me "to overcome at last," and a consoling hope that I shall no more drink of the bitter cup of trembling. Thou art my God, my rock, and my hope. Glory be ascribed to thee for ever! Amen.

Feb. 21.—This was a morning of sore temptation till about nine o'clock. I thought the Lord was about to present to me again the bitter cup. I most earnestly besought him to deliver me, to shield me from future evils; and in the midst of my distress that promise was applied, "My grace is sufficient for thee." My soul felt its truth and power, and praised the Lord.

March 10.—I was favoured this evening with much enlargement in prayer; and the Lord blessed us much in our little meeting. I have of late remarked that whenever I have prayed for any thing in particular, I have soon after heard of something which has indicated a gracious answer. I have been praying much for an enlargement of the work of God, and was gratified to-day by hearing that Mr. Wesley has been preaching in Chatham barracks; and that multitudes, both of officers and soldiers, had received the word with joy.

18.—To-day I went and spoke to the colonel in behalf of three of our labourers who had lately joined the class, and now had received notice that they should be dismissed at the end of the month. The crime laid to their charge was—praying at meal times. The

colonel promised that he would dismiss the complaint. In the evening I had a gracious time while enforcing a full and a present salvation, from these words, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

April 7.—The last few days I have been very busy in the magazine; and, blessed be the Lord, there is not a man that swears in my presence. And I find my soul full as happy there as I usually do in my hours for reading and prayer. Like the labourers, I have now no time for reading and prayer, except at meal times. An active life is better than a sedentary life for the nervous infirmities which still hang about me.

15.—Brother Ottawill was arrested this morning for a debt he had contracted before his joining our class, and taken to the inn at Aveley, prior to his going to Chelmsford jail. I went to console him, but had no thought of compromising the matter, having no money. His wife, the creditor, a young lady, and the two bailiffs, were present. We sung a verse and prayed, and the lady's heart was so touched, that she offered to grant him a discharge on paying down six guineas. I had but three, and she took his note for three more. On returning, an officer accosted me: "Valton, I have good news to tell you. The board have granted you £3 12s., for the pains you took in settling Mr. Gare's powder account." This was an unexpected boon, at a time when I was destitute of money.

17.—This Sabbath morning, Mr. Harle fetched me in his chaise to Rainham; where, after dinner, I expounded the parable of the prodigal son. So the enemy has roared in vain: he cannot stop the work of God. It was far better that I took my ill usage to a heavenly rather than an earthly court.

May 20.—Last night and this morning, being in agony of mind, I again looked over Mr. Wesley's "Treatise on Christian Perfection;" and was humbled to find that I had lost some marks of that happy state of mind. I saw that I was wanting in love, meekness, patience, and humility. I felt in myself a degree of dissimulation, and of inordinate love of the creature. I found that my spiritual union and communion with God was much diminished, and that dryness, wanderings, and sameness, had succeeded in my prayers. I saw that I had sustained a loss in my soul, and felt that I myself was alone to blame. Yet, while expounding the principal parables here, and in the villages, great power and frequent tears attended the word. O Lord, fully restore me again to the glorious liberty of thy children!

June 10.—This day, my dear mother in the Lord, Mrs. Edwards, departed this life. Happy woman! safe landed at last on a broken piece of the ship. She cared for my soul, as a mother for an only son. Would to God I had died for thee! The Lord has released her from great tribulation and afflic-

tions. Sorrow and sighing are fled away, and everlasting joy is now begun. The will of the Lord be done. She has lived, in four years, to see two classes in Purfleet, one of women, and another of men. Lord, prepare my soul to follow !

Aug. 3.—Since I have read the Life of David Brainerd, I have sorely lamented my unworthiness, and late decay of life and love. I have never read of any man whose life had so near a resemblance to my own, with regard to feelings, to trials, and desires. In how many places has he transcribed my whole heart, which I, for want of abilities, have omitted ! Yet, in my narrow sphere, engaged in a public office, controlled by superiors, my longings and desires, disappointments and encouragements, have latterly borne a resemblance to his. But, then, as a little star differs from one of the first magnitude, so was it between that man of God and me, a worm of dust. My aims, not my progress, resembled his achievements ; or rather, as the miniature is to the original. I say it to show that the grace of God endeavoured to make me such, had I been faithful to its drawings. I honour his memory, and should have thought it a great favour to wash his feet.

19.—Yesterday I expounded 1 Kings xix, 11–13 : Elijah taking refuge in Horeb. I had no sooner begun than the power of the Lord descended like a cloud, and rested on the whole assembly. Such clear illustrations,

close applications, and pathetic exhortations, I hardly ever before was enabled to make. While pressing the words, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" it seemed as if the chariot of the Lord and the horsemen of Israel were come to hasten us away.

[The writer having waded through five dense volumes of our author's experience, comprising a period of five years, since his nervous fever at Greenwich, when he was a total stranger to experimental religion, would pause a moment to mark the contrast between the inward miseries he generally sustained, and the overflowing consolations with which he was often favoured. His conflicts, which in fifty places made him wish to die, were bodily, and of which the enemy took great advantage. Perhaps the "thorn in the flesh," of which St. Paul complains, was something of the same kind. Theophylact calls it *capitis malum*, "a complaint of the head." Be that as it might, Mr. Valton was preaching day and night in the villages, and when travelling, to strangers; and in his Master's work he had no time to think of nervous afflictions.]

Sept. 4.—A friend told me this evening that Lord —— had sent a message to his tenant, not to receive me into his house, nor suffer me to come upon his premises. Dr. B.'s sermon accounts for this. "Why should my lord come out against a flea, a dead dog?" My friend added, that had not my interest

been good, I should have been turned out of my place. This treatment made me rather low at first, but I soon recollected that I had deserved a thousand times more than this; and that, though man was unrighteous, yet God was just in suffering these trials to come upon me. But, seeing his majesty's chaplain and a noble lord united against me, will not the people think that I am some hydra, sphinx, or other monster?

Oct. 10.—Having for some time had an invitation to Gloucestershire, I set out this morning for Painswick, where I was received with much affection and joy.

14.—Last evening I was at brother Holder's class, and we had a blessed season; and this morning I spent two hours in conversation with him. He is a simple, sincere, and upright young man. The people flock around me with so much affection that I am afraid of myself, lest I should rest here, and not seek after more of the love of Christ.

21.—Last evening I met the class, and this evening I spent with brother Newman. His soul was full of love, and he had no doubt of the blessed work of sanctifying grace in his soul. Another brother, affected by hearing my experience to the class, seems on the brink of deliverance. I told him that *now* was the accepted time, and that the Messenger of the covenant would come suddenly to his temple: and, indeed, it was so. He was excited to full expectation; and, in the middle

of the night, the Lord came and took possession of his heart. We rejoiced and gave thanks together, as being partakers of like precious faith.

29.—The last week I have been very much employed in visiting the poor in their houses, and have found much of the presence of the Lord. While meeting the classes also, I have eaten of the hidden manna. O assuredly,

'Tis a heaven below
My Jesus to know !

Nov. 7.—I arrived safe at Purfleet, after some hard contests for my Master, as well in the hoy, as on the coach ; for I soon let the people know my character. I found my friends also in a comfortable state ; and we met together, now eighteen in number. The good Shepherd has kept them during my absence.

13.—This morning, being Sunday, I expounded Ezek. xxxvi, 25, &c. The Lord gave me such power in holding forth a full and a present salvation as I had never experienced before. My heart was full of matter, and my tongue full of argument. The word fell as the seeds on good ground, leaving conviction on the mind.

Dec. 31.—This evening, in the class, I read two letters I had received from Painswick ; from which I took occasion to press them anew to look for sanctifying grace. Two members of the class were so blessed that

they stood up to praise the Lord. I retired, and closed the year in prayer.

O Lord, I bless thee that thou hast brought me through another year. I thank thee, O my blessed Redeemer, for all my great afflictions and sore temptations. There was, I know, a necessity for them. Thou hast supported me under them, and thy grace has been sufficient for me. I bless thee also for the success thou hast given me in thy work, and for the honour thou hast put upon a worm of dust in employing me in doing thy will. Five years ago I crossed the Thames from Greenwich, a stranger to God, and a stranger to myself; and now I can sing—

“O! the fathomless love,
That has deign'd to approve
And prosper the work of thine hand!”

Sunday, Jan. 1, 1769.—The whole of this day was a rejoicing day to my soul. I found the Lord present in every duty. The society met at six in the morning, for singing and prayer; and we plighted our troth to the Lord, and covenanted to serve him more and more in the coming year.

20.—This evening I talked with a family, and prayed in brother Weaver's house, who had just returned from the burial of their child. This is the second family that has left our meetings under a pretence that they must take care of their children; and the Lord,

in this low and unhealthy place, has soon taken all their children away.

23.—Last night, I found my soul in a sweet frame, and fraught with matter, while explaining verses 10–16 of the eighth Psalm. But, just as I was about to begin, on seeing a decent stranger coming in, I was seized with fear and trembling, from which I suffered greatly. O, my Lord, why dost thou leave me a prey to those fears? Is there not a cause? Is it not to prevent pride, and check my forwardness? O Lord, if thou hast sent me, qualify me for thy work; but if I have run before I was sent, prevent my continuance in thy work!

Feb. 25.—We have been dull in our class meetings of late; yet the work is going on. A week ago sister Shepherd found peace with God: and yesterday sister Ottawill came to say that the Lord had cleansed her from all unrighteousness; and that his love had been so plenteously and powerfully shed down upon her as to overpower the body. How gracious is the Lord!

March 1.—A revival has at last broken out in our little flock. Yesterday morning brother Shepherd found peace with God, who had applied a line of a hymn with much consolation to his heart—

“How happy the man whose heart is set free!”

This morning also, brother Ottawill was roused with these words, “Arise; why tarriest

thou? and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” He arose to prayer, and the Lord spoke peace to his soul. It is rather singular that this was both his birthday and his wedding day, as well as the day of his espousal to God. O, it was delightful to see these two brothers and their wives praising the Lord together!

27.—This moment, a present of five guineas is brought to me for assisting Mr. Back in services he had done for the board, and for which he had received a gratuity. This makes good a promise I received from the Lord some days ago. Being myself in a little debt, and called to assist a poor family in distress, I had scrupled the propriety of doing it. Immediately it occurred to my mind, that faith in God was better than ten thousand a year. I kneeled down to thank the Lord, and disposed of the gift in acts of charity.

April 9.—This evening, for nearly an hour, I had great enlargement of heart and utterance in expounding 1 Cor. i, 9–11. O praise the Lord for his abundant grace! I now find a comfortable assurance that my name shall never be blotted from the book of life. The Lord has assured me that I shall go out of his house no more for ever. Jesus is mine, and I am his. The promise I once received, now comes with reviving force—“Gad shall overcome at last.”

[*May 2*, Mr. Valton wrote to Mr. William Holder, of Painswick, as under:—

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your sufferings are what I foresaw while I was with you ; and I know by your experience that the Lord is about to do greater things for you. He will shortly bruise Satan under your feet, and seal you to the day of redemption.

“There is a promise and glorious privilege, enjoyed but by few, because not earnestly desired and sought after—an assurance wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, that we shall be ‘pillars in the temple of God, to go out no more for ever ;’ and that ‘our name shall never be blotted from the book of life.’ O, my dear brother, if you have not received this promise, ask for it, and you shall have it ! Then you shall find obedience an easy yoke, and your soul will abound in joy, like Jordan’s swelling flood, and your peace will flow as a river, with a deep and constant stream.

