

BV  
4515  
.06  
1839

Cent

Rec by [unclear]



BV 4515 .06 1839  
Onesimus, b. 1768?  
The doctrine of the new  
birth

1012R



John Hewson



THE

DOCTRINE

OF

THE NEW BIRTH,

EXEMPLIFIED IN THE LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF

ONESIMUS,

FROM THE ELEVENTH TO THE TWENTY-FIFTH YEAR OF HIS AGE, OR FROM  
THE YEAR 1779 TO 1793, INCLUSIVE.

Also, The visions which he saw concerning the city of Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania, in the days when George Washington was the President of the United States of North America, and in the year of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1792. The visions with several of the special events of his life shall be illustrated with twenty plates, and the whole designed as a defence of the truth of the Gospel, and proof of the immortality of the human soul. Written in twenty letters, and dedicated to Elder Joseph Maylin.

ONESIMUS.



PHILADELPHIA:  
PRINTED BY WILLIAM F. RACKLIFF.

Corner of George and Swanwick streets.

---

1839.

---

ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year 1839, by

JOHN HEWSON,

In the Clerk's office of the District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

---



- No. 1. The ship Perseverance, commanded by Captain Onesimus, leaving the shores of time, with her sails loose, and anchor weighed; bound on a voyage of discovery, in search of the immortality of the human soul, and with a full determination, like Columbus, to convince himself of the existence of another and better world than this, as a counterpoise to this world of sin and death.
- No. 2. Captain Onesimus, viewing through the telescope of faith, the bright and morning star of immortality.
- No. 3. Satan, the God of this sinful world, and the Prince of darkness, standing on the lantern of the light-house of the age of reason and philosophy, taking a view of Onesimus, casting off his fealty to the Prince of darkness, and leaving the shores of time.
- No. 4. Christ, the bright and morning star.

“Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets. The Lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy.”—*Amos, iii chap. 6, 7, 8 verses.*

DEAR SIR:—In hope that this little work may have a tendency to promote the cause of our common Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, I have presumed to commend the following letters to your patronage, and humbly subscribe myself your affectionate brother in the bonds of the gospel, ONESIMUS. 1839.

*To Elder Joseph Maylin, of Philadelphia.*

---

The Watch-word to be used on board the ship Perseverance, during the voyage to the shores of immortality,—“Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the spirit.”—*John, 3, 7, 8.*

Letter I. contains the first serious impressions that were made on his mind, by a sermon preached from the xxiv. Psalm, in 1779, “Who is the king of glory?” and the gloomy state of his mind, at seeing three persons executed, and the awful temptations which followed him to about the fifteenth year of his age.

DOCTRINE  
OF THE NEW BIRTH.

---

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR:—I shall pass by the childhood and early youth of Onesimus, believing with the wisest of the Hebrew sages, (Solomon,) that they are days which only present weakness and vanity, and begin where the Lord in his wisdom and mercy began with him, to call him out of the horrible pit, into which Adam by his transgression cast the whole race of mankind.

The first serious impressions which, he at this distance of time can distinctly recollect, were made on his mind in the summer of 1779: under a sermon delivered by Elder Spraut, pastor of the Second Presbyterian church of Philadelphia, from the xxiv. Psalm, “Who is the king of Glory?” This interesting discourse drew tears from his eyes, and for a season made some serious impression on his mind. The which led him for a few weeks to be very reserved in his words, and cautious in his conduct, so much so, that it soon elicited the attention of some of his father’s family, and especially a young female, who did at times exclaim, “that if he went on with his seriousness much longer, he would become a Presbyterian minister.” And to this outward change of his conversation, he added the frequent use of the Lord’s prayer, night and day, whither he was in his father’s house or ambulating the city streets. But it being in the midst of the revolutionary war, and his father but lately returned from being a prisoner among the British at New York, and was at this time engaged in keeping a house or rendezvous to recruit men for the shipping in the port

of Philadelphia; and at the same time was a captain of a company of militia. So that there was nothing to be seen or heard of at home, but the sound of the drum and fife, or seen but fire-arms, colours, and other warlike articles; and not a single person to his knowledge in the family at that time, who thought of God, or experienced any concern for their soul's immortality, and as those warlike preparations were daily passing before his view, when in process of time, all his seriousness, with the almost hourly repetition of the Lord's prayer, soon were banished from his thoughts.

When his legal fears, watching, and praying, simultaneously spread their ephemeral wings, and took their flight, and left his mind in Egyptian darkness, without the smallest ray of spiritual light, so that all his convictions, and legal resolution to serve God, was succeeded by the dark clouds of sin and unbelief, and his person surrounded with a dense atmosphere of ignorance, both of the nature and character of God, so that not a single ray of light passed through the impenetrable gloom.

But the Lord, who is rich in mercy, had not given up this young sinner as a forlorn hope, and our dear old shipmate will bear in his mind that our countersign, or watch-word, on board the ship *Perseverance*, during the voyage, was taken from the log-book of Captain John Gospel. The wind bloweth where it listeth, so that when sailing at one point of the compass, does not bring a sinner to the knowledge of the truth; the Lord will send a mackerel breeze from another quarter of the providential heavens, to re-alarm a poor sinful boy, and cause him finally to flee the wrath to come.

Therefore in the year 1780 or 1781, we do not now distinctly remember which, four coloured and one white person descended from within the British lines in the vicinity of New York, and came down the Delaware in a boat, within less than three miles of the city of Philadelphia, and robbed a farm-house belonging to one William Ball, of some silver plate, and other valuable articles not recollected. But soon after the robbery, they were advertised in the public papers of those days, and a reward offered for their apprehension, and

they were taken in some part of East Jersey, as they were returning to the British lines with their plunder, and brought to Philadelphia, and tried by the then existing laws of the state of Pennsylvania, and the whole of them condemned to die.

And when the day of their execution arrived, Onesimus being about twelve years of age, went with the multifarious throng to the place of execution, and as the five men were sitting on their coffins under the gallows, two of the coloured persons received a pardon from the Governor of the State, and the other three were launched into that world where poor mourning Job dolorously cries, "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest; there the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master." Shipmate, how most solemnly sublime is this dolorous canticle of human wo: and here, with poor Job, let us for a moment view mankind on the greatest acme of earthly glory, both in church and state, and elevate our minds so as to behold the several clouds of the restless ambition of the vain sons of men, after conquest, and empire; we would with humble difference ask them, where is the Nimrod of the bible, with all the great and lessor sattelites of conquest and dominion, which, from age to age, have been revolving round this wandering comet after earthly power. Truly, old shipmate, we are justified in singing with Job. The oppressor, and the oppressed rest together, in one physical and common level. And for a farther solution of Job's canticle, let the mournful page of history, which groans and weeps blood at every paragraph it records, join the chorus with Job, and then view what folly the past history of the world presents to the serious and reflecting mind. Shipmate, it seems somewhat difficult to find an allegory, symbol, figure, or type, to set forth the folly of designing, and ambitious men, in a just and true point of light. But when Onesimus was on shore, and standing for a few moments at the foot of a cataract, and viewing the effect which the rushing and impetuous water made on the face of

the waters, in the basin below, which would suddenly create millions of those little airy castles on the surface of the gliding waters, and as he stood and viewed them, he perceived they were of various dimensions, and here and there a solitary bubble arose, like Saul, king of Israel, a head and shoulder taller than the most of his watery brethren, so that when the rays of light darted these coruscation through these transparent walls, which would for a few moments adorn those airy temples, with some of those tints which are seen in the rainbow, and here and there one of those watery dooms, would outlive, and for a few moments outshine their lesser watery brethren.

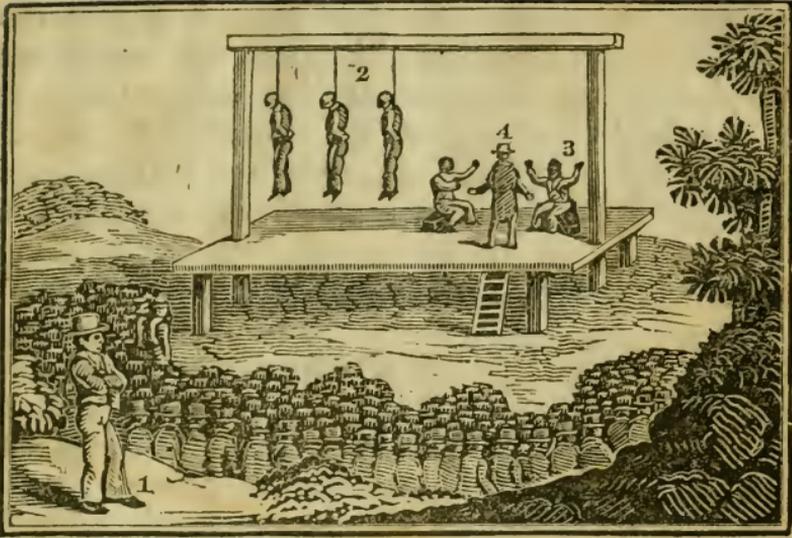
But in a few moments more he viewed them, and exclaimed, the small and the great are there, and the sons of men slip their wind, and like their watery type, seek in their parent element, the earth, a physical and common level, and the servant is free from his master, and the slave is freed from the power of the tyrant. And as he stood cogitating in his mind about the water bubbles, as a natural mirror, which showed him the variety of the human race, with all their momentary and distinguishable size, and shade of colour, such as conquest, dominion, power, honour, earthly glory, riches, birth, and the wisdom of this world, all gliding away on the passing waters of time, and forever lost in the basin below, when he said to himself, what a poor insignificant being is man, or in the language of the royal saint, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the more so if the doctrine of the bible is not true, as many of the great and wise men of this world say, that the old book is only calculated to frighten children, and old ladies, about ghosts, and spectres after the death of the body.

When they are ready to ask the followers of Christ, what person in this state, ever saw the thing called the human soul. But, old shipmate, notwithstanding the fastidious views of the wise gentlemen of the world, respecting the person of Christ, and the doctrine of the soul's immortality, which he so positively and clearly taught, and the careless interest they appear to take either in the eternal happiness or misery of their souls in a coming world.

And it came to pass, that after these reflections had passed for a few moments through his mind, when some kind or sister spirit, like as our Lord said to the Jewish Rabbi:—"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof." So is every one that is born of the spirit, brought to his recollection. The fatherly advice of Phillip to his young son upon a certain occasion, (who has been called by historians Alexander the Great,) which came with great force to his mind. My son, said Phillip of Macedon, seek a better and larger kingdom, than the small patrimony of your father has it in his power to bestow upon you, for Macedon is too small for you, it has neither riches, glory, length, breadth, nor physical resources, to accommodate, the vast mental and physical prowess the which, my son, you have this day in the presence of my court placed in our view.

And it came to pass, that when this young Scion had arrived to man's estate, that Alexander with the fealty of a dutiful son, remembered the prayer and counsel of his father, and placed the same in all his wars fully before his mind, and indulged the sound of his father's prayer to be ever vibrating in his ears, when Onesimus said, such counsel from a father, and such fealty on the part of a son, is worthy our imitation, when he said to his Soul, seek a better kingdom than this bubbling world, this time state, this theatre of vanity, for it has neither length nor breadth, nor height nor depth; to satisfy the physical and mental prowess of the vast empire of thy mind. Our old shipmate is ready to call out to the man at the wheel or helm, that it is high time to brace the yards and haul aft the sheets, and trim the bowlings, and leave poor Job to sing his mournful song to himself, and sail up to latitude of the gallows, in order to let us hear how this young sailor comes on with his dolorous reflections respecting those three malefactors, in the agonies of death. And it came to pass, as young Onesimus stood at a distance and viewed them, with their white caps over their faces, as they hung suspended under the gallows, when these gloomy thoughts suddenly rushed through his mind,

respecting human nature, and why it was, that an all wise and powerful being, should suffer or permit any of the children of men, to come to such a tragical end, or what could have been the ultimate design of the great author of nature in bringing into existence such a wretched race of beings, that any of them should be brought to such an awful end. When he was ready in the dolorous language of Paul to exclaim, "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death." But we think we hear our old shipmate, as he sits in his cabin, with the hanging compass over his head, as we have once said, call out to the helmsman, not to let the ship Perseverance fall off from the winds eye, and the point of the compass, which the ship set out to steer by, on her voyage to the land of immortality, by first bearing away after Nimrod, and then the kings of the earth, and then bearing down on poor shipwrecked Job, and then, to a college of wise Philosophers. But haul your wind and sail up to the place of execution and inform us how this youngster made it out with his melancholy view, on the condition of the sons of men. Dear old shipmate, we are led to receive your wise, and timely admonitions as correct, and shall hereafter endeavor to keep them, like young Alexander did his father's counsel, always in mind.



- No. 1. The young sailor excogitating in his mind on the mysterious designs of the Almighty, in permitting any of the human race to come to such an awful end.
- No. 2. The three men as they hung in the agonies of death.
- No. 3. The two men who received a pardon from the governor of Pennsylvania.
- No. 4. The Sheriff presenting the pardon to the two men as they were seated on their coffins.

And it came to pass, after the execution was over, that young Onesimus, came home to his father's house, when the most gloomy and melancholy views of the human race, passed in quick succession through his mind, followed by a constant presentation of the three dying malefactors as they hung under the gallows.

And the next day, for the first twelve years of his existence, he was most suddenly and powerfully tempted to drown himself in the Delaware river, in order to get rid of an existence, that to him appeared to be so dark and mysterious, and from that day he became the unhappy subject of these deleterious thoughts, more or less, night and day; and especially so, when any instrument or other means of danger was in his view. Such, for instance, as the loaded fire-arms in his father's house, or any deep water, or being elevated from the earth, or any other danger was in his view. Now it is evident that these thoughts were not his own, for this obvious reason, for the moment the instrument or other

means of self destruction were out of his sight, those awful thoughts were gone from his mind, the which leads us to conclude that these deleterious thoughts were the work of some hidden and foreign agency. No wonder, then, if those evil thoughts that followed this young sinner night and day were the suggestions of satan, as they had no location in his mind, only when some place of danger or instrument of destruction presented itself to his view.

Thus this young lad went on his way, daily having his mind pestered with those deleterious thoughts, and could not divert his mind from them, when any dangerous place or instrument was near him.

Therefore, satan by his wiles, caused this young boy to sigh and groan within himself, in consequence of being pestered with such unnatural ideas, for about a whole year; and finding that his hidden master, kept this poor young sinner, at the same lesson more or less every day, when he at times became so low spirited, that he had thoughts of running away from school, not knowing at that time, that his Lord and master of old sent his young lads he designed for the work of the ministry, on board his gospel armament to the college of temptation to finish their education.—James says, “blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life,” which leads us once more to observe, by taking special notice of the same, that God having but one only begotten Son, sent him to this college or school, to finish his studies under that celebrated teacher the devil, it is very singular to remark, that three of the chief officers who have sent their sea or Cape letters to the gospel armament, have taken particular notice of this part of our Lord’s education, as the last ornamental accomplishment that his divine Father saw, was indispensably necessary, so that he might obtain his diploma signed by the Spirit of God, in order that Christ might be inducted into the priestly office, and become the minister of God’s true sanctuary. Now, Matthew and Luke tell us that the spirit of God lead his Son by the leading string of fealty: to this severe master that is, in their language, to be tempted of the devil. But Mark is much

more bold, and says that the Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost, drove his Son into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. "And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness," Mark i. 12. And now, dear shipmate, surely it can be no disgrace to poor Onesimus that it pleased God to send him to study so hard for a whole year.

And now what are the inferences which common sense draws from the views the writer has hastily taken of the spiritual accomplishments of a true minister of the gospel sanctuary, why they are as follows, and we are full of confidence to believe, that we have some pretty wise, and experienced officers on our side of the argument, to wit: That however richly a person is or may be adorned with the science, which the most finished education can bestow in this mundane state, without the special grace of God to change and sanctify their hearts, as Paul says they are nothing more nor less, than a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbol, yet it is true that many un-sanctified men may wish to follow Christ into the ministry of his militant church, as some of the Jews did for the sake of the loaves and fishes, and they may be in the most extensive possession of the vast republic of letters that embrace the elements of all languages, both of men and angels, and as we have already observed in the little case of our water bubbles, that here and there one raises his head, like as in the case of Saul, a little above his lesser brethren in the outward church of Christ on earth, and for a few days or years, with the overwhelming elements of his powerful and prostrating oratory and for a while bears down all opposition, and using a natural figure just like the rushing in of mighty waters, carries the minds and views of thousands, (as Paul says in his last letter to Timothy having itching ears,) into the unbound sea of their vast designs of evangelizing the world without the special power of the Mighty God of Israel, in some miraculous way co-operating with them, and others with the fashionable theology of the day, with the intense study over the outward letter of the gospel, being at the same time entirely unacquainted with the watch-word on board the ship Perseverance. "Marvel

not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the spirit." John iii. 7, 8. And although, these wonderful paragons, of the dead letter of the gospel may with the softer elements of fine periods, and harmonious sounds of well selected words, cause the high wrought sensibility of many of their admirers to make them almost believe they are seated under the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. But your admonition reminds us of our duty simultaneously with the rushing sand of time, through its ephemeral hour glass of life. Not to let the ship fall off the wind's eye so often, the which your seafaring experience teaches you is too often the case, when the sailor at the wheel gets in some disulteriorious conversation, with one of the passengers or bystanders, the which too often diverts his eye from the shivering condition of his sails as well the sure point of the compass of the ship Perseverance, so that we receive your admonition both timely and wise.

My dear old shipmate, it becomes our duty to advertise you, that young Onesimus, studied for about a year under this celebrated Doctor, who was and is still the President of the college of Temptation, that it came to pass, that after his master, become too severe, so that the old adage would fitly apply in his case, all work and no pastime would finally make this young sailor a dull boy, and keeping him at the same monotonous lesson every day; that is being beset by satan to destroy himself in some way or other, for more than a whole year, after seeing the three men executed, and at the same time being ignorant of the way of deliverance through faith in the blood and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. So that he had no ears to hear, nor heart to understand the voice of kindness, and mercy through his revealed word to poor tempted sailors.

And poor stupid, and ignorant Onesimus, not knowing any way to get clear of such revolsive ideas, he thought to himself that he would try and get a boy's birth on board of one of the small privateers, that sailed

out of the port of Philadelphia so as to get to sea, and go to some other part of the world, and if the fates (so that you see that this lad, with millions of others in this dark and sinful world, had not the least distant idea of the dark agency of satan, as the primary cause of all his unnatural thoughts,) should at last propel him to do the act of destroying himself, he might be in some other part of the world, when his friends and family should not be permitted to behold the awful catastrophe. In the fall of 1782 he made several attempts to get a birth on board some of the small war vessels. But as there was at time a great prospect of peace between America, and England, a small boy who had not been to sea, stood but little chance to get a birth without the special interest of friends, and as he could not obtain the agency of friends in getting to sea, he had to give the sea voyage, or privateering business up.

And it came to pass that early in the spring of 1783, that his temptations suddenly spread their wings and departed for a season, (as was the case with our Lord. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season, Luke iv. 13.) When he gave up the idea of going to sea. But the Lord was not going to let the young sinner entirely abandon a seafaring life, and as we have no doubt, run our ship Perseverance foul of your locker of patience, we put up the old inkhorn, and close our logbook, and turn into our hammock, till the morning watch on deck, and if the cherub who sets a loft should give us a fine day, we shall be tempted to open the old logbook of our ship and write you again something about this young lad's cape letter from on board the ship Perseverance bound on a voyage of discovery, in search of the soul's immortality.

*Port of Philadelphia, March 30, 1783.*

ONESIMUS,

TO ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

## LETTER II

ONESIMUS leaving his father's house and going to the city of New York, while the British army had possession of the same, and a vision of spirits which was seen by all on board the vessel in York Bay in the summer of 1783.

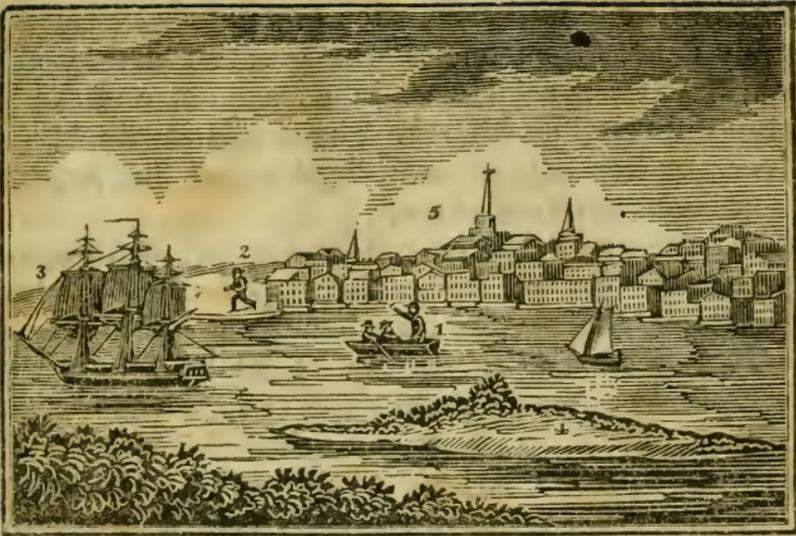
*Dear sir,*—Our last sea letter left young Onesimus out of the college of temptation, it being a season of vacation during which time the thoughtless youth forgot all the useful lessons, the old President of the college of temptation had taught him.

Therefore his heavenly father (although at that time he had no perfect nor distinct knowledge, that he was in any degree related to the royal family) saw proper to take him for a season from under the tuition of Satan, and send him to another college and put him under a celebrated teacher whose name was the wise and unerring Providence of God, so that in this vast establishment there was taught a greater variety of the sciences than in the college of temptation the which were more congenial to the habits of Onesimus, than the dull turmoil of going through, and reciting the same lesson over and over again every day, and as President Providence made it a general rule or maxim, to drill his young gospel cadets in some new branch of seamanship in order that when their education is finished, they might be able to add to their faith, virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity, or rather Love. 2 Peter i. 5—7.) So that this wise arrangement you see entirely removes any dull or monotonous effects from the student's mind and renders his condition at college more felicitous.

You remember that our last scroll from the log-book of our ship, informed you that the lad was no longer troubled like Alexander the great) with the cooing voice of the old soldier, the serpent of hell, or satan, on the outside of his tent, or in our vernacular tongue those evil thoughts and temptations to destroy himself, so that he gave up the idea of going to sea. But you no doubt

remember our countersign, or watch word during this long hazardous voyage was to be, that the wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but cannot tell from whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Therefore, one of those wires, yet in some sense like the dreams of young Joseph, which appears like an hair link which connects the vast chain of providence together, took place in the month of June 1783, his father sent him with his hired man into the city of Philadelphia, to bring out of the city, some articles used in his business, and when returning with the same the horse took fright at something unknown to this day, and running the cart on teh side of an hill overturned the same, the which broke many of the articles to pieces, and would have kiled the unworthy subject of our biography on the spot had he not possessed the presence of mind to spring from under the cart as it went over, and when they returned home with the news of the disaster, the man to clear himself from having the damages to pay, laid the blame on Onesimus by telling his father that he undertook to drive the horse contrary to his desire, the which had no foundation in truth and when he found that his father admitted the man's statement of the case to be correct, he experienced a little of the cholér of his sinful nature to rise, and his father having promised that the damages should be all settled the next morning, and knowing him to be a person of his word in all matters of that character, he said to himself the time is come for him to be off into the wide world, when he went into the house and tied up his few clothes into a handkerchief, with about five or six dollars in money, (which he had been saving together for some length of time to buy a fowling-piece; the possession of which at that time he thought would complete his happiness in this world,) and off he went like his foolish brother, the prodigal in Luke gospel, but under quite dissimilar circumstances; for his was young to fall into the prodigal's folly, for he had no money to spare in any kind of riotous living, and too young in life to experience the counter part of his folly, his departure took place about five o'clock in the after-

noon, on the 10th of June, 1783. Onesimus run into the city that evening, and went on board a large ship which had just arrived from England, after the peace of 1783. The sailors of the ship granted him the favour of staying in the ship all night, for having left his home in anger, and being grieved in his spirit that the hired person had accused him wrongfully to his father, so that he knew not what to do, nor where he intended to go, any more than to get from home, and the smell of the ship was not very agreeable to his olfactory nerves that night. He rose early next morning, and looking over the stern of the ship in the direction of his father's house, when he saw a boat coming down the Delaware, not more than a quarter of a mile distance from the ship in which he saw a person standing in the stern of the same; which he soon discovered was his father, when he instantly run out of the ship, when the voice of his father reiterated in his ears, "My son, don't run off from your father;" when he run out of the vessel, and up the wharf with all speed, and hid himself in some out-house, in Southwark Philadelphia.



- No. 1. His father calling to him, and saying my son don't run off from your father.
- No. 2. Onesimus in the act of running off from the voice of his father.
- No. 3. The large English ship, in the which he sleep the first night after he set sail to find the soul's immortality.
- No. 4. A small island called Wind-mill Island, opposite the city of Philadelphia.
- No. 5. The city of Philadelphia as it appeared in 1783.

In the which he tarried about half an hour till he thought his father had given over searching for him. But while he was in this loathsome prison, he cogitated in his mind what to do, and which way he should steer his course, when the idea struck his mind to go to New York, as the only place to elude the search of his father.