“For your encouragement, I will to you speak freely : I do enjoy that blessed assurance. I received it a few months after the blessing of entire sanctification ; and I daily enjoy a heaven upon earth. Temptations often assault me, and sore temptations too ; business hurries me, and weakness oppresses me ; and yet nothing alters my calm, solid, and uninterrupted hope of eternal salvation.

“My dear friend, be not then dejected, however you may be tempted. Quietly wait for his salvation, and you shall yet praise him. Beware, my dear brother, that you

never remit Christian duties: this will hurt your soul. You may be strongly, though imperceptibly, drawn to lethargy of soul. Keep awake, as a Christian soldier. Be like the four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind. Your enemy slumbers not: you travel to Zion through hostile ground; therefore, keep on the armour of God. Go on, my dear friend: Zion's towers already appear. Salvation is nearer than when you believed. The Lord is ready to come, and his reward is with him. May God bless you!

“I am, dear brother, yours in the Lord Jesus,
JOHN VALTON.”]

May 11.—Since last Sunday, I have been greatly tempted and exercised concerning my expounding the Scriptures. We have public meetings three times a week, beside my visits to Rainham, Nookhouse, and Thurrock; and now our congregations, often, in times past, but ten or twenty, are so increased, that the board will hear that I am become a preacher.

July 1.—I propose, through the blessing of God, to be more minute in setting down my experience, as it may be useful to me at a future day. This day, I have had hard conflicts with flesh and blood, and besought the Lord with earnest cries, that I might die rather than sin against him. Yet I cannot say that I felt sin in my heart. May the Lord bless me with a watchful spirit, a pure heart, and a loving mind! When the thought

comes, that it is expedient for me to marry, and that my soul might profit with a wife that truly loves the Lord; then the contrary thoughts come, that I should be unwilling to leave her when called to do good, and that I could not then be wholly devoted to God. Lord, be my wisdom, and teach whatever is pleasing in thy sight!

Sept. 4.—Being returned from Averley, where I had been to visit brother Evans, lying sick of a fever, I found a message from one of my officers, who was sick. To my great surprise, it was, that I should pray with him! I did so, and exhorted him as far as I durst proceed. I wonder what he will think of himself in case he should recover. Will he not be ashamed? The Lord be gracious to his soul!

11.—Since Wednesday, the 7th, last, my soul has been abundantly refreshed. I was then ready to fly from my place. To-day, though weak in body, and obliged to lie down, I have enjoyed much consolation, and a hope full of immortality. I had strength, however, at night, to invite the weary and heavy laden to come to Christ.

30.—Last night, though still weak in body and very dull, to a room full of people I expounded 1 John ii, 12. I found much difficulty the former part of the time; but, when I came to the state of fathers in Christ, O how did the blessed Spirit fill my heart, and open my mouth! I know not what the

strangers thought, but I know the Lord had thoughts of many of them.

Oct. 19.—This morning I had great joy from one of my class calling to say that the Lord had given her the second blessing, a new and a clean heart. When I am dry and discouraged in preaching, I often hear of some good, which comforts my soul, and strengthens my hands.

Nov. 23.—This being my birthday, when I entered my thirtieth year, I set the preceding day apart for humiliation and prayer, and in the evening met my friends at the usual hour. A circumstance, which I deemed rather remarkable, happened at this time: a letter was put into my hand, as follows:—

“*London, Nov. 21, 1769.*

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—It is a great thing to be open to the call of God. It really seems as if he were now calling *you*. When I wrote last, you was not willing to go out; and, probably, he is now thrusting you out into his harvest. If so, take care you be not disobedient to the heavenly calling. Otherwise, you may be permitted to fall lower than you now imagine. I am your affectionate brother,
J. WESLEY.”

It is not easy to conceive what dejection of spirit I was thrown into by this letter. I could neither think nor pray. But can God require me to make bricks without straw? O no, Lord! thou art not an austere man. Besides, my weakness, my timidity, and want

of gifts, are to me proofs that I am not called. Nor have I the least intimation that it is the will of God. O what a dreadful apprehension of such an undertaking! It almost deprives me of life when I think of being thrust out! Suffice to say, I gave Mr. Wesley my reasons, which for the present satisfied his mind, as appears from his reply:—

“*London, 2d Dec., 1769.*

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—Certainly you are not called to go out now. I believe you will be by-and-by. Your inabilities are no bar; for, when you are sent, you will not be sent on a warfare at your own cost. Now improve the present hour where you are. I am your affectionate brother, J. WESLEY.”

This letter was as pleasant as the grapes of Eschol to my soul.

January 1, 1770.—I endeavoured to expound the parable of the barren fig tree. The room was crowded, and we had a soul born to God,—sister Bayley, who sent to say that the Lord had set her soul at liberty. Mr. Pool, a brother of Mr. Weaver, came to me with evident marks of being awakened. He said he would join the society on his return to London, for which I gave him a letter.

We now divided our little society into four classes; viz., seven with me, nine with brother Weaver, four with brother Cockran, and four with brother Healey: in all twenty-four members.

April 5.—Last night I was enabled to make

a very awful and close exposition of Rev. i, 7: "Behold, he cometh with clouds." A stranger present seemed much broken down.

15.—Being Easter day, we met for morning service. Four strangers were present. I endeavoured to expound Acts v, 30–32; but was so tried and tempted that I was obliged to stop, and beg the people to pray; after which I went on with the discourse, and many were much refreshed.

[Mr. Valton's journal now assumes another character. Four or five times every week we find him publicly and zealously engaged, except when public business required his evening attendance. Therefore the more particular meetings only are noticed here.]

25.—This evening, Mr. John Allen, a young preacher in the London circuit, came to see me: an Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile. He preached on adding to our faith, virtue. His word was made a blessing to all. I had a temptation of Satan that nobody would now care to hear me after hearing so lovely a young man as this. While I admired his eminent gifts and profound experience, united to the simplicity of a child, I was thankful to God for what I did enjoy. I know, if he see good, he will give me more; and he even does crown my poor attempts with success.

May 23.—Dr. Hugh Smith being consulted on the state of my health, advised me to lay aside business for a time, and use exercise on horseback. In conformity to his advice, I

arrived this evening at Mr. Whitbread's, a farmer at Kirksend, near Barnet. While staying with this obliging family, I had frequent opportunities of meeting the class at Bentley Heath and at Barnet, and also at Mr. Shewell's, an opulent family, that showed me much kindness.

June 3.—This afternoon Mr. Allen preached at Bentley Heath, on turning to the Stronghold. It was a blessed time. In the evening he preached at Barnet. Next morning I rode with him to Whetstone, where he preached on the trembling jailer.

29.—To-day, after an absence of five weeks, I returned to Purfleet, having preached and met the classes at Barnet, Bentley Heath, and Potter's Bar, as my strength would admit; and the Lord has given us his blessing.

July 3.—Last night I endeavoured to illustrate that passage, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." The Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon me in a very remarkable manner, both in praying and preaching. Since my return from Barnet, I praise the Lord for his goodness: my health has been much improved, and my soul has been wonderfully favoured. I now lie down and rise with great comfort and joy. The temptation under which I so long groaned has now vanished away, and never appeared since my return. But, alas! my poor flock have felt the absence of their shepherd: three of them have been overtaken in liquor, and one grossly so.

Aug. 10.—The last few days I have attended the conference in London, and found much of the gracious presence of the Lord. My eyes were drowned in tears, and my soul filled with humility, praise, and love. The conference now sitting in London, Mr. Whitefield, prior to his embarking for America, preached at five in the morning, and sat with the preachers till breakfast, and very much encouraged them to go on in their plain and humble way. He dropped several expressions of disapprobation, that several ministers in connection with him had begun to wear a gown and bands.

Sept. 3.—Last night, in a crowded room, I cried, “Acquaint now thyself with him,” &c., Job xxii, 21, but found no liberty; I was shut up and tried most of the time. My memory often failed me, so that I almost forgot the thread of the discourse. A thought darted across my mind—“I will speak no more in the name of the Lord.” I began to reason about it, and thought it might partly be owing to the weakness of my body, but chiefly to the dealings of God, who had justly withdrawn from me those gifts of which he saw I was unworthy. May the Lord humble my soul to the dust, and sanctify his paternal corrections!

6.—A party of us walked this evening to Rainham, to hear the Rev. Mr. Elliott. He delivered a strong discourse on predestination. Some parts of it made me tremble,

they were so pleasing to flesh and blood ; yet I could by no means accede to his opinions. I was, however, engaged in argument till one o'clock in the morning. How different are these debates from the simplicity which usually follows our meetings at Purfleet !

Oct. 8.—This evening, in a room full of people, I asked, “Lord, are there few that be saved ?” The Lord gave me great power, and the word went to the heart. Some were greatly alarmed, and others much stirred up. It was a time that will be long remembered. One young man, acquainted with religion, though not with Methodism, received the word with meekness. Another declared he would leave his lodging to come nearer to us.

18.—This morning sister Weaver came to say that she had no doubt that the Lord had given her, two days ago, the blessing she had been earnestly seeking for three months—a pure heart and a token that, having justified her, he would also glorify her. Her soul was in transports of joy while she related these things. It also encouraged me ; for having had a dry time in expounding the word, I found the Lord had made it a great blessing.

Nov. 5.—Last evening I endeavoured to expound the twenty-third Psalm : “The Lord is my Shepherd,” &c. Most of us found the Lord very present, and great refreshment. After the meeting, four persons gave in their names to join the society. This, in some sort, prepared us for the solemn intelligence, which

presently followed, that the Lord had called home to his great reward that eminent servant of Christ, the Rev. George Whitefield, who died near Boston, in New-England. I wept before the Lord for our sins of ingratitude and unfaithfulness, which might have provoked the Lord to remove that burning and shining light from among us.

Dec. 2.—Last week I have been much engaged in the business of the office and magazine ; so that I have gone to preach, without time for meditation ; and this Sabbath I have been all the day engaged for my heavenly Master, except a little time when I was obliged to lie down. I had this evening a blessed time while expounding Rev. i, 5: “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

25.—This being the day of our Saviour’s nativity, in our morning meeting I expounded Luke ii, 14. Having read to our friends in the preceding week a discourse on the Lord’s supper, a company of us walked to Thurrock church, and received the sacrament.

[On the last day of this year, Mr. Valton writes, “How little have I done ; and how small is the progress I have made during the past year ! Lord, I fly to the arms of thy mercy, and take shelter under the merits of redeeming love.” He had only, when at home, held public meetings twice every Sabbath, and three times on the week evenings, meeting classes after preaching. On the

other three evenings we find him often preaching and meeting the class at Rainham, at Renham, and Thurrock, Nookhouse, &c. In a district so thinly populated his congregations were small, but mostly enough to fill the house. What a man of God, tried with a thorn in the flesh, and encompassed about with manifold infirmities !]

January 26, 1771.—This evening I went to spend the Sabbath in London, and meet Mr. Wesley at brother Windsor's. "As iron sharpeneth in iron, so does the countenance of a man his friend."