And when he came out of his hiding place, he ran round by the Schuylkill side of the city, and got into the road that leads to Trenton, (a place noted in the revolutionary war, where Washington suddenly surprised about a thousand of the royal army of George the third, king of England, and made them prisoners of war; the which appears to the writer as one of those wonderful hair-links of an overruling Providence, on the which converged, as on a single point, the destiny of a nation only as yet in a state of embryo, so that the wisdom, skill and sword of Washington, by this act, thrown into the vibrating scale of the war of 1776, caused it to prepon-

derate in favour of the salvation of a people destined, we humbly trust, to be one of the greatest nations of the earth; but in a special sense in consequence of the light of civil and religious liberty. She as a national telegraph, converging her rays of civil light on all the oppressed and enslaved children of men.)

But to return to the case of Onesimus. On the evening of the second day he reached a place in New Jersey called Perth Amboy, and from hence got on board a small vessel for New York. In this vessel he fell in with a young person about 19 or 20 years of age, who was going in search of his sister, who during the revolutionary war, and while the British army were in the State of New Jersey, had married a quarter-master of one of the British regiments. And as peace had taken place, the parents or other friends of the family, sent the brother to ascertain her situation. When the young man arrived at New York he was informed the regiment was at a place on Long Island, called Flushing. So the young man persuaded the subject of our little history to accompany him, as he was a stranger in search of his sister. So they went on the Island together, and when they had proceeded a few miles, they were stopped by the British guards, who demanded their pass; but having none to present, they were put into the guard-house, and after a short time brought before the officer of the day, to whom the young man stated the object of their journey, which was to see his sister; and giving the name of her husband, and regiment to which he belonged, the officer let them pass, without farther detention. And when they came to Flushing, he found his sister; but the quarter-master and the regiment were at a place called Oyster Bay, from twenty to thirty miles distant, when her brother concluded, that as long as he had come so far, he would go and see his sister's husband before he returned to her father's house. Here it may be proper to remark that the lady had the appearance of the wreck of a handsome person; but in consequence of the indulgence of a deteriorating, or rather degrading vice, she had greatly, like the Queen of Egypt in the days of Cæsar Augustus, depreciated some of the tenets of her former beauty, and

after staying at Flushing a few days, the brother set off to Oyster Bay, and took the subject of our dolorous story with him, and the next day found his sister's husband at the above place, who behaved very kindly to the young man, and from the conversation that passed between them it appeared that the quarter-master had been once excessively and passionately fond of his sister, and he told him that her base conduct was such, that he should not go nigh her any more. And as the young man had seen enough of her conduct the short time he remained at Flushing, so that he could not deny her husband's statement of her case. And as the quarter-master occupied a red frame building as a store or depository of the ammunition, provisions, and other warlike articles for the regiment; and he being much of his time out of the store, he wanted a boy about the age and size of Onesimus to stay and mind the store during the times of his absence; and being a stranger, and his little money almost gone, he accepted the berth, and the young man returned to his people, and left his young acquaintance in the employ of his sister's husband, and have never saw each other since.

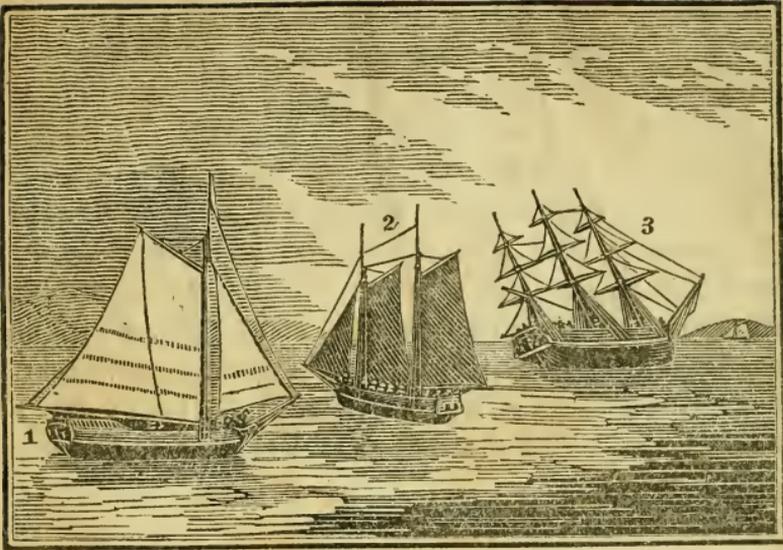
Onesimus was well satisfied with his new quarters for about two weeks, when an imaginary danger, or in the view of many persons will no doubt be considered as a trifling thing, disturbed his resting place. According to a declaration of holy writ, (there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. Isaiah 57, 21.) This small occurrence, or rather incident, which drove him from his new berth, was as follows: There was close by his bed where he had to sleep, several kegs of gun powder, the which, when he understood what was in them, when it so powerfully wrought on his fears, lest the exploding article by some accident should be ignited and blow him to a thousand pieces, for he was now fond of life, and Satan was not at this season permitted to tempt him as on former occasions, and as his fears increased night and day, so that his sleep departed from him, when he rose early one morning and set off for New York, and there fell in with a refugee Captain, that owned a small vessel, who at that time followed fishing for a kind of fish named seabass and

blackfish, and also bringing the Jersey people with their produce to the New York Market, who received for the same the silver and gold of the British army, who still had possession of the city. Onesimus hired with this captain for an English guinea per month, early in July, 1783; and was well pleased with his new occupation and master, and he had plenty of that which was necessary to live on.

And one day as the vessel was crossing York Bay from the Narrows to Sandy Hook light-house, as the boy Onesimus was steering the vessel, when his captain came and took the helm, and sent the boy into the hold of the vessel to clean out the same after the market people, who always made more or less dirt in the hold with their articles of produce going up to the market, and among the hay and other rubbish he found two pieces of gold of the value of eight spanish dollars, these he put into his pocket, and there is no doubt but some of the country people lost the same out of their pockets, as they had to sleep or lie down in the hold of the vessel in crossing the bay. And when he had cleaned the hold of the vessel and put all things in order to please his master he came on deck, and went into the cabin as though he had something to do, when he took up a brick out of the hearth of the fire-place of the cabin and deposited the two pieces of gold in the place from which he had raised the brick, and placed the piece of brick in its former place again; and then came on deck and took the helm again, and the captain was never the wiser of what he had been doing. Suffer us to notice that that these two pieces of gold under the overruling of an alwise providence, were the only outward means of getting Onesimus a few clothes for the ensuing winter: which leads us to observe how many little things in our view transpire, although they are under an alwise but to us a mysterious providence.

And it came to pass that after this occurrence, that Onesimus and his captain were reciprocally satisfied with each other's conduct, all the time he sailed in this refugee captain's employ, which was about three months and a half. And as we have nothing more worthy of

remark, with the exception of one singular occurrence, which took place in the month of August, 1783, and if true, goes to prove the immortality of the human soul, and confound the skeptical doctrines of the age. And was as follows: the writer is fully sensible that in giving this statement to the world, that he will be the accidental cause of getting his fleece wet with the risibility of philosophy, and a host of other wise and knowing ones of this age. But a sense of duty presses us on to disregard their fits of laughter, believing the day is fast approaching when their risible countenances will be bedewed with a flood of tears; be that as it may we shall fear lessly make the statement of the case to the world.



- No. 1. The sloop in which Onesimus was, when the strange vessel passed her by without wind.
- No. 2. The schooner full of people which passed by their sloop in a dead calm, without the propelling power of the wind.
- No. 3. A Spanish ship on a shoal in York Bay, and in great distress with her hold full of water.

Our old shipmate will bear with our folly, as Paul says to one of the churches in his day:—Now the things which we write we lie not, but speak the truth before God. One night in the month of August, 1783, as the sloop was laying in the middle of York bay, which lays between Sandy Hook light-house and the Narrows, becalmed, and the sea like a sheet of glass, and not the least breath of air moving over the face of the surrounding waters, and the moon shining with peculiar brightness; when a schooner full of people passed by the sloop in which Onesimus was in, and so close that all hands on board the vessel could clearly see the people on the deck of the schooner, and the colour of her sails, when she suddenly vanished out of their sight. When the captain of the sloop Onesimus was in, said to us all, did you see the schooner pass by our vessel? when we all answered him in the affirmative: when the captain observed to all on board his vessel, that this was a token for some one or more on board his vessel, that their time was short in this world.

Now in order to prove to our venerable old shipmate that our vision had some foundation in truth, respecting the schooner peopled with spirits, or the ghosts of the departed sons of men, at a little distance from the sloop lay a large Spanish Ship in great distress, on a shoal or bar in or about the middle of York-bay, having bilged, and her lower hold full of water, and among the articles that constituted her cargo, was a large quantity of sulphur, and salt-petre, which when it came in contact with the sea water, created foul air in the hold of the ship. The next day when a number of small craft were round the ship trying to save as much of her cargo as they could, and while most of the crew of the Spanish ship was at work in the lower hold, getting what of the articles of the cargo they could to the hatchways of the ship, in order that the hands on deck might hoist them out, and put them on board the small vessels alongside, when a simultaneous, or sudden collection of the foul air from the different articles of the cargo, suffocated all the hands of the ship, who were at work in the lower hold, and when the hands on the deck of the ship supposing they were overcome with the heat of the weather, rushed down into the hold of the ship to relieve their drowning shipmates, when they also in like manner were suffocated, so that a ship of about eight hundred tons burden, lost near all her hands in a few minutes of time, the captain of our vessel although a refugee, with the rest of the hands which saw the schooner load of ghosts pass them by the evening before, acknowledged that the sudden death of the ship's crew in this unforeseen, and unexpected manner, was a perfect and true anti-type, and providential solution, of the vessel full of apparitions that they all saw the evening before. The next day all the boats of the Spanish ship came up from the bay with the dead bodies, the writer saw the corpses of those Spanish sailors laying on the slips at the city of New York the next day. Thus aged shipmate we shall pass by this singular phenomenon of the schooner sailing without the propelling power of the wind, peopled with spirits, and the almost simultaneous death of near all the people of a large Spanish ship,

we leave this testimony to the world at large, but more especially to our Atheist and other skeptical gentlemen of this profound age of wisdom and worldly knowledge.

And having sailed by, and lost sight of our cargo of spirits, we shall return to the case and experience of Onesimus ; he sailed with his refugee captain till about the last of October, 1783, and the season for fishing being nearly over, and his master wishing to sell his vessel, as he had with the rest of his brethren belonging to the refugee society, to depart to the promised land of Nova Scotia, therefore he laid up his vessel for sale, in one of the docks on the East river, somewhere near the old fly-market ; at the end, or head of the dock, a relation of his kept a boarding-house ; his captain ordered him to stay on board the vessel and take care of the same, till his return, as he was going on Long Island to see his people, and the boy was to get his meals at his friend's boarding-house, and when he returned he should receive all his wages. Now the lad Onesimus, had let all his wages lay in his captain's hands with a view of buying him some warm clothes for the ensuing winter, which was now fast approaching, and having waited near double the time he had fixed on to be gone, he inquired of his friend what part of Long Island his people lived at, and being informed by him it was about eight miles from Brooklyn, the boy went in search of his master, and found the house, but the person who came to the door denied the captain's being there, and did not know where he was gone, nor when he would be home ; when he began to see his three guineas and a half, as sailors say, "was shivering in the wind, or looked squally to windward ;" he came back to the city the same day, and informed his friend that he was not to be found at the house of his family, who put him off with some evasive answer, not at this length of time very distinctly remembered, his friend, we believe, had married the captain's sister, and appeared to be up to the whole scheme of depriving Onesimus of his three and a half guineas, and advised him to get a birth in some other vessel, as winter was fast approaching ; and what to do he at the time did not know, and at the same time the

boy was so extremely ignorant of common law, and indeed of men and things in general, or of the legal claims of poor sailors respecting their wages, or the boy might have attached his master's vessel for his wages, and as there were several refugee captains at the boarding-house of his sister's husband, that had to leave New York early in November, and most of them were bound to the land of promise, as we have already observed, viz., Nova Scotia; the captain's brother-in-law soon obtained a birth for Onesimus, and as all was hurry with the refugees to get off with the British army, who were about to evacuate the city of New York before the last of November, according to the articles of the treaty of peace of 1783; so he shipped on board of a Virginia built sloop owned by one of these refugee captains, at six Spanish dollars per month, and having no warm garments for the cold climate of Nova Scotia, when he thought of the two pieces of gold he had about three months before deposited under a brick in the fire-place of his old master's cabin, when he went and obtained the keys of the vessel from his brother-in-law, and took up the brick and found the two pieces of gold in safe keeping, Onesimus then went to one of the slop-shops, and bought two woollen garments for one of the gold pieces, and the other he sewed fast in some part of his new garment, that he might not lose the same.

Here indulge us for a moment to pause, and seriously reflect on this over-ruling providence that permitted at the loss of some person's interest these pieces of gold by what we call accident, to place themselves in his way, the same over-ruling providence equally foresaw, that his captain intended to wrong the poor runaway boy out of all his three-and-a-half months wages, which leads the writer to exclaim with Paul when viewing his wonderful providence, for the time being, in his rejecting the Jews on account of their rejecting his son, and of his calling the Gentile world to be his church, in their stead. But the same Almighty power which governs the vast empire of worlds, and of the nations of the earth, has kindly informed us through the special agency of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, that the smallest oc-

currences of our unprofitable and unworthy persons, even that of the two pieces of gold in the case of this ignorant boy, are equally the objects of his care; then we are justified in borrowing the apostle's language in his case, and exclaim, "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." And it came to pass, that in a few days after he had shipped with his new master, that his sloop was ready to sail with a full cargo of refugees with their families and their goods, and other effects, and as the hour glass of time has nearly run its sand through—and our watch on deck is called, we will turn into our birth, and when it is our watch on deck again, and when we have a clear sun and a gentle breeze from the writing quarter of the gospel heavens, we will write to our friend again from on board the ship *Perseverance*.

*New York, November, 1783.*

## LETTER III.

HIS leaving the city of New York with some of the refugees, (a few days before it was evacuated by the whole of the British army,) and sailing for the land of Nova Scotia, and the vessel very near being cast away on her passage, and his conversation with the false doctrine of Chance, under the idea or similitude of a very accomplished lady, respecting a special providence in the concerns of the children of men, and his safe arrival in Nova Scotia.

*Dear Sir:*

In our last we informed you that when we felt a free breeze off the writing quarter of the ship *Perseverance*, we would get out the old inkhorn, and note down a few more of our ideas, of what transpired in this part of his voyage in search of the soul's immortality.

And it came to pass, when the sloop had sailed from New York, on board of which Onesimus had shipped with a freight of passengers, all of that class of people called in those days refugees, that for the first two or three days as they ran through the Sound, that is the sea which divides Long Island from the main land, all was pleasant for the season of the year; but on the third day about the setting of the sun, the pilot, who was by these refugees called an old Yankee, and had come to New York after the peace of 1783, to get a birth to pilot a vessel to the land of Nova Scotia, and agreed with the captain and owner, for to pilot his vessel to the land of promise for a certain sum; the old man like Isaac the father of Israel, was rather near sighted, and not being on the coast during the seven years war, so that he had forgot some of his old land marks, which sea-faring people call those objects on a sea coast, by which they sometimes steer their way through rocks, bars, shoals, and different currents, on a sea coast—which are more or less located in every part of the watery world—this pilot ran the vessel on a shoal about four or five leagues from the land, and she being a sharp Virginia built vessel, and loaded with her deck not more than a foot above the water, and

beating on the shoal, and the day light fast receding in the west, and their situation the most perilous that human beings could well be in, and the enraged captain and the rest of the refugees standing round the old pilot with the instruments of death in their hands, and imprecating the most awful oaths, that the moment the vessel bilged they would be revenged on the old Yankee pilot, by taking his life before they lost their own, when the salvation of all on board seemed to be almost impossible, from any physical power that human beings are in possession of, therefore if their lives were spared it must be brought about by some agency beyond their control : Thus all on board stood as it were with their death warrants suspended over their persons, by the sheriff who rides upon the pale horse whose name is death ; and the enraged refugees stood round the old man like the Philistines round Sampson at the pillows of the amphitheatre, so that they might feast on revenge as their last supper in this world, and then yield their bodies into the jaws of the venomous monster, death.

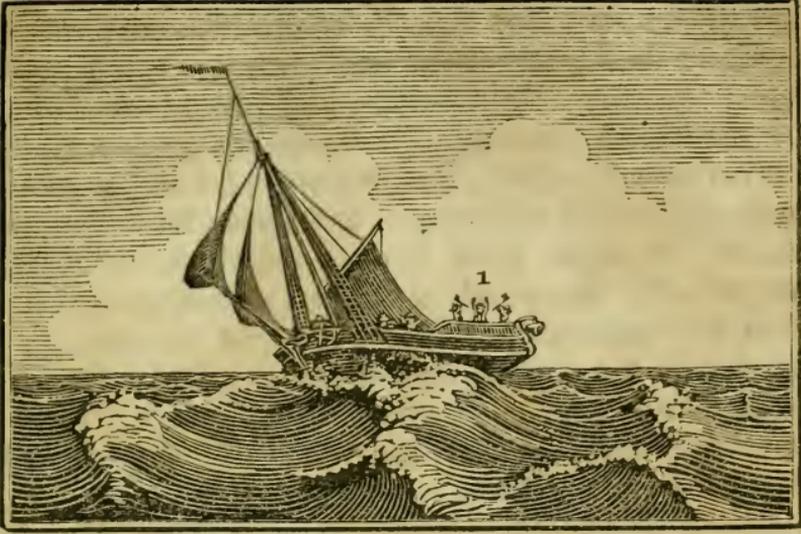


Figure 1. The old Pilot standing on the quarter deck between two refugees with axes in their hands, in order to kill him the moment the sloop bilged.

And when all hope of their lives being saved, had almost forsaken them, and expecting every moment to be their last, when that almighty being who declares he holds the winds in his hands, as in an instant stopped the blowing of the wind from off the sea, and in a short time the wind changed to the opposite point of the compass, which brought the wind off the land, when the undulatory sea began to lower its angry surges, so that the beating of the vessel became less dangerous, and the setting in of the flood tide about nine o'clock in the evening, drifted the sloop from off the shoal, when they cast out the anchor and rode in safety till the next morning; when they made sail and pursued their voyage.

Dear old shipmate, we think we hear the fastidious atheist and other free-thinking gentlemen of the age, saying to themselves—why all this which you relate respecting the salvation of the people on board your vessel, was nothing more nor less, than one of the flirts of the careless and flowing robe of lady chance in one of her whimsical moods, as she cast her enchanting and rolling eye towards the gods of nature, that was the

cause of her ladyship's unintentionally changing the wind to the opposite quarter of the heavens; these are the views which all carnal and unregenerated persons, take of the ways, the wisdom, and providences of God, who view with their skeptical wisdom, under the personification of a lady, exhibiting, and out-shining in every expression of elegance and gracefulness of form, and at the same time her physical qualities richly adorned with every other ornamental accomplishment which her mental faculties were able to sustain, presents to the view of an ungodly and unbelieving world the false doctrine of chance, more imposing than the charms of Egypt's beauteous queen did to some of the chief commanders of ancient Rome. Therefore, leaving lady chance and her vain admirers to enjoy their own view, relating to a special providence; so that after calmly viewing the perilous situation of Onesimus, the poor old Yankee pilot, and all their refugee companions, on board that evening, and their temporal salvation being the sudden change of the element, which is not, nor never shall be, under the power of human agency or control, leads us to believe it to be as much an act of the special agency of providence, as those which are recorded in the gospel that caused the astonished mariners to exclaim, what manner of man is this, that even the physical laws of nature obey him, or in the scripture phraseology, "The winds and sea obey him." Now the only difference in the two cases, is this, that in the case of the ancient disciples, they were permitted to see their Lord and Master with their natural vision, and touch a few of the small wires connected with the wheels, and other apparatus of a special providence in their behalf, as John exclaims, "that which our hands have handled, of the word of life."

But in the case of Onesimus, and the poor old Yankee pilot, and vessel load of refugees, the curtains of the scenery was lowered down, so that they did not see with an eye of sense, so clearly as it may be seen by an eye of faith; all this providential apparatus in all its mysterious and wonderful operation in the temporal salvation of those ungodly sinners, who were for a few days

like the ancient Philistines, willing to admit that some greater agency than their own, saved them that night from a watery grave. But in a few days, like the uncircumcised enemies of God's ancient Israel, when the danger of their persons was a little passed over, they soon began to conclude, perhaps it was only a chance that saved them. And it came to pass the next morning they weighed the anchor, and made sail, and pursued their voyage, and in about two weeks passage, after encountering high winds and stormy weather, they reached the mouth of St. John's river, and soon got up to the town: and as the hour glass of their watch on deck is again run out, and the mate's watch is called; we will bid you good night.

*Town of St. Johns, Bay of Fundy, in the British province of Nova Scotia, North America.*

## LETTER IV.

His travelling from Annapolis, over a deep snow, and through a lonely wilderness, and the distress and poverty the Lord permitted to come upon him, in order one day to bring him to the foot of his cross.

Dear Sir :

Our last scratch, from the log-book of the ship *Perseverance*, brought the boy *Onesimus* to the land which the royal munificence of George the third King of Great Britain, had in reversion to divide among his loyal subjects the refugees of North America, and a cold and solitary land it was in that season of the year, and a few days after their arrival, they sailed for Annapolis river, which was blockaded with ice, and in a few days the captain had all his goods in the vessel taken up to his house in the town of Annapolis, and then informed *Onesimus* and another young man of about twenty years of age, that as the navigation was closed for the season, he could not keep them under wages during the winter, but as they came from New York in his vessel, they with the rest of the liege subjects of his royal master, were entitled to a share of the king's munificence, which he provided for the children of promise, as soon as the ensuing spring opened he would put them on wages again; the boy *Onesimus* would have accepted the offer if it had not been that the young man advised him not to accept the captain's offer, and in the evening of the same day he persuaded him to go with him to the city of Halifax—at which place he said there was not the least doubt but that both of them would obtain a birth, so the next day they went up to the captain's house, when he paid them all the wages that was due them, which did not exceed twelve dollars, these small sums with the other gold piece that *Onesimus* had saved out of the two pieces he found in the ballast of the sloop in York bay, increased their funds to about twenty dollars; the day after, they having obtained some raw hide and made themselves snow shoes, they set off for Halifax, over a snow from two to

three feet deep, and the weather being intensely cold, and in about four days they arrived at the town of Windsor, about one hundred miles on their way to Halifax, and put up at an inn in the town, and as soon as supper was over, the boy being much fatigued with walking in the snow shoes, went to rest, leaving his friend, as he supposed, in some desultory conversation, to spend the evening with the host. The next morning his shipmate informed him, that he went to see an old acquaintance of his, who was farmer in or near the town, who wanted a hand for the winter, and that he had accepted the birth; this information went to the heart of this poor boy, in a strange land, when too late he discovered the false friendship of his shipmate, in persuading him to go with him to Halifax, and that it was only his company and money that he wanted on the road, as far as the town of Windsor. And after paying for his entertainment at this inn, he found that he had but two dollars remaining out of the twenty they started with, when he summoned up all the resolution that his physical and mental powers were master of, and then obtained of his host all the directions he could for the rest of the road to Halifax, which his landlord informed him was about forty miles, over a deep platform of snow, and through woods, with houses in some part of the road from four to six miles apart, and if he pushed a-head he could reach the half-way inn before the day closed, as they were at the shortest. (And being, the writer believes, between the forty-fourth, and forty-fifth degrees of north latitude,) and after obtaining all the road marks he could of his host, he set off by himself through as it appeared to him a vast howling wilderness, the roaring, and hollow sound of the wind through the dismantled branches of the trees as he scudded along over a glib railway of snow, appeared to him the first day of his lonely pilgrimage, as if he was almost beyond the habitations of men, thus he made "all sail," as sailors say, that day, 'so as to get into harbour before night, and every now and then experiencing a subsultory moving of his heart for fear the bears and wolves would rush out of the howling wilder-

ness and destroy him. About the close of the day he reached the half-way house, his stay at this inn, took one of his two last dollars. The next morning he set sail for the port of Halifax, and the farm houses not being so far apart on the latter half of the road, he did not experience those oscillatory vibrations of fear near so powerful as the day before, although he experienced the passion of fear of another kind, the clouds of poverty were fast gathering blackness in his remaining funds, and he going into a strange place, and every person a stranger to him; and knowing it would take his last dollar to pay his way that night, drew the tears from his eyes that day, as his mind was more or less occupied with a sense of his condition. Thus this day wore off, and a little after the setting of the sun, he made the north end of the city of Halifax, and knocking at the door of the first house he came to, inquired for an inn in the town, and was directed to one adjoining the Navy-yard; the night was intensely cold, and his supper was poor, and they had put him in a cold loft to sleep, and the bed and the fare was not such as he found at the inns on the road, which was good, but the lad Onesimus, was small of his age, and the host or his lady, put him among the servants in the kitchen at the second table. But notwithstanding this, as they no doubt viewed him as a young sailor from New York, and of course had money to pay his way, so that they did not forget to charge him a man's full price for his supper, a cold bed and breakfast, which took his last dollar, and after warming himself by the stove in the bar-room a short time, he set out to seek a birth or any other employment, he first went along the wharves, and through the shipping, all of which had a gloomy and wintry appearance, when he found that all shipping business was completely embargoed for the winter season, so that neither men nor boys were wanted in any vessel in the harbour, and as he stood viewing the ice as it had collected itself in large bodies, round the wharves and shipping in the harbour, which at that time appeared to his young mind more like the ideas he entertained of the regions near the North Pole, than the winters he had experienc-

ed at Philadelphia; and after sailing as poor sailors in their seafaring or technical language call it, up and down the wharves in the port of Halifax, during a great part of the day in search of employment, and not meeting with the least kind of encouragement, and hunger and cold at the same time presenting to his mind their gloomy and melancholy visage, when he now felt afresh those oscillatory vibrations of his almost bleeding heart to violently increase, and to sorrowfully experience the heart of a stranger; according as it is written, “there were strangers and pilgrims in the earth;” so was this poor lad, this winter in the city of Halifax—who was now in a strange city without a single friend or acquaintance in the place, nor one cent of money in his possession, and this short day fast wearing off, when the undulatory waves were tossing their angry surges of human misery against him, and almost foundering his clay built tabernacle; and the dark clouds of distress and hunger were fast collecting a dolorous atmosphere, and the lowering portentous clouds were ready to open the windows of human wo, and pouring down their torrents of want in one impetuous storm, and sweep him from the face of earth; and in this dark state of his mind, without a solitary idea either directly or indirectly in relation to the providence or agency of a divine Being, who in the least degree has any regard for the distress, misery, or want of his creatures in this lower world, worse than Egyptian darkness and the most dense unbelief had overshadowed his whole soul; notwithstanding all the physical anguish that his mind and soul was passing under at the moment, or in the sententious language of the scripture, during this outward storm, God nor his providence never once passed through his mind, nor entered once into all his thoughts: our dear old shipmate will be so kind as to pardon our preaching.