March 17.—This morning I walked to Rainham, to meet the class, in brother Weaver's turn, he being sick : after dinner I catechised the children, and in the evening addressed a crowded congregation, in which were many strangers ; and one, having the appearance of a preacher, so embarrassed me, that I had no power. O what I have suffered on this account, and times without number ! I thought, if ever I went to Rainham or Dagenham after this, I should be ashamed to walk the street. However, two or three of the friends mentioned the comfort they had found under the word.

22.—My mother having been many years absent in France, I had lately spent some time with her and my sister, and had often talked closely to her about religion. But it is hard to convince the papists. They always fly off from the Bible to the church. My

mother being now taken ill, I spent four days in London, often talking to her, and left her much better in health than I found her.

Sept. 10.—This morning I set out again to spend a fortnight at Dugdale-hill, near Barnet, for the benefit of my health, where I employ my time in meeting the class at Barnet. There I heard Mr. Gathercart on Mark xvi, 16: a better discourse surely I never heard.

Dec. 25.—I expounded Isaiah ix, 6, 7: "Unto us a child is born," &c. It was a time of heavenly refreshing. The Lord out of Zion gave us his blessing. At Purfleet, it might indeed be said, The Saviour was born there.

31.—To-day I dined with Mr. Wesley, at Bow, and heard him preach at night. We held a watch night, and ushered in the new year with singing and prayer. My temptations and sufferings during the past year have been small compared with preceding years. I have been enabled to go on preaching and visiting the sick in a constant course. My greatest trials have been timidity: when any well dressed strangers have come in, I have scarcely been able to speak; and often have been ready to say, "I will speak no more in thy name." But I could not recede: it was come to this, "Wo is me if I preach not the gospel." However, the success I met with, and the comfort I felt in my own soul, encouraged me to go on; for a class was formed in most of the parishes within the compass of an easy walk from Purfleet.

Jan. 1, 1772.—This evening I was at the renewing of the covenant at Spitalfields. It was a solemn time, and the blessing and presence of the Lord accompanied the means. But now, what shall I say of myself? I confess it is of the Lord's mercies I am not consumed. I do not think that I am either so lively in my own soul, or so zealous in the work, as I have been. I am also many times in doubt whether I have not lost the blessing of a pure heart which I once enjoyed. But glory be to thee, O my God, that thou hast not given me up as an unprofitable servant! Grant, O Lord, that the course of the ensuing year may be employed more to thy glory than the past!

3.—Yesterday I returned from town, in the passage boat, as usual, full of wicked people. I delivered my soul of them, and am clear of their blood. This evening I expounded the barren fig-tree, after which we renewed the covenant, as in London; and I believe our meeting was not in vain.

5.—This Sabbath morning I walked to Rainham to meet the class, where I found a man and his wife, who had been awakened under Mr. Maxfield. In the evening, after preaching, one of the chalk people met us, who had been brought under serious impressions by hearing his child read the New Testament.

23.—A poor woman came to me to visit her husband, a labourer at the chalk works. I

found him in a burning fever, and scarcely any covering on his bed, in the depth of winter. I kneeled down to pray to the great Physician in his behalf. I gave him Dr. James's powders, and afterward milder physic; so that the man, though weak, was at his work again in the course of the week.

27.—This evening, according to appointment, I visited the sick man again, preached in his room, and prayed the people, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. The people being eager for the word, I told them, if they would get a room, I would come to them. On that, Mr. Watson, a lime-burner, offered me one that will hold a hundred people. We measured it for benches, and I promised to visit them twice a week. Glory be to thee, O Lord, for this opening! O that thou wouldst give me such gifts and such graces as I need, to be a blessing to this people!

Feb. 23.—This evening, to about fifty people, I had a blessed season while explaining Eph. v, 8: "Ye were sometimes darkness," &c. But I am embarrassed what to do. Mr. Bell, the manager of these works, so far approves of our meetings, that he seems inclined to build us a chapel. In that case we must have a preacher. Here is the difficulty.

March 25.—Being in London, I went to the Apothecaries' Hall to pay for some medicines; and, to my great surprise, found the bill to come to a guinea and a half! I was in a strait, not having money enough. How-

ever, I borrowed a little of a friend. On taking tea with brother Chambers, Mr. Dornford (a wine merchant) came in : we walked to the chapel together ; and, after preaching, he took me home, and gave me two papers of James's powders, a bottle of spirits of wine, some Bibles, and a guinea to buy medicine with. This was surely the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in my eyes. This good has resulted from my giving medicine ; and a door is opened for the gospel among the poor chalk people. Add to this, on arriving at home, I found a guinea had been sent me by the Russian ambassador, for doing him a service about à year ago.

June 21.—Mr. Allen paid us a second visit at Purfleet, and spent the Sabbath. His sermon in the morning on the Sun of righteousness, (Mal. iv, 2, 3,) and in the evening, on examining ourselves whether we are in the faith, were heard with much attention, and the approbation of the people.

Aug. 12.—I am now returned from Dover, where I have been for almost seven weeks, for the benefit of the salt water. The preacher being absent, the Lord gave me power and courage to preach four times a week ; and I have reason to believe the Lord made me of great use to the people. To him be all the glory !

I had now an offer made me by the earl of D——r to be page of the presence to the queen. I laid this overture, flattering in

itself, before the Lord. The result was, my heart being on the sanctuary, that I was at Purfleet secluded and quiet; that I feared a post of honour, and at court too; and having already a small clerkship under government, which was quite sufficient for my support, I thankfully declined it in favour of Mr. Cooper, my sister's husband. Another reason was, that I had a few souls to care for; and above all, a soul of my own; and I chose rather (yet not I, but the grace of God in me) to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the favour, honours, and riches of a court. Adieu, vain world! stand aloof with thy slighted charms! The Lord is my portion.

Sept. 4.—I received a letter of thanks from my brother C. for conceding the place, which to him was worth £200 per annum.

Dec. 14.—Last night I had a good time, and was enabled to discourse on the beatitudes with great power. A self-righteous man, and one who had been of a bitter spirit, came up and thanked me for the sermon. This evening I and four of the brethren united to get an evening school for the poor children of the lime-burners, who are obliged to work by day. I trust we shall not only teach them to read and write, but also to be Christians. May the Lord succeed our work!

30.—To-day I received a letter from my sister, acquainting me that an officer had dined with my Lord D——r, and told him that I

had got a congregation, and preached to them : and that I also kept a school. My lord had told my father of it, adding, that those things would obstruct my promotion ; which had made my father's mind very uneasy ; and he requested me to leave off all those things, as it would augment the happiness of his family.

Satan always delights to afflict the afflicted. This letter came to hand at a moment when I was greatly tempted about preaching. I had also much temporal business on my hands ; and was fearing that some of the gentry belonging to the chalk works would drop in to hear me. May the Lord support me ! for nothing but love glowing in the soul can make us zealous and persevering in every good work. If love decay, we shall soon become unfruitful. O Lord, in thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded !

At the close of the year, having preached on the end of all things being at hand, I was in some doubt whether I still retained the pure and perfect love of God. O my God, do not suffer me to fall from the grace which thou hast conferred ; but do thou establish me for ever in righteousness and true holiness !

January 1, 1773.—Entering now on another year of grace, I sit down to consider my state. I now, through mercy, enjoy a measure of the fruits of the Spirit. I love the Lord my God above money, place, or preferment. Still I have reason to complain, as I do not now enjoy the love that casteth out fear ; and have

not the firm persuasion of the promise once given to me, that "I shall overcome at last."

Some time ago, I remember that through very perplexing trials and temptations I was led publicly to declare that I had lost the pure love of God. But scarcely had I yielded to do this, before I became sensible that my unbelief at this juncture had effected what I before only supposed had been done; and the Lord has chastised my giving place to unbelief, as I have never since had a clear testimony of being saved from sin. However, for some years I have enjoyed almost a continued calm in my own breast, and felt a constant longing after my heavenly home.

June, 1774.—Toward the middle of this year my constitution was brought into a weak and reduced state; but, having changed the low and vapourish air of this place, I was, in the course of three months, enabled to return to the office.

For the last few years I have been fully employed after the hours of office, in preaching, catechising, and teaching in the school every night in the week, with the exception of a Saturday, now and then; and there was a prospect of much good resulting from the school, had not the wicked parents of the children frustrated the hope, by allowing them to run wild on the Sabbaths.

Another thing I undertook, in compassion to the poor, was the administering of medicine to the sick. This stripped me of money,

exhausted my time, and involved me in debt. I bought an electrifying machine, and learned to bleed. I principally aimed at gaining access to sick beds, and being useful to the souls of the people; and I must own that the Lord most wonderfully prospered my undertakings. The blind, the halt, and the languid came, and received relief or cure. This success brought a crowd of patients. Their diseases obliged me to study books, and the remedies exhausted my pockets. And though Providence remarkably assisted me, yet the loss of time and the want of adequate means greatly hurt my soul. Thus it was that, in the zenith of my popularity and entanglements, God made a way for my escape, by removing me out of the place. And I humbly trust that the souls that have been convinced and converted will be my crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

These incessant labours, and the unwholesome air of Purfleet, so reduced my constitution, that the physician told me my employment was not fit for my health. Another eminent man spoke in stronger words, that I was murdering myself, and that no expedient would restore me but exercise on horseback.

In this strait and dilemma, I wrote to ask the advice of a few preachers eminent for wisdom and holiness; and they all with one voice advised me to give up all, and take a circuit. Among these was Mr. Samuel Wells, with whom, in my visit to Gloucestershire, I

had become acquainted. He was a lovely youth, of classical literature; and one who, I believe, enjoyed the pure love of God. He wrote in a very decisive manner; adding, "I do not know but God has spoken the word, PREACH OR DIE." This last word turned the trembling balance.

After the reception of these letters, I calmly came to the conclusion to forsake all, and, like Jacob, set out with my staff in my hand. But for some weeks my temptations to *delay* and *recede* were more violent than ever. Unknown are the sufferings through which I then passed. Seldom had I more than two hours' sleep; all was weeping and wailing before the Lord. On the one hand were the opposition of my family, and all their disappointed hopes of my preferment; on the other, my natural timidity, my health, and inability. Often did I retire to a neighbouring wood, and spend hours in bitter lamentations and cries before the Lord, praying for power to come forth. At length, early one morning, I rose, and, with the best preparation that haste could make, I came off to London. I there wrote my letter of resignation; and then, spreading it before the Lord, I fell on my knees, and said, "O Lord, I thank thee for having given me this place for almost eighteen years. And now, seeing thou requirest thy own, lo! here I present to thee that which is thine, and cast myself on thy providence." This I said with a

melting heart, and with eyes deluged with tears.

1775.—After my letter of resignation, and all the way to the Leeds conference, O how was I assaulted by the enemy, for having made all these sacrifices for God, when it was suggested there was no God! For some days I was enveloped in a cloud of atheism. Surely, had it not been for this sore temptation, I could not have known the strength and malignity of a fallen angel. But on arriving at Leeds, and lodging with a cheerful Christian family, (Mr. Randall's, in Brig-gate,) all these bodings vanished away; nor have I ever since been assailed with the like injections of the enemy. None, however, but the Lord himself can tell what I passed through for the last two months before I came to Leeds. This I can truly say, that the Lord has thrust me out into the work; for in no one's case, perhaps, did ever such a group of concurring circumstances meet to make manifest the will of God. And now, O Lord, seeing thou hast brought me forth, do with me as seemeth good in thy sight, and send me wheresoever thou wilt.