And we'll return again to the history of this gloomy and almost melancholy boy—so he continued his going up and down the wharves, till at last he saw an old looking schooner at one of the lower wharves of the city, next to the sea, and as our watchword on board

is, you remember, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou heareth the sound thereof, but can'st not tell from whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit." So when his watery eyes caught the old vessel, he hauled his wind till he got in her wake, and setting all his pedestrian sails, he soon overhauled the old vessel, hailed her and was invited on board, where he found a lad about his own age in charge of the schooner, unto whom he related his distress and other embarrassed circumstances, and that he came from New York with the British army to the Bay of Fundy, and had crossed over from the town of Annapolis, near 150 miles, over a deep snow to Halifax, and that he knew no person in the city, this young sailor being in the possession of a little of that magnanimity of soul for which sea-faring people are generally characterized, he invited him into the cabin, and got out the wooden bowl, with some cold salt meat and sea biscuit, on which he amply relieved the unpleasant vibrations of hunger, when he invited him to tarry on board the vessel with him all night; and said when his master, captain Little, came on board the ensuing day, he would speak to him in his behalf: and it came to pass, the next day that the captain visited the schooner, when the lad, who was his apprentice, informed his master of the strange boy from New York, and after an interview between the captain and Onesimus, it was agreed upon between them that he should stay on board the vessel to take care of her during the winter for his meat, and his apprentice should go home to the captain's house, to do whatsoever he wanted done about the same, and go to school in the evenings.

This was no doubt one of the motives on the part of the apprentice, which caused him to take so interested a part in the behalf of this young prodigal; but what ever are the motives by which an agent acts, yet it does not alter nor weaken the force and truth of our watchword, (nor make it the less true,) "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou heareth the sound thereof, &c. : and that salvation is of the Lord." Therefore our old shipmate will clearly see, that to all

outward appearance, under a dark cloud of the mysterious ways and overruling providence of God, so that by this little arrangement this wandering prodigal was preserved from perishing with hunger and cold, through this winter; and it came to pass, that by this time most of his clothes were getting old, and as there was some old sail-cloth in the vessel, when he by the use of twine and a sail-needle, patched up his old clothes in the best manner he was capable of, and also made himself a pair of trousers out of some of the old-sails.

Thus our old friend will plainly discover that his new master who under an allwise and gracious providence, put Onesimus into one of the lowest classes in his school, under president Providence, even a class of poverty and disgrace in his outward condition in this world, like ancient Israel among the pots in Egypt.

But we must be under the unpleasant necessity to inform you that all his poverty and outward wretchedness, never once brought either the power, wisdom, nor any other of the attributes of God once to his mind; and here indulge us to ask is it not wonderful that the scriptures, the sacred oracles of heaven which are so simple and plain, and at the same time so naturally sublime, speaks the language of the hearts and consciences of all mankind, and that the book called the Bible, should be so generally despised by the great body of the children of men; but if we take the wisdom and knowledge which our cabin of understanding contains, we shall never be able to give a better solution of the perverse spirit and character, as well as the unhappy condition of mankind, in all those things which relate to the interest and salvation of their indestructible souls, than our admiral in white, the Lord Jesus Christ, has noted it down in a certain log-book written some 1800 years ago, in these very remarkable words: To wit, that light has come into our world, and that men love the sable and deleterious empire of darkness rather than the light of the Gospel of the Son of God. We think we hear you exclaim, why this unnatural, this unreasonable choice, by the children of men; the high ad-

miral in white, “who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens,” gives us the answer, through the speaking trumpet of his Gospel, to wit, because our deeds are evil; so that in the simple view of the writer, all the wise gentlemen of this age, with all the taper lights of natural philosophy if they ascend with Babylon’s vain prince, to the sides of the north in their inflated imaginations after a true and correct solution from now till dooms-day, they will never be able to give a wiser nor better solution than the captain of our salvation has given of the primary cause of our benighted choice: light has come into this sinful world, and men love darkness rather than the bright morning star of immortality.

And now dear old shipmate, when we for one moment reflect that at last the united power and grace of God should ever locate its divine influence on the mind and heart of this young prodigal, with a mind so dark, so ignorant, and so alienated in his affections from the life of God in his soul, and that the power of divine grace, should at last enable him to out-ride the storms of sin and unbelief, and finally bring his weather beaten bark into the port of Zion; and at last have his name enrolled among his saints on earth; causes his soul he trusts, to flow into the elements of Paul’s view of the case in his canticle of redeeming love to Titus, in these most felicitous words; “but after that the loving kindness of the love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to the unmerited riches of his grace and mercy he hath saved us lost sinners, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

And as this short piece of history, and at the same time rather of a desultorious character, brings the ship *Perseverance* to the end of the year 1783; and indulge us as the weather appears to be a little squally off our weather quarter in the Gospel heavens, and the drops

of rain from the lowering clouds of adversity wets our paper, we will close the log-book till our next watch on deck.

*City of Halifax, province of Nova Scotia,  
British dominions; North America, Dec.  
30th. 1783.*

E 2

## LETTER V.

WHAT befel him in the city of Halifax, in Nova Scotia, and his very near being lost at sea.

*Dear Sir:*

My last scroll from the log-book of the ship Perseverance left Onesimus on board an old schooner in the port of Halifax, where he continued during the months of January and February; and when March came in the owner made up his mind to send the vessel to a place in South America called Surinam, and as captain Little had given him a promise that he should sail with him that voyage, he had been pleasing himself more or less through the long nights of that winter, as he was by himself on board the vessel, with the felicitous idea of seeing the warm countries where the oranges, pine-apples, and other fruits of the tropical regions grew; when about the 20th of March, the schooner was ready to sail.

When the owner objected to the captain taking two boys with him so near of a size; when his apprentice claiming his priority of right, Onesimus was left on shore; when all his little ephemeral happiness, that was floating in his mind, suddenly spread its wings and fled away. And as the captain was somewhat displeas'd at the owner, he told him to go and stay at his house till he returned, when he expected to take the command of a new brig which was building at a place called Passamaquoddy, and he should sail with him in the next vessel; Onesimus accepted captain Little's offer: under this new arrangement, he was rais'd to the office of a lady's kitchen servant, when she soon taught him to be expert in his new profession, or calling. But his mind at this time was so low and servile, and his physical and mental powers so degrad'd, that by this time he was glad to do anything for a piece of bread, and the occurrences which transpir'd during the time he sail'd under female colours, were of such a monotonous character, that it will not remunerate the time of the writer to

record, nor justify his making an unnecessary levy on our brother's patience to read. And it came to pass, that in the month of June, 1784, captain Little returned to the port of Halifax, from his voyage to Surinam; the vessel proving so leaky, on her homeward bound passage, that he gave up the command of the same, believing the vessel no longer sea-worthy; and the brig building at Passamaquoddy not being launched, captain Little took the command of a large French built sloop, of about two hundred tons, and made a short voyage to the Bay of Fundy, and took the boy Onesimus with him; when he thought to himself he was in his element, or once more on the borders of what we call an earthly paradise, to be at sea again after being embargoed on shore about six months. Thus you see that providence, put this young prodigal down in one of the lowest classes in his school—we should scarcely have believed that president Providence had been quite so severe with the young cadets, before he advanced them to the office of midshipman on board his gospel armament, had it not been that perchance, or rather to speak the truth before the mast of the ship Perseverance, in overhauling the old log-book and other papers of the ship, that we laid our hands on an old sea letter, which by some of the officers of the gospel armament, is said to have been written by captain Paul; although there is some considerable discrepancy in the minds of many of the midshipmen, and other of the minor officers of the gospel navy in this our day, about whose fingers steered or guided the goose quill, when this sea letter was wrote: be that as it may, we still believe the letter was sent to the old gospel armament, by the authority of Jesus Christ the high admiral; in this sea letter, we discovered it to be the old uniformed practice when providence had a special work, for any of his young gospel midshipmen to perform or any daring service for them to execute, that he first drilled them by causing them to pass through the different grades of poverty and disgrace in this world; and as near as we are able to decypher the words of the letter, its vocabulary run in this style, when he was referring to the prophets in

the first rudiments of their education ; viz., they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom this sinful world was not worthy ; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth : thus you see that this poor boy, made some small advances, though at the same time at a humble distance towards some of the old sailors on board the old prophetic armament ; viz., in his wandering over the earth, and sometimes destitute of the means to get a piece of bread, and if he was not clothed in sheep and goat-skins, yet his clothes were made of old canvass, or the old sails of the vessel in which he stayed ; but we think we hear vibrating from the cabin of the ship *Perseverance*, your voice, avast with your so much preaching, and keep your eye on the compass of the ship, and don't let her luff up in the wind's eye, and then fall off the wind so often ; old shipmate your admonition we receive as correct. This short voyage run off about a month or six weeks, and no special occurrence transpired, that would remunerate the scribe to record, or your precious time to read. After this, the sloop sailed for the coal-mines, to a place eastward of Halifax, called Cape Britain, and what in those days were called the king's mines, and brought a load of coal to the city of Halifax ; this voyage ran off the lead-line of time about six weeks, and was mostly of the same monotonous character with the former voyage, and when the coal had been discharged at Halifax.

And it came to pass that the owner of the vessel and captain Little, put their heads together to cozen George the third out of a little of his revenue, when they cleared the sloop out of Halifax, to go to the west part of Nova Scotia for a load of fire-wood ; when the captain sailed his vessel a few leagues to west of the light house, and then shaped his course to the eastward, and sailed to the king's mines ; and bought a load of coal, and had it invoiced for the city of Halifax, and when he left Cape Britain, he crossed over the sea about forty or fifty leagues, to a small island at the west end of Newfoundland, by the name of St. Peters ; which at that time was in the possession of the French govern-

ment, who kept a small garrison of soldiers in the island, over which was located a little grandee, by the honorary title of governor; when it appeared that the special object the French government had in view in being at so great an expense to possess a little rock of a few miles extent, appeared to be to foster their fishing interest, in those seas, as they brought their fish on shore, in order to dry them, either for a foreign or home market; and as this island was a barren rock, they had no fuel but what was brought them from the British dominions of Nova Scotia; and when this sloop with her illicit commerce on board was on her passage between Cape Britain and the island of St. Peters, the vessel was overtaken with a violent storm, which to all human appearance was every moment likely to send the sloop and all on board with their unlawful commerce to the bottom of the ocean, (which is yet very problematical, both to naturalists, and also to navigators, whether our globe is a dense body of matter, or its primary constituent parts consists of water, if this is the case, it will certainly relieve the mosaic account of the flood from those objections which natural philosophy so often arrays against the truth which Moses has given of there being a sufficient quantity of water in our globe, to cover all the high hills and mountains on the outer surface of the earth with water; it is very likely, as the earth or land, does scarcely cover more than one third of the superficial surface of our globe, and if our views are in any way plausible, or in the smallest degree tangible, then how very easy it was for the natural power or laws of gravity, by being charged with a little more density, to have caused the land to sink in the mighty waters; thus we see the constitution of our world possesses more ways than one under the influence of a divine agency, to justify the mosaic history of drowning the old world of ungodly sinners; so you see we are again falling off the point of the compass on board the ship *Perseverance*.) The sea ran mountainously high, and the raging and foaming of the waves, were both majestically and awfully grand to behold; and about midway across, there were several rolling waves

that came after the vessel which seemed like distant mountains, which presented to this heavy loaded sloop a perpendicular wall in height above our mast head, and at the same time their curling and foaming heads like snow capped mountains, when they came near the sloop gave every indication that they would break on the vessel, in which case it would have buried the sloop under a mountain of water, from under which it would have been physically impossible for her ever to rise. But shipmate, there was a flying Jonah on board, which in a few subsequent years, had the word of the Lord to deliver to a sinful world; therefore he that girded the everlasting hills together, bound by his power also the raging watery mountains together, till it had passed the vessel by; captain Little who had followed the sea from his youth up, declared that he had never seen so high and so awful a wave of the sea in all his life. Which brings to our mind, that highly coloured, but natural description of the royal saint in a storm at sea, in which the Psalmist is proving the doctrine of a special providence over the physical as well as the moral world, who seems to have been entirely disregarding of all the scientific speculations of modern philosophy; when David says that Israel's God commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof, they mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths, their soul is melted, because of trouble. What a living and natural comment was this storm, of the language of Israel's royal saint; but again we are apprehensive that you are ready to call to the writer to make more sail, and mind his helm and compass a little better, and not let his fore and maintopsails shiver in the wind's eye so often, which deadens her way, and also exposes her to danger, should the ship be suddenly struck with a flaw of wind from the opposite quarter of the heavens; and that is not all the evil, for if you go on with your luffing and falling off the wind so often, you will never cross the line of time, nor bring the ship Perseverance safe into the port of immortality.

Therefore don't bear away the ship any more, after

mother Carey's chickens, these are a kind of sea or waterfowl, that chiefly hover about the tropical latitudes, and are said by sailors to warn them of their impending danger when a storm at sea is near at hand. But see that you mind your helm and compass a little better than you have lately done, and let our modern star gazers spread their ephemeral wings, and as pilot Isaiah calls to them through the spirit of his God, to go on a little longer with their vain folly, and warm themselves with the sparks of their own kindling.

Therefore, let the foolish birds alone, till the hurricane of wrath, which their appearance in the modern latitudes of the gospel seas, are portentous of, and is very likely suddenly to overtake them, when there will be no ark of safety for them to flee unto. Dear shipmate we believe that you are for once, very correct, so we shall leave those tropical birds of vain philosophical folly to soar a little longer over the warm seas of tangible and sensual felicity.

And it came to pass, after the storm was over that the sloop arrived safe at the little island of St. Peters, where they soon began to discharge the cargo of coal. But we remark here that through a very singular circumstance, captain Little made this a very profitable voyage to himself; viz., the French chaldron not being but about half the capacity of the English, he got double measure allowed him for his load of coal, or else it were owing to the ignorance and cupidity of the French excise officers; so that captain Little obtained from them a bill for double the number of chaldron his bill of lading called for at the king's mines at Cape Britain, which when presented to the little governor, or his officers, was paid for in French crowns.

Our dear old shipmate, will be so kind as to indulge us to make a few remarks on the careless administrations of despotic governments, for you know that our upper rigging is a little wild, if not rather fanciful; when we shall just observe, what almost countless millions of public money is more or less, by most all despotic governments, exacted from the sweat and blood of their subjects, and then through the ignorance, weak-

ness and cupidity of their public agents, are all thrown away without the least benefit to the nation at large ; but as your last admonition reminds us of our bad steerage, we will sail the ship Perseverance by them at the present time, and when their voyage of life is past, and they come with their log-books and other ship's papers into the high court of admiralty, where all will be spread open on the cloud capped mountains of eternity, as we have read in an old log-book found on board an old prisonship at anchor in the Isle of Patmos, under the command of captain John, in these significant words : (“ And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God : and the books was opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life : and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them : and they were judged every man according to their works : Revelations xx. 12-13.) But to return to the boy Onesimus, captain Little and the sloop and the load of coal, at the Isle of St. Peters ; the money for the load of coal came on board the vessel in two bags of about twelve hundred French crowns each, when the sloop sailed for an inlet twenty or thirty leagues to the west of Halifax, and then took in from sixty to seventy cords of fire-wood, which the owner had contracted for to be ready for the sloop, as a kind of a cover slut, as poor sailor's ladies are in the habit of sometimes saying when they are a little displeas'd with each other, so this load of wood was designed as a cover, to cozen the custom-house officers of George the third, out of a little of the king's revenue, at the port of Halifax ; at which city they arrived late in November, 1784, and anchored a little below the town, about nine o'clock in the evening, when captain Little ordered the boat to be lowered into the water ; with two of the hands, and the boy Onesimus, himself and the two bags of French crowns, and went up to the city ; and when they came to the wharf the captain took the two bags of money with the boy out of the boat, and sent her back to the vessel.

And when the boat had left the wharf, the captain took up one of the bags of money and carried it up to the owner's house, leaving the other bag on the wharf in the care of the boy, and bid him take special care of it till his return; in about half an hour the captain returned to the wharf, and ordered the boy to follow him with the other bag of 1200 crowns to his house, which was located at some distance in an opposite part of the town. Dear old shipmate, you will grant that this was a very lucrative six weeks voyage for captain Little, besides his wages; and as every thing respecting this voyage, had to be kept quiet, the merchant nor the excise officers of the port of Halifax, were never the wiser of this smuggling business we believe to this day; and as all the parties concerned have ere this day gone the way of all earth, with the exception of the boy Onesimus, it will do no harm to relate the circumstance.

The coasting trade being over, in consequence of the setting in of the winter, the vessel was safely moored at the wharf till the following spring; and as we perceive the sand of time is fast running through the hour-glass of life, it is time to throw the log, and call the mate's watch, and turn into rest, and when the writing breeze whistles through some of the upper rigging of our mind, we will try and splice a few more fathoms of our dolorous and desultorious spun-yarn, and forward the same by the first opportunity.

*City of Halifax, in the British dominions, province of Nova Scotia, North America, December 31st, 1784.*

## LETTER VI.

WHAT befel him in the city of Halifax, during the months of January and February of 1785; and his very near being lost in the Bay of Fundy, and his arrival in the West Indies.

*Dear Sir:*

We promised in our last sea letter, that if a special desultorious inclination, located itself in our main-top, (viz., our mind,) or whistled through the upper rigging of our ship *Perseverance*, that we would try to spin a little more colloquial spun-yarn, or in other words, note down a few of our sailor-like ideas from the log-book of the ship *Perseverance*; and as we perceive this forenoon there is a clear sky, and it being our watch on deck, and as the sea this morning does not run so high, as to give the ship too great an undulatory motion, we think it advisable to get out the old inkhorn, and trim our goose quill, in order to tease your patience with more of our views respecting the voyage of *Onesimus*, in search of that wonderful country, that has never yet been fully explored, and its seas never been entirely circumnavigated by the wisdom of this dying world; which lays beyond the verge of time.

Our last sea letter you no doubt remember, was dated Halifax, December 31, 1784. The bag of 1200 French crowns made plenty of good living during the remainder of this winter at captain Little's house, and the boy *Onesimus* received some new clothes, and now and then a little pocket money, which he also took care of for to buy him some articles of clothing, for he had no predilection to go with the sailors to the inns, and at the same time he was too young in life to experience those subsultory laws of our physical nature, to which we arrive at a certain period of our existence. And it came to pass, that about the middle of March, 1785, the sloop was sent to a place called *Passamaquoddy*, to take in a load of lumber for the West India market, and when they had sailed almost in sight of the harbour, and lay off about the middle of the mouth of the Bay of Fundy

almost becalmed, the sky clear, the receding sun in the west, and in a few hours after the daylight had followed the course of the luminous orb of day, when the horizon was overspread with night's sable empire, when a most dreadful storm came down on the bay, accompanied with sleet and snow, which caused them to lower and take in all the sails; and let the vessel, as sailors call it, scud under bare poles; when the smallest rope belonging to the sloop was the size of a man's wrist with sleet and snow, which freezing to the sails, ropes and spars, made the vessel appear like a glass chandelier, and made it impossible for the sailors to do any thing with the vessel, her deck at the same time being one glare of ice; so that no person could either stand or walk the deck; when the storm continued to increase in violence, and the cold in its strength throughout the night: and all that the hands could do to save themselves and the vessel was to keep the stove in the cabin as hot as they possibly could, in order to relieve the man at the helm every five or ten minutes, so as to keep him from perishing by the severity of the weather.

The sloop was not only in imminent danger of foundering every moment, but was also in great danger of being driven on a lee-shore, as there was a strong current of 4 or 5 miles an hour, either setting in or out of the bay, and had it been flood-tide the vessel would have drifted up the bay so far that according to all the physical laws of nature she would have been driven on the lee-shore. And the first dash of the vessel against that iron bound coast in such a storm, would have broken her in a thousand pieces. The captain talked very seriously to all the people as they stood like a small flock of poor hapless creatures around the stove in the cabin, acknowledging to them, that nothing short of an over-ruling providence, could save them that awful night. And after the storm had passed over the vessel, the captain found himself about twenty leagues off the south west point of Nova Scotia, and clear of any land; and as the weather became somewhat mild, the people went to work and cleared as much of the ice and snow from the decks, sails and rigging as they possibly

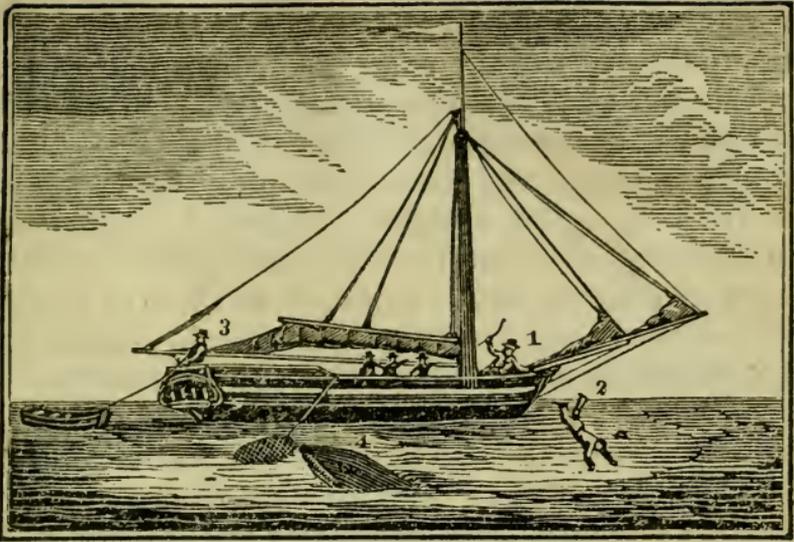
could, and made sail ; and in about three days made the harbour of Passamaquoddy, at which place the vessel took in a load of lumber, and then sailed for the West Indies, and in about eighteen or twenty days she arrived at an Island, which in those days was called Santa Cruz, which at that time belonged to the Danish government. And there for the first time, Onesimus saw the tropical regions where the oranges, pine-apples and other fruits of those warm latitudes grew. And after their arrival the sloop was soon discharged of her cargo of lumber, which was more or less covered with ice as they took it out of the vessel's hold, (but like the wise gentlemen of this age, it soon disappeared in the presence of a tropical sun ; just so will all the wisdom of this vain and sinful world disappear from the insufferable splendour and refulgent glory of the sun of righteousness ; when the affrighted ghosts of Deists, Atheists, and all the other skeptical gentlemen of the free-thinking schools, shall with everlasting fear and dismay call on rocks and mountains, to hide them from the insupportable glare of the countenance of the Son of God.) And soon after the lumber was discharged, the vessel began to receive her return cargo, which chiefly consisted of Santa Cruz sugar ; no occurrence or incident took place for about two weeks that is worthy to record. But one which happened a few days previous to the vessels sailing, which was as follows : One day as the sloop was receiving her return cargo, captain Little was invited to dine on shore by the owner of the plantation from which the cargo of sugar came ; but before the captain went on shore, he called the boy Onesimus into the cabin, and gave him the keys of the liquors, with orders to give the mate, and the rest of the people, their usual quantity of spirits through the day, and cook and prepare their meals, and then clean up the cabin, as he expected some company on board in the evening ; and when all the captain's orders had been executed with fidelity, about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, a singular whim suddenly came into his head, in order to display to the mate and the rest of the hands on board, the confidence the captain had placed in him, he went into the cabin, and got

one of the captain's books, and came up on the after deck of the vessel, and seated himself under the awning of the same, with a book in his hand; when he did not long enjoy his felicitous chair of assumed ease, before it elicited the attention of the hands who with the mate were at work hoisting in the hogsheads of sugar, when one or more of the sailors observed to the mate, that if they occupied his station, as the second officer of the vessel, they would soon make that young fellow lay down his book, and come and put his hands to the fall and help to hoist in the sugar; and as the mate, rather viewed the lad with a jealous eye, in consequence of his being entrusted with the keys of the liquor, it being an article that the mate had a very strong predilection for, so much so, that the captain had to keep the same under the charge of the blacksmith's daughter; and it came to pass that the pendulous vibrations of jealousy in the mate's mind being propelled to a higher degree of velocity than usual, by the remarks and advice of the sailors, so that the mate put his pedestrian ship in motion, and laid hold of a rope and came after Onesimus, to coerce him to obey his orders and come to work, when he still refused, and started towards the bow of the sloop, and perceiving the mate in his wake and so close hauled after him, that he must either strike his colours and surrender, or spring over-board; when in the height of his passion he chose the latter, and over the bow of the sloop he went, and made for the shore. The sailors seeing their counsel growing into seriousness, went to the stern of the vessel, and got up the boat and came after him, and persuaded him to come on board, and they would let him alone, and not coerce him to work; so he went into the boat and returned on board the vessel again.