One circumstance tended to humble me. A few evenings before the conference, Mr. Pawson, the superintendent of the Leeds circuit, desired me to preach. The congregation was unusually large, compared with the small groups in Essex, and two or three times my memory failed me; but the people pro-

fessed to be much blessed under the word. Here my soul was exceedingly happy, being all the day engaged in spiritual exercises.

August 2, 1775.—I was this day admitted on trial as a preacher, and appointed to the Oxfordshire circuit, which comprised part of three other counties. My colleagues were Samuel Wells, jun., and George Shorter. It was joy to me to labour with a man that I knew and loved.

Another boon of equal joy seemed to drop from heaven. On arriving at Witney, the first place in the circuit, I found a letter requiring my presence in London. Here, to my infinite surprise, I found all my relations very cordial, and not a word of reproach on my conduct: and during the few days I was in town, the most high God, in his providence, made a comfortable provision for me for life; so that I can preach without being burdensome, and have a tolerable competency for age, when infirmities may admonish me to retire. I was overwhelmed with this astonishing token of the goodness of God, for which I desire to praise him for ever.

[Mr. Valton does not say what was the amount of the pension granted him for eighteen years' service; but it was not less than forty pounds a year. In consequence of this he never would take any allowance from the circuits, except his food. He travelled as a single man, and a gentleman; giving the surplus of his money to the poor.]

In the Oxfordshire circuit I laboured for two years. It was a very hard circuit, the rides were long, and fuel very scarce; but the Lord was my support. The first year was a pruning time; the second was a year in which we gathered many souls. It was a great trial to me to leave this loving people and so many excellent families; but, as the Lord so required, I bowed to his will.

[Mrs. Weaver, whose husband succeeded Mr. Valton as leader of the classes in Purfleet, told me, that Mr. V. came about this time to visit the little flock he had gathered with so many toils and tears, and strengthened their hands in the Lord. During this visit an officer came to see him, and finding him now dressed in a plain suit of black, exclaimed, "What, is this the little gentleman that came to us in a cocked hat and a gold-laced waistcoat?" "It is, sir," rejoined the other; "but the Lord, since that time, has done something under the waistcoat." After this, Mr. Whitbread, celebrated in parliamentary records, built a little chapel, and gave a Bible; but the preachers, on account of distance, often neglecting, and a Calvinistic schoolmaster settling there, who was a preacher, the Methodists were gradually superseded.]

At the Bristol conference, 1777, I was appointed for the Gloucestershire circuit; and, blessed be God, our labour was not in vain. Our rides were often long, travelling from Stour-

port, Worcester, and Stroud. The friends would have borne with me a second year, but my constitution was so impaired as not to be able to bear the extensive journeys. I cannot, however, omit naming the loving kindness of the Lord to me this year. When seized with a bilious fever, which lasted some weeks, my lot was cast at Stroud. Here I met with the tenderest of nurses and friends, in Mrs. Scudamore and her family, who had me removed to their house, and showed me no little kindness; where, with the help of God, and a skilful apothecary, I was soon restored to my labours. During the whole of this year, I have found much peace in my own soul, which has the more supported me under the hardships of an itinerant life.

In 1778 I was appointed to the Bristol circuit. As soon as I received the letter from Leeds, my soul was in the furnace; being awed at the idea of standing before so many wise and holy persons as then were in Bristol and Bath. I wrote immediately to Mr. Wesley, praying to be sent anywhere rather than to those cities. But he still kept to his appointment, in spite of all remonstrances. My distress and timidity continued for some days; but, laying it before the Lord one evening, I was much relieved by two lines of a hymn, powerfully applied to my mind,—

“Wait thou his time; so shall this night
Soon end in joyous day.”

I came to Bristol in a weak state of health,

and was presently obliged to retire to a kind friend's house, near Pensford, where Mr. and Mrs. Wait showed me every kindness for the restoration of my strength. Here I gave myself up to prayer, which increased my spiritual strength also, and enabled me to enter on my work with joy. I have cause to rejoice that I had in Mr. John Goodwin, and Mr. James Wood, the kindest of colleagues. In Paulton, the work broke out wonderfully; and about eighty souls were added to the society, and a preaching-house was soon afterward erected. The effects of the word on the poor colliers were such as I had never witnessed before. At Fishponds, also, we had a blessed revival of religion. This was, indeed, a year of consolation; the people were uncommonly affectionate, and I should have been glad to end my days among them.

1779.—My second year in the Bristol circuit was attended with some heavy trials, particularly the dispute which happened between the superintendent and the clergyman Mr. Wesley had stationed at the new chapel in Bath. The issues were, that Mr. M'Nab left the connection, and the clergyman set up for himself, in Dublin, taking with him above a hundred persons, among whom were the richer members of the Dublin society. This dispute gave a general wound to the cause. However, the time I was there I enjoyed a heaven upon earth, and left the friends with many regrets. The last place I left was Ames-

bury, where I remained a fortnight for my health, and experienced every kindness from the lady of the house for her Master's sake. Mr. M'Nab, however, returned the next year; but did not continue long in the circuit.

1780.—At the Bristol conference, I was ordered for the Manchester circuit, as the assistant preacher. On arriving, my soul entered into great sufferings. The regrets at leaving my Bristol friends, and the dread I had upon my mind concerning the office that was laid upon me, quite drank up my spirit. However, I set my shoulders to the work, and endeavoured to lay out my soul in the discharge of every duty. God was so far pleased to own me, and Mr. George Snowden, my fellow-labourer, that nearly three hundred souls were added in the town; and there was a general revival throughout the circuit. At Stockport the chapel was enlarged, and at Ashton a new one erected, and a promising prospect of a great work in the ensuing year.

When I came first into this circuit, I was quite a stranger to the habits and complexion of the people; and I construed their shyness to strangers into want of love. Some of the stronger trees and plants are slower in opening their bud and bloom. The issues were, that I found them a most affectionate, generous, and steady people; and, with tears in my eyes at parting, I could say that they lie near my heart.

The main circumstance which encouraged

me was, the breaking out of the work of God in different parts of the circuit. My constitution I found too weak to bear the journeys, and was obliged to call for additional help in a third preacher. This set us at liberty to try and take in new places.

This work would have been more extensive had it not been for two or three leading members of the Rochdale society, who demanded an unjust share of our labours. Their opposition was so strong, that it quite broke my spirit, and cramped my future usefulness. It obstructed all my intended visits to the populous villages.

Some time during the winter, I went with a few of my Oldham friends to a village called Gladwick, consisting of colliers and weavers. I preached in a house with comfort and joy to thirty or forty people, and many felt the power of the word. I visited the village a second time, and was favoured with the same blessing and presence of God. But on going the third time, and with a design to preach in the open air, as Satan's kingdom began to suffer, several being awakened and joined to the society, the enemy collected his forces, armed with stones and noisy instruments, to make a furious attack. They literally gnashed upon me with their teeth, and so pelted me with stones and coals, that, after a while, I was obliged to retire into the house. Thank God, I was unhurt. We sung and praised the Lord in the house. Meanwhile, the mob

was waiting without for another assault ; and as soon as I and my few friends were out of doors, dirt and stones were poured amain : yet none of us were hurt, except a woman, who received a severe cut in the head.

These storms without were small, compared with the inward conflict I had from myself. When the large new chapel in Oldham-street was opened, and when I saw such large congregations, I suffered inconceivably from my old feelings of timidity. Standing in that pulpit was like standing to be shot. The good and gracious Lord, however, brought me through the year.

1781.—At the Leeds conference I was appointed a second year for Manchester ; but fearing some extraordinary trials from different parts of the circuit, and disapproving from my soul of some late things which had occurred, I entreated that I might be sent to Birstal. But my kind friends in Manchester were determined not to part with me without an answer to their petition ; so I left the contest, having obtained leave to go and bathe at Liverpool ; where I experienced every kindness from the people, and spent my time to much profit and comfort to my own soul.

My lot having fallen for Birstal, I was received with undeserved affection by the people. This encouraged me to undertake some difficult things with regard to discipline, at which my nature shrank. And yet, through the help of God, I was brought through full as

well as I expected. This I found a most easy and suitable circuit to me, as I could not then, on account of pain in my breast, bear much riding. Yet, how favoured soever our lot may be, it is through much tribulation we are to enter the kingdom of God; and the path of suffering is the road to glory. I have learned lately a useful lesson,—to cease from man, and seek my all from God. Amid all difficulties, I enjoy abundance of peace with God; and can sweetly appeal to him, that his glory, the good of his church, and the salvation of my own soul, are the ruling principles of my heart; and, indeed, they are the sole objects that I have in view. I am a poor nothing in his sight. As to any warm and strong expressions, which may set individuals against me, I cannot help them. I must have liberty of speech, and deliver my soul when speaking in the presence of the Lord and of his people.

I experienced the greatest kindness and support from my colleagues, Messrs. Briscoe and Shaw,—through whose aid good has been done,—beside a remarkable promise of a revival sealed upon my heart. The promise was given me on this wise:—I was at Dawgreen, the southern part of the town of Dewsbury. Being alone in my chamber, I prostrated myself before the Lord to ask the outpouring of his Spirit on so populous a neighbourhood, while my eyes were suffused with tears. I then came down to engage in family prayer; and the power of God fell

upon me, enabling me to pray with much enlargement as the Spirit gave me utterance. I had a blessed revival before my eyes, and we praised God by way of anticipation; for I was fully assured the Lord was about to work. My petitions were uttered in the assurance of faith; for I knew that God would make bare his holy arm. The family felt the divine unction; and I continued till I could scarcely rise from my knees. I went up stairs, but could engage in no work except prayer and praise. My soul was truly in travail for Zion to bring forth children.

I should not omit one unpromising check on the ardent wishes of my heart—a great loss to us, but not a damp on our hope. Mr. Fletcher, on the 12th of November, 1781, stole hallowed fire from my people by taking away Miss Bosanquet to Madeley. I and a few friends accompanied them to Batley church. Surely such a blessed wedding I never knew before. By request I improved the occasion in the evening from these words, “What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon his name.” It was truly a refreshing time, and many prayers were offered that eternal blessings might crown the devoted pair.

My soul shares in the divine joy of my honoured father and friend, Mr. Fletcher. My whole heart is engaged in the work of the Lord. But my spirit is often too active

for my body. The weight of Saul's armour is a sore clog to my spirit. Hoping to live and die in my Master's cause, my frequent prayer has been that I might close my life and my work together. My soul is happy, and enjoys constant peace; and often divine transports possess my breast. Jesus is the soul of all my joys; he is my theme of praise, and my all for ever. With confidence I can declare in the congregations of the people that crowd to hear his word,

“Ye all may know that God is true,
Ye all may feel that God is love.”

October 28, 1782.—This evening I preached at Hanging-Heaton, a village near Dewsbury, with much power; and many felt the mighty energy of the word. After preaching I met the society; and while singing the first hymn the power of the Lord fell upon me, and, soon after, upon all the people. They were all in tears, and we scarcely knew how to conclude. I had never known such a night since I left Paulton, in Somerset. God was, indeed, in the midst of us, and we all rejoiced with unspeakable joy.

Dec. 26.—After preaching twice this day, and riding twenty miles, I walked to Hanging-Heaton to hold a watch-night. The service of preaching, prayer, and exhortations continued from seven o'clock to one in the morning. Here the work broke out in a very astonishing and extraordinary manner. The cries and agonies of the people were

very moving. We sang and prayed till near twelve, and no deliverance was wrought. I then went to one who seemed to be agonizing in prayer: I kneeled down and prayed with her for deliverance as far as my exhausted strength would permit; and, presently, she found peace. I then went to another; and she also, in a few minutes, found peace. Thus four or five were set at liberty in the same manner. In all, nine persons that night obtained a sense of God's forgiving love. I never knew such a time before. O that God may bless and keep them in his faith and fear! In this place the work is mostly among the young people, but the whole town seems to be stirred up.

31.—This night I went to Earl's-Heaton, and had a good time. One young woman wept aloud for the disquietness of her soul. She was cruelly handled by the enemy for a long time. I prayed and sang verses of hymns till my nature was exhausted; but she still affected our hearts with her piercing cries and throes. At length I went to her, and kneeled down in earnest prayer. She soon became calm, and returned home with several friends rejoicing in the Lord. I trust the Lord will here also revive his work.

January 20, 1783.—Two evenings ago we held a watch-night at Chidsill, and had an excellent time. It lasted for five hours. Four persons were very earnestly groaning and crying for mercy for a long time. Two or

three of them were so deeply convinced that they trembled like a leaf in the wind. At last three of them obtained mercy, and went home rejoicing in the Lord. Another dropped down on the floor, and many were deeply wounded.

21.—Last night, at Hanging-Heaton, we had a wonderful time; and the power of the Lord was present both to wound and heal. After the sermon we continued in prayer for two or three hours, amid the groans and cries of many in distress. We told the Lord that we would not depart without their deliverance; and God was graciously pleased to grant our importunate requests. We then gave thanks, and sang joyful hymns of praise.

23.—This evening I preached at Daniel Brooke's, on Dewsbury Bank. As soon as I began giving out the first hymn, I felt the power of God descend upon me; and gave notice to the people that we should have a glorious time. Presently cries, and groans, and agonizing prayers were heard all around; and several were in distress. In a while the anguish of their hearts was removed, and their souls entered the glorious liberty of the children of God. How marvellous are thy ways, O King of saints! Ride on in thy chariot, and with thy great and strong sword strike the head of Leviathan, that crooked serpent! Amen, Lord Jesus; Amen.

27.—This evening we held a watch-night at Ruth Williamson's, near Tingley-Moor.

The congregation was large; and the Lord made it a time of refreshing from his presence. Cries, tears, and prayers were poured out for some hours. Three found peace with God, and were made remarkably happy in his love. Two of them experienced much anguish, and uttered the most moving prayers.

Feb. 1.—At Chidsill this evening we had an awful time with the people. Three were under strong convictions of sin. One young woman was roughly handled. At length she cried out, “Let me lie prostrate at my Saviour’s feet,” and immediately was made happy in God. We had reason to believe that three of those under conviction found peace.

3.—I called this morning, by request, to pray with a sick woman at a public house, in Shaycross, who had been no friend to religion. Presently several of the neighbours were gathered into the house. While I was at prayer, violent convictions seized the sick woman, which communicated to others who were present. They cried earnestly for mercy, and with many tears. I continued in prayer till two of them were set at liberty. This was indeed a solemn and awful hour. But my poor body fails under the pressure of these ardours and fatigues. Yet I rejoice in spending my whole strength for my Master, and bemoan the insufficiency of my frame to support the energies of the mind.

12.—This evening, after preaching at Daw-

green, I desired the bands to meet, to speak their experience as usual ; but our attention was presently called off to assist a young person who had been under conviction during the sermon. Several others soon felt the power of grace ; while some made it known in the village that the work was broken out in the chapel. They came rushing in, and were seized with divine solemnity and awe. About ten o'clock the prayers began to subside, when it appeared four or five persons had found peace.

13.—This evening I preached at Batley, but with little power, my nature being exhausted with the exertions of the three former nights. However, it was soon found necessary to continue the service, as several “were pricked in their heart,” and, after some conflicts, professed to have obtained comfort from the Lord. In all these watch-nights I have been assisted by the leaders of these classes ; for God has been pleased to employ plain and weak instruments in the accomplishment of his great work. Blessed be his great and glorious name for ever !

March 3.—This afternoon I catechised the children at Hanging-Heaton ; and while in prayer, many of them began to cry aloud for mercy, and continued for the space of two hours. I believe that they all, for the time, felt a good influence on their hearts. Thus, “out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, the Lord has ordained strength.”

4.—This forenoon was spent in visiting the people from house to house, and the afternoon in meeting classes to renew the tickets. After sermon at night we continued in prayer till midnight. The divine presence descended on the people, exciting them to weep and pray. Nine persons found peace and comfort, while many others remained under conviction.

11 and 12.—At Ardsley and Morley I held watch-nights the preceding evenings; while many have wept aloud in distress, and some found peace with God.

13.—We had a watch-night at Birstal, and on the 14th at Gildersome; and the Lord was in the midst of our assembly. I was nearly worn out; but, thanks be to God, toward the close of the meeting my lamp was replenished with fresh oil, and I was amazed at my support during the week.

24.—After visiting the society at Hanging-Heaton, from house to house, most of the day, I preached in Joseph Bennett's room with great power; and many were deeply wounded under the word. We continued in prayer, singing short hymns at intervals, for about three hours, amid the cries and groans of the contrite. Some found peace, and others went home in deep distress. The next morning I went to see two poor mourners. Others came into the room, and while singing and praying, one found peace; but several others were left in distress.

25.—This evening I preached at Earl's-Heaton, in a rather dull manner; being much disturbed by the constant coming in of the people. However, when we began singing and prayer, at the close of the sermon, the Spirit of the Lord was poured down upon us. The cries were so strong and loud that we could not be distinctly heard, while others fainted and were convulsed. We continued these exercises and wrestlings for the space of five hours. Here the enemy of souls made the most violent opposition to our work that I had ever seen. O, how did it endear the Saviour to me, who hears prayer, and delivers his people from the cruel tortures of the foe! It was an awful time; but the cries of the people were cheered with verses of praise, sung for those who had found peace. I trust many will have cause to bless God for ever for having brought them to that place.

29.—This evening I preached a funeral sermon at Chidsill, and afterward kept a watch-night. The whole of the services were in the open air; a lantern supplying the absence of the sun and the moon. It was a very solemn time indeed, and attended with a general blessing. Some hundreds of people were present; and four, I was told, found peace with God.

April 1.—I was obliged to spend nearly three hours out of doors at Tingley-Moor. The crowd was very large; and the Lord

owned the means by the conversion of a few who came to hear.

12.—At Chidsill we again prolonged our worship, with a very large crowd in the open air. Some were deeply distressed, and a few were set at liberty.

14.—This evening, the crowd being great, we got into a barn, at Hanging-Heaton. Ten, I was told, among whom was a backslider, found peace with God. These wrestlings and intercessions continued for five hours. Like the gay world, in their balls, we stayed till the midnight hour.

15.—This evening we had a wonderful time at Batley-Carr. The rich, as well as the poor, mingled in the crowd. Misses Kitty and Nancy Wooller were the chief mourners. Miss Newsome found peace with God, and is since taken to paradise.

16.—At Morley we had another watch-night; and had it not been for the unbecoming prayers of two young converts, I believe we should have had a wonderful time. This was the first appearance of wildfire that we have had; and I was sorely distressed about it. I feared to speak, lest I should do harm. But Morley being a Presbyterian town, ordinary means perhaps cannot affect them. I felt a great want of wisdom, and entreated the Lord to teach me how to manage these appearances of disorder. We closed the meeting, leaving two or three in distress.

25.—Having changed with the Hudders-

field preacher, I went to Mirfield, and met the society after preaching. I advised them to hold prayer-meetings after sermons; and, above all things, to pray for the Promise of the Father. I proved that the work in the Birstal circuit was Scriptural; adding my belief that the reason why we did not see more conversions after sermons was, because we knew not the Scriptures, nor the power of God. While I was speaking, the power of God fell upon two or three persons; and presently there was a loud cry. We continued in prayer for two hours; and one soul found favour with the Lord.

May 7.—We held another watch-night at Dawgreen. Soon after the close of the sermon, we heard a cry for pardon and peace. The spirit of contrition was poured upon us. Some found peace and joy through believing, while others went away in distress, being advised to lay their case before the Lord at home.

8.—We had a large congregation in a barn at Batley; for the *laythes*, or barns, at this season were empty. Many were cut down under the word; and two cried aloud for mercy, “and were heard in that they feared.”

14.—Last night we had a watch-night at Heckmondwike; and we had, in the issue, a very awful time. A small company stopped behind, to whom I spoke on laying hold of the promises. The word was like lightning. Some were deeply affected. We continued

in prayer till midnight, when four persons found redemption through the blood of Christ.

I am quite astonished how my poor body bears up under these exercises and fatigues. But all things are possible to God. Surely an omnipotent arm is displayed in this work. My breast is torn with a cough, and I am often more fit to go to bed than to pray night and day, as I am obliged to do in this revival of religion: yet I get through my work. O God, I bless thee for the grace! My soul is all on fire to save poor sinners from the miseries of the fall. My life to me is nothing, though I would not purposely kill myself; yet, be the consequences what they may, souls I will endeavour to save.

It is amazing what untruths and false reports are spread abroad concerning this revival of religion. Many hard reflections are personally cast on me. I can, however, praise the Lord that my eye is single, and my intentions are pure. These reproaches tend to deaden me to the praise of men, and even to the esteem of good people. I will seek my all in God, and take as many with me to glory as I can. O God, "give unto thy servant a wise and understanding heart, that he may go in and out before so great a people!" Here I am; do with me and my frail body as seemeth good in thy sight!

My life—if thou preserve my life—
Thy sacrifice shall be;

And death—if death shall be my doom—
Shall join my soul to thee.

May 17.—Blessed be the Lord, we seldom have a barren meeting; he deals bountifully with us throughout the circuit. O that he would extend his benign influences far and wide.

July 1.—Sister Briscoe expecting to remove, I met her class, in order to divide it, and to appoint fresh leaders. We had a full room; and, in my last prayer, the Lord visited us indeed. Such a night I scarcely ever knew. Heaven seemed to come down to earth. Now it was that the promise given me nearly a year and a half ago was fulfilled to the letter; and in the very spot where it was first applied to my heart. Many, and at the same instant, cried aloud for mercy, and all seemed to attest the refreshing power of the divine presence. One young woman was much distressed. I pleaded the promise (John xvi, 23) in her behalf, that God would give us whatsoever we should ask in the name of Christ; and she rose calm and serene. The watch-night kept here the ensuing evening was attended by a crowd of people equal to a Sabbath-evening congregation.

3.—This night, at Hanging-Heaton, I was six hours on my legs. The crowd was large, and we had a wonderful time. One aged man dropped down on the floor, and many cried aloud and were comforted. Some of the brethren continued in prayer till three in

the morning. This was truly one of the days of the Son of man.