Dear old shipmate, what a most striking evidence of the truth of the history which Moses has given the world of the fall of Adam—and through his transgression, as Paul most clearly and logically proves, to his brethren in the church of Rome; his language is so very singular, and also so specially adapted to the dark mind, and vile passions of the heart of this young sin-

ner, that we cannot refrain from placing it in your view.

(Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Romans, v. 12.) And his daring conduct on this occasion justifies the declaration of the prophet, can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. Jeremiah, xiii. 23.



- Figure 1. The Mate with a rope in his hand in pursuit of the Boy.  
 Figure 2. The young sailor springing into the sea from the Mate.  
 Figure 3. A sailor hauling up the boat to take the wicked sinner out of the water.  
 Figure 4. The shark taking the sailor's dinner out of the net.

And it came to pass, that in the evening Onesimus having given the hands and mate their supper, and when it was over and the people were all in the fore-cabin, spending the evening in some sailor-like or desultorious conversation; when their attention was suddenly excited by an unusual undulatory noise in the sea alongside the vessel, which instantly brought all-hands on deck, for to ascertain the cause that gave the alarm; after they had looked round the vessel in every direction, and every thing on the surface of the water appeared as silent as death, as we poor sailors sometimes say, for the want of more elegant language to express our views on things, in order to communicate our thoughts to our wise people on shore: and after staying on the vessel's deck for some time, they all retired below again, wondering at that which caused the alarm, and sailor-like in imitation of the children of Israel in the days of Moses, began to prophecy; or if our old friend thinks the author is not fully justified in the use of such

strong language, we leave the longitude of scripture phraseology, and bear down on the vocabulary of heathen mythology and say, each man was trying to prognosticate the cause of the noisy phenomena in the watery element; and after long discussion, and much sailor-like elocution by these sons of old ocean, had been brought to converge on the watery alarm, and no one for a long time possessed the wisdom of a Solomon to call for the sword of common sense, to cut the illegitimate child of nature asunder in order to ascertain which of the two elements were its natural mother, either sea or earth. And it came to pass, that Solomon-like the oldest tar on board rose up, and calling for his sword of common sense, asked the boy Onesimus whether he had put any salt meat in the net that day, and being by him answered in the affirmative, he went on deck and drew the net out of the water, and behold all the salt beef and pork was taken out of the same, although the net was made of plaited rope as large as the finger of a man, and as the people on shore, are not all of them acquainted with the design of putting their salt meat into the sea-water for about 24 hours before they cook the same, it is done in order to abstract the salt as much as possible, out of the meat before they boil the same; by this all on board the vessel were fully convinced as to the true character of that wonderful agent who caused the alarm and had made such a deleterious war on their provision for the next day: now his honour's name was a shark, that had been lying under the vessel all day, waiting for the sable empire of night to give him an opportunity to take his prey; and in his official capacity the Nimrod, or great and mighty autocrat of the watery world, but we see one trait in his character, which has a wonderful adaptation to the strong colouring our Lord placed in the view of Nicodemus, that a world of falling and dying sinners loved darkness rather than light, because with the shark, their deeds are evil. And as it is late in the evening we shall retire to rest, and should we see the light of a new born day we will write you again on this gloomy subject of immortality. ONESIMUS.

*Island of Santa Cruz, West Indies,*  
*May 20th, 1785.*

## LETTER VII.

HIS return from the West Indies to Halifax, and a voyage to the Bay of Fundy, with a few remarks on the character of the officers who commanded a company of British soldiers, on board the vessel *Onesimus* sailed in; and a few remarks on the great height the tide ebbs and flows at the head of the Bay of Fundy, in the province of Nova Scotia, North America.

*Dear Sir:*

Shortly after the shark affair had passed away the sloop sailed for Halifax, you will indulge us to remark that there was a small oversight in our last letter; to wit, that after the mate and hands of the vessel, had all retired below, and the novelty of the shark running off with the meat was a little subsided; when the mate and sailors gave the boy a moral lecture, for the rashness of his conduct, in springing into the sea; telling him that the shark was under the sloop's bottom, at the time he went overboard, and that nothing but the noise made by the hands on deck prevented the shark from making his supper off him instead of the salt meat; when his conscience for the moment severely condemned him for his rash conduct.

And it came to pass, that in a few days after their sailing from the Island of Santa Cruz, that the sailors on deck saw a large log or a piece of old timber, which by its appearance had been floating on the bosom of old ocean many years, and when the captain came on deck, and saw it, he called to the sailors to get out their hooks and lines, in order for a mess of fresh fish for a dinner; and as soon as the vessel came near the floating timber, the fish left the same and came round the vessel, when in less than hour they caught as many fish as they well knew what to do with, and among the rest were five dolphins; these beautiful creatures when first taken out of the sea, or their native element, exhibit a pleasing variety of the most delightful shades of colour, and are constantly changing their hues, till all their ephemeral beauty sinks and is for ever lost in the shades of death;

which is certainly a very striking figure of all the ephemeral glory of this changing world ; but as we have already in some sort expatiated on that idea, it is not wisdom to go over the same ground again ; and a few days after taking the fish, captain Little called the boy Onesimus into the cabin, and told him when they arrived at Halifax, if he would consent to bind himself till he was twenty-one years of age, he would teach him navigation, so that he might one day rise above the level of a common seaman ; and as the boy's mind was fully bent on a sea-faring life, while at the same time, a life on shore appeared to him, so dull, so monotonous, at that period of his life, that he most willingly accepted the captain's offer ; and as he was to have been bound when they arrived at Halifax, which took place about the 20th of June, 1785.

And it came to pass, that when they arrived the merchant or owner having a freight in readiness to go in a great hurry to a place called Windsor, which lays up the Bay of Fundy, the same place where the young sailor forsook him in the winter of 1783, as noticed in our third letter.

And being so hurried in discharging the cargo of sugar, and taking in the freight for Windsor, the binding was put off by mutual consent until the sloop made this short voyage ; one principal part of her freight consisted of a party of British soldiers, going from Halifax to Windsor, to relieve a company who were stationed at that place, they were commanded by two officers ; young Onesimus saw nothing imposing nor very interesting in these gentlemen, either in their words, or acts ; their conversation was mostly of a desultorious shade of character, which often caused them to fill their sails, on which were all manner of fourfooted beasts and fowls of the air, when they soon got into the low and dense atmosphere of the prime beef, cheese and excellent porter, and other good things of old England ; and each officer having two servants to wait on them, so that a great part of their time was occupied on ship-board, in giving directions to them how to cook this, that and the other for their different meals ; when

Onesimus saw none of those traits of character that were so remarkably striking in the youthful mind of Alexander at the age of sixteen years ; it is said, or written of him, that this young officer when in company with the Persian and other foreign ambassadors, who came on business of state to his father's court, that this youngster did not spend his time in inquiring after the good fare which the different countries those gentlemen represented possessed, in order to entertain foreign gentlemen who came either on public or private business, there appeared something more manly, noble, and also magnanimous in this youth, than wasting his time in making a God of his appetite, in inquiring after the sweet-meats of a foreign land ; but this young lad, as an undesigned type of one of the youthful traits in our Lord's boyhood, who so wonderfully astonished the profound doctors of the Jewish theology in the temple with his understanding, questions and answers ; just so did this young scion of old Nimrod interrupt often times the desultorious conversation of those foreign gentlemen on minor subjects, by inquiring of the Persian and other foreign ambassadors, the geographical extent of their master's states and kingdoms, with the natural productions of the soil, and their princes' physical and military resources in time of war, and the character and condition of the shortest and best roads to their princes' empires and kingdoms. Now shipmate it is either written or said, that this youngster's interrogations drew out from the minds of those foreigners this reflecting piece of conversation, when they said to each other, our master has got the silver and the gold ; but this young scion of our ancient father Nimrod, had a mind whose acme like a cloud capped mountain, rises far above all our master minds put together. But casting our eye at the fore-topsail of the ship Perseverance, we discover it is shivering in the wind's eye, we will give the ship the wind a few points free, in order to fill her sails and pass by these red-coats, young Alexander, and the Persian ambassadors.

And it came to pass after they arrived at Windsor, and landed the two officers and their men, there appear-

ed nothing at this place which merits the scratch of the goose quill, except the wonderful flowing and ebbing of the tide in the Bay of Fundy ; so that at the town of Windsor, a 100 gun ship could sail up to the town at high water, and at low water, the bed of the river is quite bare ; and at the head of this bay it is said, that the rise and fall of an ordinary or common tide, was from 50 to 60 feet perpendicular. . But as the writer has never studied natural philosophy, he is of course entirely unacquainted, viz., scientifically, with the physical laws which rule or govern the natural world, so as to define the cause of this watery phenomenon ; so you see dear old shipmate, that we are under the imperious necessity of leaving the same with ten thousand mysterious things and occurrences, both in the natural and moral world ; viz , both as to the manner and modes of our own existence, as also the existence of the whole race of beings, which constitute the inhabitants of this mundane orb, which we no more can comprehend, than we can the nature of God and the modes of his existence ; as our Lord wisely remarked to the Jewish Rabbi, “ If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how then shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things ? ” Therefore let the whole posse of Rabbies of the law of Moses, and the whole host of the doctors of the christian theology put their wisdom together respecting the world of nature of which they form so small a constituent part ; then how much more must these assumed self-created paragons, who assume the appellation of masters in Israel, and the most profound doctors of the gospel of the Son of God, if they are so much in the dark respecting the mysteries of nature, how much more so, must they be in the dark, except they are taught of God respecting heavenly things, or the blowing of the wind of the spirit of God, or the divine influence of the Holy Ghost on the mind and heart of every new born soul, with the ebbings and flowings of the waters of the grace of God ; and the wind of the spirit in the wonderful work of the salvation of one sinner that is truly born of God. But as we are again led to cast our eye at the trim of the sails of the ship Perseverance, we see

her fore-topsail shivering in the wind, which we have already promised to guard against except prevented by physical and moral causes. Therefore about the first of September, 1785, the sloop returned to Halifax; when captain Little promised the boy Onesimus that the indentures should be executed in a few days; the next day as he was standing on the deck of the vessel, as she lay at the end of the wharf, a thought instantaneously rushed into his mind, that before he should bind himself an apprentice to captain Little, he would go back to Philadelphia and see whether his father was still living, this idea was so powerfully impressed on his mind, that it caused him to pause for a few moments, when his soul suddenly experienced a strong desire to see his father and family once more, if they were in the land of the living. And what makes it the more remarkable is because it was the first time since the day he left his father's house that he experienced a solitary wish to return home, notwithstanding all the poverty and dangers he had passed through, and as these thoughts were passing through his mind, he cast his eye up the wharf, and saw a person coming towards the vessel, who was inquiring for a lad to go as a cabin boy in a small brig that was bound to Philadelphia, and as soon as he heard the man pronounce the words he said to himself that he would go, the person told him the brig was all ready, with her sails loose at the end of the wharf, and there was not a moment of time to be lost, as the captain of the brig was unexpectedly put to a non-plus, in consequence that the former cabin boy was that morning suddenly taken so very ill, so that he had to be taken on shore; and that the brig was now waiting to obtain a boy to fill his place. When Onesimus desired the person to wait a few minutes, and went down into the cabin, and put his few clothes in a small canvas bag, and threw it over his shoulder, and followed the person to the brig forthwith; and just as he got to the end of the wharf where the sloop lay, captain Little met him and asked Onesimus what was the matter, when he answered the captain, that he was going to Philadelphia to see his father; when he was somewhat surprised,

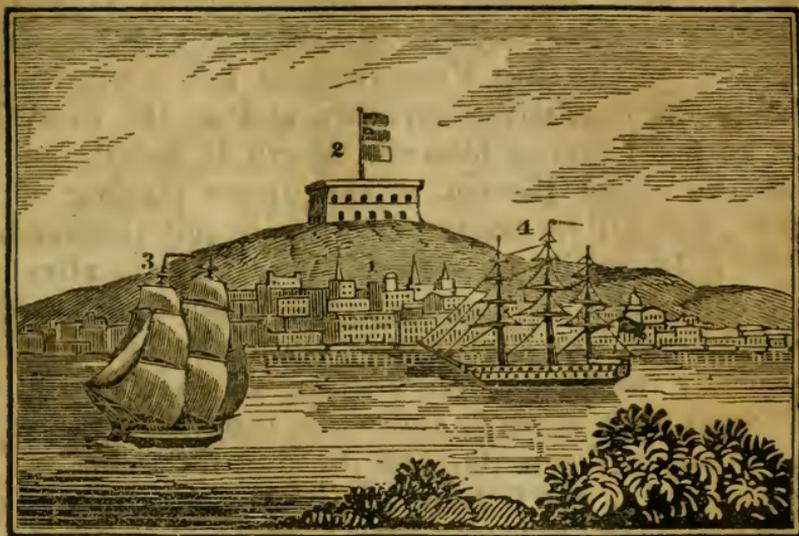
as he had, heretofore, passed for a fatherless boy from New York ; captain Little observed that he was sorry since things about his apprenticeship had gone so far that he was now so suddenly going to leave him, he said he wished he might do well go where he would, when Onesimus bid captain Little farewell, and saw him no more.