7.—Being on my way to the Bristol conference, I called on my old friends at Ashton, among whom I had laboured when in the Manchester circuit. After preaching, I met the society, and gave them an account of the great work of God in the Bristol circuit. I then particularly insisted on the doctrine I had lately enforced, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Presently the cries, groans, and prayers of the people drowned my voice, and the power of God rested on us in a wonderful manner. One received pardon, another perfect love, and a backslider was restored. Much more good was done, I believe, than was known. We continued some time in prayer; for it seemed as if the people could not leave the throne of grace.

[Mr. Valton does not give any particulars of the Bristol conference. Being the clerk, and without any assistance, he would be much taken up with the duties of his office.]

Aug. 20.—This year I returned from Bristol to labour another year in the Bristol circuit. But, in looking over my journal, I find my accounts this year much the same as in the past. Our watch-nights, prayer-meetings, and love-feasts were owned of God. The work of the Lord went on prosperously, and many were convinced and converted to God. A new and beautiful chapel was begun at

Dewsbury; and it is with great pleasure I add that the young converts remained steadfast in religion. But the heavy burden of being assistant (to Mr. Wesley) in the care of two thousand people in society, and the many watch-nights that I kept, with all the fears and anxieties that I felt for my circuit, sensibly sapped my constitution. Violent head-aches, often accompanied with giddiness, almost overcame me. Nevertheless, through a great flow of natural spirits, and the daily help I received from the Lord, I was enabled to bear up through the year. I need not say what I felt and what the people suffered when I took my leave of them.

Aug. 3, 1784.—This day our conference at Leeds ended in much harmony and love. My appointment was for Bradford, in Yorkshire; only a few miles from the scenes of my former labours. But having a slight enlargement in my ankle, indicating a scrofulous affection, my health required the use of sea-bathing; and on the next day I set out for Hartlepool, and preached at Ripon and Stockton in my way. I remained there about a fortnight, and often preached in the town and villages around about. The Lord graciously assisted me, and I hope my labours were not in vain.

26.—This day I returned to my new circuit at Bradford, [which then comprised the three circuits of Bradford, Halifax, and Sowerby-Bridge.] My first care was to lay the people

before the Lord, and implore his presence and blessing; and here the Lord gave me a promise, and very encouraging tokens in my own soul, that he would, in a glorious manner, revive his work. Mr. John Shaw, my colleague in the Birstal circuit, accompanied me to this place. He was a holy man, and a powerful preacher, and concurred in all my measures for the good of the work; though, from his very corpulent habit of body, he could not move out of his ordinary course.

28.—Being at Elland, the first place at which I preached, my spirits were very low. At night, however, we had a good time, and a general blessing was poured on the people. Two or three were deeply affected, and wept much before the Lord. This I could not but regard as a pledge of future good.

In this new sphere of labours I continued preaching and often holding prayer-meetings till the beginning of October, when I was prevailed upon, by the advice of a physician, to cease from speaking, and for a time to retire from all public labours. I felt great regrets at this; as the fields already began to ripen for the harvest. I found afterward that I had just retreated in time: had I gone on a few weeks longer, I had gone beyond the reach of medicine. My head and breast were sorely afflicted. I frequently lost my memory, and my understanding was often beclouded. In short, I was reduced so low that I scarcely durst read a chapter in the family before

prayer. At this juncture, I received a kind invitation from brother and sister Beecroft, of Kirkstal Forge, to make their house my home.

[It was on the first Sabbath that Mr. Valton came to Bradford, I had the pleasure to see and hear this man of God ; and from the time that he knew me, he became my father and friend. Like him, I had exhorted a whole year without taking a text. He encouraged me in the work, made me the leader of a class, and nearly at the same time sent me a plan as a local preacher. At the end of the two years, in 1786, he recommended me at the Bristol conference to Mr. Wesley, by whom I was sent to Redruth, in Cornwall. This to me was utterly unexpected ; for, judging myself inadequate to such a work, I was then turning my views toward a school, which I thought would be my lot for life.

The first time Mr. Valton met the society in Bradford, he told us of the promise he had received of the Lord concerning the revival of the work in the Bradford circuit ; and though afflictions checked the ardour of his soul, yet the presence of the Lord everywhere so accompanied his labours that, at the end of two years, there was a great increase of members, beside the erection and enlargement of chapels.

His method of preaching very much resembled that of Mr. Wesley. It was clear in ideas, earnest in address, and his word was

often accompanied with such powerful strokes as reached the hearts of the people. The gentleman of polished manners, and the classical scholar, were all lost in his bold attacks on error and vice, and in his warm and earnest exhortations to the people. He set about his Master's work as a workman that needed not to be ashamed. His voice was clear and sonorous ; just strong enough to be distinctly heard in the larger chapels ; yet he was best heard in the large room, which Methodism at that time was thankful to enjoy. Here he shone, while every sentence opened with instruction, and every stroke seemed as the hammer to drive the nail. He eminently possessed what Erasmus requires in a minister—a fountain of eloquence in his own breast. No wonder he should in most places always be attended with a crowded auditory.

It was his lively manner of preaching, and his good and healthy appearance in the pulpit, which operated against him in the estimation of his hearers, when they understood that he must retire for a time : they could scarcely be persuaded that he ailed any thing. His physician, however, having superior knowledge of his infirmities, as superinduced by excess of speaking, restricted him, as Mr. Shaw told me, to a *total silence*. He did not allow him even to articulate *yes* or *no*, till he should find the pain removed from his lungs and vocal powers. This medical opinion was

correct, as will appear from Mr. Valton's own words.]

After being a few weeks at the Forge, I yielded to the importunity of the people, and met the class; but even this small exertion brought on all my former pains, in such a degree that I thought I should have died during the night. However, in the beginning of November, I returned to my circuit; for the people said they would excuse my preaching if I would reside among them. So I left my Kirkstal friends in tears; but was obliged to be silent in all for many months.

May 18, 1785.—For the last few months I have only ventured to pray and exhort, as the Lord gave me strength; and yet my word has been owned, much the same as if I had preached, in the conviction and conversion of several souls. But, alas! even these exertions occasion a return of all my former pains. I am, therefore, advised again to retire, and shall set out this morning for Scarborough.

June 25.—This day I returned to Bradford, having found relief by bathing in the sea; but have preached several times in different places, and attended prayer-meetings; and the Lord has blessed my own soul and the souls of the people; to whom be glory for ever! O that I might now spend and be spent in the service of souls, and of my blessed Redeemer! I long to see the dawning of the latter day. May the Lord hasten it in his time! Amen.

July 16.—Having arrived in London in

order to attend the conference, I consulted that pious and eminent physician, Dr. John Whitehead, on the infirmities under which I laboured in my breast. He advises me to give up morning preaching at five o'clock, and to preach but little in the evenings. But my honoured and much esteemed friend, Mr. Fletcher, in a very kind and affectionate letter, gives me advice of another kind; namely, to follow his example, and look out for a suitable companion to nurse me in the retreat and under the infirmities of life. That, however, must be a subject of prayer. He named also Mrs. Purnell to me, who had been an affectionate nurse in my affliction at Bristol. But as she refused to travel, the matter dropped for two years.

Aug. 5.—To-day I set out a second time for the Bradford circuit. O that the presence of God might accompany me in his word and work among that people! On arriving safe, I can say that the Lord has accompanied me. He gave me great power and success at several places where I preached, and souls were brought to God.

23.—By the advice of physicians I am again obliged to leave my circuit, and go to the sea—the salt water being beneficial to a scorbutic complaint, with which I am afflicted. I spent a fortnight at Bridlington, and at the Quay. At both these places I preached several times; and it may be that the bread cast on the waters shall be found after many days.

Sept. 9.—My dear friend, Mr. Coulson, of Scarborough, met me to-day at Wold-Newton, and took me to his house, where I continued almost every night to be engaged in preaching or exhortation; and God was pleased to own my poor labours—to whom be glory for ever! On the 15th I preached a funeral sermon on the death of Captain James Smith, a young man not quite twenty-one. I think I never saw so neat, attentive, and serious a congregation before. They were almost all in tears; and the young people, in particular, were deeply affected. It was indeed a very solemn occasion.

Oct. 1.—This day I arrived safe at Bradford, having been accompanied part of the way by my dear friend, Mr. Coulson; and preached at Malton, York, &c., on my return. I find my health much improved, and hope to devote my new acquisition of strength wholly to the glory of God.

In opening the new chapel at Wichfield, half way between Bradford and Halifax, we had a very serious alarm by the breaking of an old bench. It was some time before the noise and terror subsided. As not half the crowd could get in, I took occasion to preach out of doors, and was happy to remark that the whole could hear the word, and the divine blessing implored on the assembled multitude.

At the close of this year I can give but a summary of my labours in the Lord. They have been much the same as in the Birstal

circuit, only my declining state of health did not allow me to hold many watch-nights. I have, therefore, bowed to the divine restraints, and held frequent prayer-meetings after preaching, and been favoured with the power of the Holy Ghost. In these exercises many souls have been converted during the last two years, and several hundreds added to the different societies. The thorn in the flesh has checked the ardours of my mind. The sharp returns of pain in the breast and head, accompanied with dizziness when in the pulpit, have often obliged me to hold myself by the desk, to keep me from falling down. Sometimes, indeed, I must have declined the work altogether, had not the rides in this circuit been short, and had I not been favoured with many vacant nights.

[In addition to what Mr. Valton states here, I have to add that, in love-feasts and on other occasions, he held fast the confidence of the pure and perfect love of God. He pressed this liberty more or less in most of his sermons, in the society meetings, and in visiting the classes. In discipline he was a pattern of paternal vigilance and care. He would not allow the men to commit any nuisance near the house of God, nor allow any member to lend a ticket to other persons to enable them to obtain admission into the love-feasts; as this was silently telling the stewards at the door a double lie, "This is my name; I am in the society." A man from

the country had bought a cake for his child on the Sabbath-day : the circumstance having reached Mr. Valton's ears, in renewing the tickets he required him to promise not to do it again ; which not being complied with, he tore the ticket. To rich men who prospered in trade, and conformed to the world, his voice was often strong : he menaced them with the loss of their souls. I once saw an opulent friend come out of the chapel, very much moved by what he had just heard. Mr. V., however, got well over those difficulties, because the offended soon knew that he practised the duties of charity which he pressed upon others.]

July 19.—Having taken my leave of the dear people in my circuit on the 3d of this month, I proceeded, by easy rides, to the Bristol conference, preaching almost every night among my old friends. On some occasions the Lord favoured me with remarkable enlargement, both in prayer and in preaching.

August 1.—This day our conference closed ; and, by an overruling Providence, I was appointed assistant (we now say superintendent) of the Bristol circuit ; and yet with the grace to be a supernumerary, which indulgently allowed me to preach just as much as I was able.

[Mr. Valton, when in the Bristol circuit, eight years before, had found the kindest of Christian friends in Mr. and Mrs. Purnel, who lived at the Fort. They had also a country house at Almondsbury, seven miles north of

Bristol. Mr. Purnel was now dead, and the family had, in consequence of considerable losses in mercantile life, laid aside their carriage. The widow now lived entirely at Almondsbury, with a view to foster the infant cause in that parish. She, and Miss Johnson, and Mrs. Wait, of Belton, were reckoned three of the most pious women among the Methodists in the west of England. Of the connection that follows, Mr. Valton writes:—]

It was now that a correspondence was renewed, or rather begun, between me and Mrs. Purnel; in which procedure I met with the concurrence of Messrs. John and Charles Wesley. Mr. Charles, then living in Bristol, cordially approved, as did also the particular circle of our religious friends. After receiving the approbation of Mr. Wesley, which for a while had been deferred, and a few select friends, I wrote to her, proposing marriage, and retired to Brean, a very lonely place, within a hundred yards of the sea. Here I gave myself up anew to the Lord, and cannot but adore and praise my Lord who directed me to so retired a place. I know not where I could have found so agreeable a situation for health and solitude. Here I was much engaged in prayer, and my God was with me. I deprecated all the sins of my single life, and cried to God to interpose with regard to the issues of my letter. I particularly implored an increase of his Holy Spirit, and that I might return to the labours of the circuit with strength renewed. Many weep-

ing and happy times I had ; and, I believe, my soul sunk into a deeper state of pure and humble love than I had enjoyed for some years past. The day on which I left Brean, while walking on the seashore, I entered into a most solemn covenant with the Lord. I repeatedly, and with my whole heart, avouched the Lord to be my God, and my portion for ever. I found myself perfectly free from all creatures, sensible that all my riches, honours, and blessedness must come from Him. My soul did indeed rejoice in the God of my salvation ; whose name be blessed for ever !

Sept. 30.—This day Mrs. P. gave her full consent to marry me. On this subject we have both had severe trials ; but a kind Providence seems to have cleared our way.

[Mr. Valton, ever mindful of his paternal cares over me in the work, favoured me with a very encouraging letter ; which I transcribe for the good of others.]

Bristol, Nov. 2, 1786.

DEAR JOSEPH,—I was comforted when I received your letter ; and am overjoyed that the Lord blesses you with success in your work. This you may consider as a token of the divine approbation, and that you are now where Providence has appointed.

My dear Joseph, take no thought for the morrow ; live and labour to-day, and God will bless you. As your day may be, so shall be your strength. He will not send you a warfare at your own charge. He will help and

uphold you, and make you like a new thrashing instrument. In all your troubles have respect unto the recompense of reward; and for the joy that is set before you, endure the pain and shame of the cross. Remember, afflictions are but for a moment; but the rewards are a weight of glory.

You must not be discouraged at the loss of seventy members the first quarter-day. I have generally found a loss after conference, which the Lord makes up in the course of the year.

And now, my dear youth, let me entreat you to give yourself wholly up to God, and to prayer. Do not seek so much for the art as for the unction of preaching. If you have the art, you will please; if you have the unction, you will save men. Cry to God, my brother, that you may be filled with the Holy Ghost; and that the Spirit may accompany all your studies. You well know the method that I use, and how God has owned my labours. Was my success obtained by seeking to gain admiration? No. You know how familiar and plain my discourses were; and how much prayer I used for the help of the Lord's arm. Beware that you do not give yourself up to such studies as may only enable you to decorate your sermons and inform your hearers that you are not one of those "weak things" that God has chosen to confound the wisdom of the wise. O, Joseph, be simple and humble; and both God and man will love and honour you. Never aim

to appear the gentleman, but the Christian. Be ready to clean your own shoes, and to do any thing else for yourself and others that may be proper.

Be not forgetful of the servants where you go ; but speak to them, as well as their masters ; for, with God, there is no respect of persons. Beware of high living, especially drinking much beer or wine. Let your moderation be known to all men ; and let all your hearers see that your kingdom is not of this world. Wear your own hair, and buy nothing that is ornamental. Let no man despise you.

And now, my dear brother, you will be thankful to God for these lines, and take them in good part. God bless you, and make you illustrious as the sun ! May you be a burning and shining light in your day and generation ; and may you at last finish your course with joy ! Pray for me, my dear boy. My heart salutes you. Give my love to dear Jonathan and Penny, [cousins,] also to Mr. Wrigley. Let me hear from you now and then ; and believe me, now and ever, your affectionate brother and fellow-labourer,

JOHN VALTON.

Wednesday, Dec. 1, 1786.—This memorable day I received the hand of Judith Purnel, at the altar, in St. James's Church, Bristol. It was a solemn time, and God was present with us. The Lord gave me courage to behave as became the occasion. My grateful heart said, "Surely I have not been a peti-

tioner in vain at the throne of grace." Such a pious and suitable person, in all respects, I do not know where else I could have found. While I was able to keep a circuit, I sought not for a wife; being determined to have full freedom in serving the church. But now, being disabled, I have sought and found a faithful companion for the retreat of life. Just before I went to church, I fell on my knees, and entreated the Lord for a blessing. I could appeal to him that I made his will my law; and could then have given her up had it been his pleasure. These words were applied with power to my mind, "Go, and I will bless thee." Lord, be it so! My soul embraced the promise, "My presence shall go with thee." It is enough, enough, O my God! And now, I beseech thee, O Lord, fulfil thy gracious word; and let thy presence attend us in all the walks of life! Keep us ever humble, loving, and simple, at thy feet; and make us truly helpful to each other, that we may meet at last where pain and parting shall be no more!

July 2, 1787.—I this day closed my year of labours in the Bristol circuit. The superintendency did not obstruct my going to visit new places. I took in Thornbury, and several villages, forming classes in every place. In the city of Bristol also we had a clear increase of one hundred members; and between one and two hundred souls found peace with God. The people truly live in my heart; and I can

rejoice to waste my life away in doing them service. I preached on the road at several places, and had remarkable times ; several were convinced of sin, and some found peace with God. At two or three of the places, persons were heard crying aloud for mercy. Glory for ever be ascribed to thee, O Lord !

Aug. 18.—This day I reached home from the Manchester conference. Mr. Wesley having been so kind as to ease me of the duties of superintending the circuit, I shall be at liberty to comply with invitations from the country, and to visit the villages.

Some time in October, by desire of Mr. and Mrs. Goodfellow, I visited Ditchet, where the Lord much blessed the word to the hearers. Some, from that night, were awakened, and brought into the society.

I had promised, on my return, to visit Shepton-Mallet, and give them a sermon on the following Sabbath in the evening. Having had a very disagreeable representation of the state of religion in that town, I felt my spirits low, and experienced much depression as I was riding thither. But a text was forcibly brought to my mind : “ Sing, O barren,” &c., Isa. liv, 1, 2. I thanked the Lord ; and, finding the congregation large, ventured to read the words which had been given to me on the road. Many, I perceived, were affected, and wept bitterly under the word. I met the society ; but the crowd stayed behind, and I thought more than once that we should

have had a general cry. When I came down from the pulpit, I found many in great distress, and could not leave them without prayer. Mr. Coulson, an aged class-leader, told me afterwards that he believed about one hundred persons were more or less awakened under that discourse.

In the beginning of November, I spent two or three nights more with that people; and many seemed truly convinced, and in earnest for salvation. The mornings I spent at my lodgings, to receive and advise those who came in distress, inquiring what they must do to be saved. The congregations increased every night, and a general spirit of alarm and inquiry was spread through the town and neighbourhood. That week many found peace, and forty-four were admitted on trial into the society. How soon did the Lord fulfil the gracious words given me for a text, "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear!" &c.

In my next visit I had another wonderful night, and returned thanks for about twenty-two that had lately found peace with God. The preachers in the circuit had fostered and encouraged the work. I may truly say, I never saw such a general awakening, and without the least appearance of wild fire. One morning, I think not less than twenty came to my chamber in distress, and two of them found peace with God. Among the many who were convinced and converted in this revival, was a very intelligent looking

boy, deaf and dumb, who stood up in the love-feast, and by signs, which others interpreted, expressed how happy he was in God.

On the last day of this year I preached again at Ditchheat, to a crowded auditory; and God sent the word to the hearts of many. We continued the services till near midnight. Three that were near me were in great distress, especially a young man that was born without arms. He had been a notorious sinner, and was wonderful in the use of his teeth and feet. This youth roared aloud for the disquietude of his soul.

In one of my former visits to Ditchheat, a woman, who had been awakened, desired her husband to come and hear me. "No," said he, "I would rather go to hell than hear the Methodists." He was presently after seized with a pain in his side, took to his bed, and died in a few days. One of our friends visited him and proposed prayer. "No," said he, "it is too late. You should have come before." In a little while he was heard to exclaim, "What, is it for ever! for ever!" and presently died.

July 13, 1788.—This day I set out for the London conference, having finished my second year at Bristol; my first care being to thank the Lord for the success with which he has favoured me in the past year. About one hundred members have been added in Shepton-Mallet, and the chapel has been considerably enlarged.

[About this time, the case of George Lukins attracted considerable notice in Bristol, and in all the public papers. I personally knew him; a youth about eighteen, short in stature, and meager in aspect. He had frequent fits or paroxysms, and was sometimes affected like the Pythonesses, or rather like the Furies, mentioned often by Herodotus and ancient writers. He was cruelly distorted, and uttered foul language; but was often heard to say that he should be delivered if seven ministers should pray with him. His words at length attracted notice, and the Rev. Mr. Easterbrook, vicar of Temple Church, collected that number to pray with Lukins in the vestry, and see what the Lord would do. They were gentlemen of superior education, and able ministers. Suffice to say, after the prayers of that morning, Lukins had no more of those horrid distortions, but was employed by Mr. R. Edwards, and others, as a bill-sticker. Mr. Easterbrook published a plain narrative of the case, an extract of which was published by Mr. Wesley in his Magazine. A physician of Bristol replied to Mr. E., contending that Lukins was altogether an impostor. The Rev. Thomas M'Geary, A. M., principal of the Kingswood school, and one of the seven, was, as he himself told me, very much of the physician's mind; but, knowing Lukins to be altogether illiterate, he asked him a question in Latin, and Lukins at once replied in Latin. This carried conviction

to the minds of all the gentlemen that the contortions of the young man were effectuated by an evil influence; and, by consequence, that Lukins was a demoniac. Of this Mr. Valton writes :—]

Some time ago, I had a letter requesting me to make one of the seven ministers to pray over George Lukins. I cried out before God, “Lord, I am not fit for such a work; I have not faith to encounter a demoniac.” It was powerfully applied, “Go in this thy might.” The day before we were to meet I went to see Lukins, and found such faith, that I could then encounter the seven devils which he said tormented him. I did not doubt but deliverance would come. Suffice to say, when we met, the Lord heard prayer, and delivered the poor man.

April 22.—At Lady-day, I was providentially removed from Almondsbury to a house adjacent to St. George’s church, at Kingswood; a central abode to a little sphere of labour. Here we fitted up the best part of the house for a chapel; a beautiful large room, comfortable and commodious. We have preaching every Tuesday, and Mrs. V. meets a class: thus, through mercy, good has already been done. I would gladly infer, that it is the earnest of a much greater work. My chief infirmities, during the year, have been a vertigo in my head, and an old infirmity in my ankle. If I walk much, it sometimes deprives me of sleep at night. Glory be to God that he does not quite lay me aside!

July 6, 1789.—I this day set out for the Leeds conference. My bodily infirmities still continue, especially in my ankle ; so that now I can walk but little. Sometimes the loss of memory in the pulpit has obliged me to stop, and I have been ready to fall down. Under all my weaknesses, the Lord still blesses my word in the conviction and conversion of souls.

My Methodistical year having closed, I would wish, like the cautious tradesman, to take stock, and see whether I have been a gainer or a loser in the past year. I trust, in the fear of God, I can say, that I have been, in some small degree, a gainer. I have reason to believe that love to my God has increased. Some humbling trials have exercised my patience, and proved it to be more than it was. I feel more indifferent to the praise or dispraise of men, and seem to be more loose than ever to the world. I feel the same love to souls, and desire to lay out my life to do them good, and advance the Redeemer's kingdom. I have no desire, no notion of living for any thing but to serve the church. Thus, through grace, I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me. To see the vineyard of the Lord flourish, and the vines send forth their tender grapes, is the joy and delight of my heart. I have no greater joy than to see the children of Zion walk in the truth. I can indeed say,

“Zion—my first, my latest care,
The burden of my dying prayer,—
Shall live within my heart.”

Aug. 5.—This day our conference ended at Leeds. We had a very brotherly and affectionate conference, and seemed perfectly united one to another. I still remained a supernumerary, being unable to resume the labours of a circuit.

While at Leeds, I consulted the good Dr. James Hamilton [who afterwards removed to practise in London] on my infirmities. He, as others, advised me to go to Scarborough. I did so, and was comfortably entertained at my old friend's, Mr. Coulson's; whom I now found actively engaged for God as a leader and circuit steward. I received benefit from bathing and drinking the water; and preached in the town and villages;—but think the people were not so lively as before.

Sept. 16.—I this day arrived safe at home, and felt much thankfulness to God. On my journey, I was much assisted while preaching at York, Leeds, and other places. To God be praise and glory for ever! Amen.

On making my estimate toward the close of the year, I feel grateful that the Lord does not take his word from my lips. Though I cannot take a circuit, through infirmities, yet, in general, I am enabled to preach about twenty times in a month: often, indeed, with much pain and difficulty. I bless the Lord, that my heart is still in the work; I cannot

forget the former days ; and, if it were in my power, I would again go forth into the full work of saving souls. But known unto my God are the painful nights that I frequently have, as well as wearisome days. But all is for good. The Lord cannot err ; nor can I choose. Glory be to his name for ever !

Mr. Valton's journal ends here. He did not write much in later years ; and the greater part of what he wrote relates to places, and the texts on which he preached.

May 11, 1790.—He opened the new chapel at Trowbridge, while I took his place in Bristol. On my return, I found the most grateful sentiments that so blessed a man had been sent among them. In the chamber, at Mr. Knapp's, where the preachers lodged, was a Bible placed for their use. On the blank leaf, between the Old and the New Testament, I found in Mr. Valton's own hand three texts :—

“Cursed be the man that doeth the work of the Lord negligently,” Jeremiah vi.

“Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate.”

“My spirit shall not always strive with man.”

At the Bristol conference, 1790, Mr. Richard Andrews, of Redruth, having come on some Cornish affairs, Mr. Valton was requested, as indeed he had often been desired before, to spend a little time among the generous-

hearted people of that country. The visit was very refreshing, both to them and to him. The ground was new, and it seemed as if he could hardly leave it. Of this extended visit he wrote to Miss Knapp, of Worcester, as follows :—

“ *Kingswood, Oct. 28, 1790.*

“ MY DEAR MISS KNAPP—This day I arrived at home, after being absent about eleven weeks in Cornwall. I was desired by Mr. Wesley, and the friends at the last conference, to visit the Cornwall circuits, which I have now done ; and, I trust, with some profit to myself and others.

“ I did not receive your letter till this afternoon, or I should most gratefully have acknowledged your favour before this time. I am exceedingly obliged to you, and your dear father, for taking so much thought about such an unworthy creature. It pains me that I cannot comply with your kind proposals [to come and reside among them]. We have in the Bristol circuit a greater prospect of good than ever ; so that I dare not move from this place. I can do nothing without the Lord. The cloudy pillar must move before me. Pray give my sincerest love to the friends at Stoke ; and say that it would afford me great satisfaction to have them for neighbours, but Providence has ordered it otherwise.

“ And now, O Sukey, what a vain thing is life, without the enjoyment of God and of real religion ! Can any thing here below

supply the wants, and fill the vast desires, of an immortal spirit? O no! See then that you desire, and seek, and labour for that precious pearl,—the love of God. All short of this leaves the soul under the anathema of a righteous God. The love of God is the life of the soul, the kernel of all true religion. Possessed of this, you may smile amid the wreck of nature and the crash of worlds. Do not rest short of this love. Preaching is good; class-meeting is good, and so are all the means of grace; but if we do not attain to love, through faith in the atoning blood, we shall never be admitted into the presence of God. My dear Sukey, have you justifying faith? Have you peace with God? Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart? If not, O that you may now set out afresh, and never rest till you can say, ‘Lord, thou knowest that I love thee!’ May God bless and keep you from the snare of the fowler! May he adorn your soul with every grace of his Holy Spirit, and give you a place at last among the honourable women! I am, dear Miss Knapp,

“Your most obliged and affectionate friend,
“JOHN VALTON.”

This holy and venerable man, suffering under many infirmities, felt no decay of love and zeal. We find him making excursions for twelve or fourteen miles from home, to Bath, Paulton, Clutton, Pensford, &c. To Nailsea he often went. The Rev. Mr. Baddily and he were very intimate. This clergyman

received the preachers, and attended the Bristol conference. He and Dr. Coke gave us the sacrament at the close of the conference, in 1790; Mr. Wesley, being fatigued, received the elements as the officiating ministers trod among the crowd. In the latter end of the next year, we find Mr. V. paying his annual visit to his Gloucester and Worcester friends, as he writes to Mr. Knapp, of Worcester. This letter, as a cloud of others, is a specimen of his faithful dealings with his best friends:—

“*Sept. 21, 1791.*

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—I intend, if the Lord permit, on the 29th instant, to occupy your bed-chamber. Give my love to the preacher in town, and, if it be agreeable, I will endeavour to preach that night. I hope also to be at Bewdley and at Tewkesbury.

“My dear friend, you are growing rich;—do you also grow good? Beware that you be not surfeited with the cares of this world. Your life waxes old as doth a garment, and very soon all before you will be eternity. Beware, lest that day come upon you unawares. Christ says, ‘I come as a thief.’ O that you and I may be found ready! Look to it, my dear John, that you be pursuing after holiness. If we are found at death in a lukewarm state, the Redeemer will spew us out of his mouth. The Lord stir us up to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Then,

when Christ shall appear we also shall appear with him in glory.

“I am your truly affectionate brother,
“JOHN VALTON.”

The next year he paid another visit to his numerous friends in Worcestershire, &c., &c. His letter, on his return to the same friend, breathes the same spirit:—

“*Kingswood, Oct. 3, 1792.*”

“MY DEAR BROTHER KNAPP,—Through the kind mercy of God, I arrived safe at home yesterday, and found my family in health and peace; for which I desire to be unfeignedly thankful. It was a pleasure that Miss Knapp came to us in the evening, accompanied by our two nieces. May the Lord bless her coming to the profit of her soul!

“I found myself very comfortable while I was at Worcester: the appearance of good days rejoiced my heart. I believe you will see both an increase of the work, and an increase of grace in the people. And may I not hope that my dear brother will come in for his share? You are deeply immersed in worldly avocations and cares, and have need to pray, and to fear lest you should be overcharged with them, and the day of the Lord come upon you unawares. Your care for the temporal interests of your family is highly commendable; only there is danger lest it should absorb the needful care of your soul. I would recommend you to lessen those cares as much and as soon as

you can, that you may attend the more to your spiritual interests.

“O, my dear brother, you are now very far advanced on your journey; and eternity is suspended on a very few uncertain moments of time. You are clearly convinced, that without holiness you cannot see the Lord. Let it then be your chief care to secure an inheritance among all those that are sanctified; yea, as far as possible, recommend it, and promote it in your family. Call them together every morning and evening, for reading and prayer. The eyes of men are on you, and your children, and your servants. In so doing, you may leave a lasting impression on their minds, which may do them good in future years. And the God of peace and love bless both you and them, with present and everlasting mercies! I am, dear sir,

“Your affectionate friend and brother,

“JOHN VALTON.”

About this time a strong feeling was revived in the nation in favour of the West India slaves; and the religious world began to express their sentiments by abstaining from the use of sugar and rum. Mr. Valton, as was most likely, joined in this feeling, and in a pamphlet recommended abstinence from those articles.

While I was stationed in the west of England, I called two or three times to see him, and generally found him in apparent health and good spirits. He had learned to bear the

thorn in the flesh with silent meekness. The last time I called was, perhaps, eight months before he died. Mrs. Valton now told me, what I had no idea of before, that he sometimes lay for whole nights sleepless, and sweating with anguish and pain, for a cancerous ankle. When he came into the parlour, he looked only a little impaired in his face, but he was still able to preach. He seemed to regret a want of resolution to suffer amputation. The pains, meanwhile, superinduced a fever, which gradually consumed a good constitution. So silent and secret were his sufferings, that I did not hear of immediate danger till I heard of his death.

His dear wife, running a race, as it were, to the tomb with her husband, died a happy death on the 16th of November, 1793.

This blessed woman was eminent for piety, and spent her mornings, from six till half past seven, in devotions. She established the cause of Methodism in Almondsbury, and formed, as is supposed, the first Sunday school that had been formed in England. She expired saying, "I have no fear."

February 28, 1794, contains the last entrance Mr. Valton made in his journal. "This day being appointed by his majesty to be observed as a day of fasting and prayer, I preached at Chewstoke, and prayed several times at Mrs. Griffith's. In the evening I reached Mr. Wait's, and preached at the chapel in Pensford, to a crowded auditory.

We then continued a while in prayer, and the Lord blessed our labours. For the king we sang lustily, and poured out our souls on his behalf."

Sunday, March 2.—I had a good time at the chapel, Kingswood school, and found the people in a promising way.

After this, he mostly kept his room; but in all the severity of his pains, he was endued with heroic and submissive patience. His prayers were the breathings of his soul to depart, and be with Christ. Whoever entered his chamber, he was still a preacher, exhorting all to embrace Christ and fully close with the Lord.

Thursday, 13.—The Rev. Richard Rhodda, an aged preacher, called to see him, and on being informed that he was below, he said, I must see him, though it be only for a few minutes. He stretched out his hand to receive him, saying, Welcome, welcome, blessed servant of the Lord; adding, "I am happy, I am happy." He was strong in faith, and his hope full of immortality.

Mr. Viner, a steward of Bristol, hearing of his case, hastened to see him. Mr. Valton, taking hold of his hand, said, "O my brother, for the last four days my soul has constantly been in a state of inward glory."

Monday, 17.—He continued breathing out his soul in divine ejaculations. And on being asked whether he had much pain, he rejoined with a heavenly smile, "Pain is not an affliction, but a blessing."

To a friend who sat up with him, and whom he had appointed to lead his class, he said, "Take care of my flock." On naming his insufficiency, and begging Mr. V.'s prayers, "Prayer," said he, "I have done with prayer now; I can love; I can praise; but I cannot pray."

Wednesday, 19.—He had pain, but not the least fretfulness, having in his breast "the eternal sunshine of a spotless mind."

In the afternoon he lifted up his eyes and said, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Presently after this he fell asleep in Jesus.

At his funeral and sermon, 1 Cor. xv, 55. there was but one sentiment, many exclaiming, "Let me die as Mr. Valton died!"

Farewell, dear man of God; farewell till the bright morning of the resurrection.

THE END.