And he went with the person to the brig, and as soon as they went on board the brig, they cast off the fast and set sail ; and in less than an hour from the time that it was his full determination to bind himself to captain Little, and follow a sea-faring life all his days, did this sinful prodigal by the wind of the spirit and over-ruling providence of the most high God which bloweth where it listeth, change his mind, and what is more remarkable, that it required the simultaneous operations of men and things to work together with the cogitations of this youngster's mind ; so that in less than an hour, the brig passed by the city of Halifax, and Onesimus saw it no more to this day (March 1839). But you remember, that the motto of the ship Perseverance was at her departure from this vain and sinful world, the wind as we have just said, bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof ; and it was very squally in the providential heavens for about sixty minutes : and now indulge us to say we almost experience with the sailors when the shark ran off with their dinner in the harbour of Santa Cruz, the spirit of preaching and prophesying, as we lay off the coast of a special providence. But as we see the sand of time is fast descending through the hour-glass, we will defer the discussion of this mighty subject, till we go into the drawing-room of lady chance. And when it is our watch on deck again after that our mind has taken a little rest in sleep, we will inform you of our table-talk with that wonderful lady Miss Chance.

ONESIMUS.

TO ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

*City of Halifax, province of Nova Scotia,  
British dominions ; land of North America  
September 30th, 1783.*



- No 1. The city of Halifax, in the province of Nova Scotia.  
 No. 2. The fort on a hill which commanded the city, and the flag-staff, with its different colours to show the character of the vessels that were approaching the harbour.  
 No. 3. The brig in which Onesimus was leaving Halifax in.  
 No. 4. The guard ship laying at anchor off the city of Halifax.

### LETTER VIII.

His returning home like the prodigal to his father's house near the city of Philadelphia, and his conversation with lady chance, about the doctrine of a special providence.

*Dear Sir:*

We shall endeavour to bear in mind your very seasonable admonition to keep the ship *Perseverance* as near the wind as possible, by bracing the yards and trimming her sails, so that she may lay her course if possible, in a straight line to the world of spirits, and country of immortality: but being sensible that you sir, have some knowledge of the sea-faring business and have yourself sailed half round our mundane globe, in which case it places us before you in a more pleasing situation, like it did Paul before a Roman prince; viz., knowing you to be expert in matters and things relating

to old ocean ; now you know, sir, that current, head winds, shoals, islands, and promontories, very often cause the mariner to go out of a straight course, and as we have got the ship *Perseverance* into a whirlpool of strange and conflicting currents, and as the wind from the gospel heavens bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof in the upper rigging of our minds, you will no doubt permit us to put another hand to the helm, while we shall take a seat on the after hen-coop of the ship, as the most retired place on board, to communicate and interchange our views and ideas reciprocally together ; and keeping our sea vocabulary, always at your service, and while the hour-glass is not more than half run its sand through the same, we will try and spin a few fathoms of rather a desultory conversation with you respecting that very handsome, graceful, and highly accomplished lady, madame chance, who they say has for these last three hundred years, since science, and modern philosophy has made such wonderful discoveries in the natural world, assumed to herself the appellation of the queen of nature, and declares that her family, and all her progenitors are the eternal laws of nature : and as her ladyship revolves round the higher circles in life, and this queen of nature they say, has captivated almost all our wise, well bred, and well educated people ; her pleasing manners, and alluring graces, renders her company so very delightful, and at the same time so fascinating, that when the doctors, philosophers, deists, and atheists, once are admitted to one of her levees, or are introduced into her wise company, it requires more than stoical virtue and self denial to absent, or withdraw themselves from her presence, so that lady chance by her silken cords leads her admirers captive—fast chained to her chariot wheels ; such as kings, princes, statesmen, lawyers, physicians, and the profound philosopher, so that those and millions of others, in the second ranks of life, who all are more or less desirous to be in her felicitous company, the harmony of her words moves on like the motion of the spheres, as she sings her love notes, which far exceed the sky-lark of old England, and as

it respects the variety of her anthems, she sings to the Gods of inert matter, she outdoes the mocking-birds of North America; when the sweet cadence and melodious accents of her voice gently undulates the ambient air that encircles our globe, so that the fragranciness of her breath, like the zephyrs from off the spicy islands in the eastern seas, gives a delightful sensation to the olfactory nerves of the mariners as they sail by those spicy islands, just so the zephyrs from off these new discovered islands, in the vast sea of modern philosophy, gives a delightful fragrance to the breath of this wonderful lady (viz., the doctrine of chance). But dear shipmate, what a ruthless, cruel and savage monster is death to cut asunder with his broad sabre, the conjugal ties of these loving and felicitous people. We are justified in exclaiming, O! ye fates, what tongue can tell, or what pen, can such barbarities record, of the wanton slaughters of death's ruthless sword, in parting these loving ones asunder.

But we see it is time to give the ship a little more press of sail, and leave the lady and her admirers astern, and now in our sailor-like fancy we have brought all our ideas to converge in our exordium, on one point of our compass, or test of a special providence; permit us to open the same under three short heads, so that from this part of Onesimus' experience, we shall endeavour to prove by the simultaneous actings of several special things, in the course of one fleeting hour, by which you may be able to see, that if one of the spokes in this small wheel of providence had been wanting, then the whole chain would have most assuredly parted asunder, and the salvation of that young ungodly sinner miscarried for ever; so that in the language of a poet, we may justly exclaim, on what a slender thread hangs everlasting things; and indeed it would appear to our weak vision here below, that the great author of a wise and over-ruling providence has in his infinite wisdom, suspended us on a single hair, or a sudden turn of thought, or the passing impression of a new idea, the salvation of countless millions of poor sinners in this probationary state. Here indulge us to remark, that

we believe, the review of which when we arrive on the heavenly shores will create those springs (promised by our Lord) of living waters, to which he will lead his blood bought church, unto when he will fill the celestial fountains, which are most beautifully arranged along the rich pasture grounds, which are located in the champaign country that lays in the fore ground of the throne of God; so that when the redeemed and blood washed soul, shall cast the eye of grateful reflection over ten thousand temptations, and dangers, both seen and unseen; that an allwise and guardian providence has led it through, will no doubt greatly enlarge the joys of its paradisaical, its glorified state, and will entirely remove all monotonous sensations from the mind and soul of the believer forever: so that the spirit of the righteous after it has ambulated from one part of the starry heavens, or the vast dominion and empire of glory to another, and has seen an infinite number of the most singular curiosities which are in the museum of glory, so that it may possibly be that the wonders of creation, might in process of time, perhaps become monotonous, and in a great measure lose it former novelty. Our old shipmate will admit that our views are both rational, and tangible from all our past experience in this our mundane state; which leads us further to admire the glorious genius, and wisdom in the scheme of the gospel, which shall forever present to each redeemed sinner's view, a deep and humiliating sense of the low and degraded condition that sin, unbelief and ignorance has reduced us unto in this lower world, with an abiding sense, also, of the many hair breadth escapes we have had personally, more or less of losing our lives before we were brought to the saving knowledge of the truth; we say that a lively sense of these things will forever remove all dulness and insensibility from the spirit in its glorified state, and will no doubt cause the church with Israel's royal bard, who when on earth perched himself on the branches of the tallest cedars of Zion; so that not the least doubt remains in our minds that David's Lord and Master, of whom he sung so

sweetly here below, with his sonorous and variegated notes, has given him the royal honour to lead that special part of divine worship in the church in her triumphant state, where with those excursive, and discursive powers of mind which David possessed here below, shall then receive some new oscillatory energies from the springs of living waters, who will there, with his celestial harp and golden lyre, followed by patriarchs, prophets, apostles and the lesser grades of the blood washed congregation, that have sailed through the gospel seas here below, will then sing more loud, more sweet, and more melodious, the royal saint's remarkable canticle of praise, and humble gratitude to the God of his spiritual Israel; to wit, I will sing of mercy and of judgment unto thee O Lord will I sing; followed with this chorus, who hath remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth forever. And dear old shipmate, shall this young sinner, Onesimus, ever forget to sing his share of this humble canticle of praise, and strike his lyre in a new song of praise, that he at last should be favoured with the high privilege with the beloved disciple John, of exclaiming, Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Then God forbid, that he should ever forget that all important hour of his existence, when in the forenoon about the tenth of September, 1785, standing on the deck of a vessel lying at the end of a wharf in the city of Halifax, province of Nova Scotia, with a mind as dark as hell itself; viz., in things respecting the nature, attributes, work and true character of the God, which the scriptures reveal; and at that all important crisis with a full determination to bind himself to the sea-faring business, and that in a moment of time, so powerful a revolution should take place in his mind.

And our dear old shipmate, no doubt will logically grant, that it required that while this thought was acting on his mind, the simultaneous agency of several persons and things to strike the iron while it was hot, in order to weld this link of the chain of a special pro-

vidence together; now you see that the first stroke of this tilt-hammer, on this small hair link in this young sinner's case, was the sudden change of his mind while standing on the deck of the sloop, the second stroke was the person who at that instant of time was coming down the wharf, enquiring for a lad to go as a cabin boy in a brig that was ready to sail immediately for the city of Philadelphia; the third stroke of the hammer of providence was, that the former boy belonging to the vessel was at that instant of time taken so very ill, that he had to be taken on shore. Now when we look at this small link that connects the vast chain, to us of a complicated, but yet a special providence together; notwithstanding all the fastidious risibility of lady chance, and her admiring gallants, who are continually casting their rolling eyes on her beauty, and with the admirers of the scarlet queen, who the apostle John saw at the Isle of Patmos, and heard the kings, and princes, and other great wise and rich men of the earth, admire her beauty, riches, honour and glory; when by the incense of their fealty to her queenship, which causes the loving queen to reciprocate to their canticle of praise, by graciously responding, I set as a queen forever, and my felicitous throne, and regal power shall never be overcast, nor shaded by the dark clouds of widowhood, and sorrow shall never enter my palace gates: so you see this vain queen and all our modern grandees of the skeptical schools fully and most cordially reciprocate their views to each other, and disregard all the judgments of heaven, against an ungodly world; but we shall say no more at this time about the doctrine of chance.

And as there was nothing took place in Onesimus' passage to the city of Philadelphia, which merits an entry into the log-book of the Perseverance; about the last of September, 1785, he arrived safe at his father's house, and found him and his family all well, after an absence of two years and four months separation, during which time neither party had heard a single word from each other; and as the sand of time is fast descending through the hour-glass, we will take the old inkhorn

and log-book below, and when we have a clear mental sky, we shall note down a few more ideas in the old log-book of the ship, and send them by the first opportunity.

ONESIMUS.

*City of Philadelphia, land of North America,  
September 30th, 1785.*

## LETTER IX.

ONESIMUS goes again to sea, with a short history of his voyage to see the great Tyre of our modern times; viz., the city of London, when he was very near being lost going out of the capes of the Delaware.

*Dear Sir:*

Our last epistolary communication to you brought this young prodigal home to his father's house, when it came to pass, that in a few weeks the novelty of his return soon subsided, and he again experienced those subsultory sensations, like a fish when it is first taken out of its natural element; when he wished to be on old ocean again, as persons and things on shore soon begin to wear a monotonous aspect, and it appeared so unlike the changing scenery of a sea-faring life, which is more or less presenting to the vision of sailors some new object. When he informed his father, that he could not content himself on land, and must go to sea again, when in a few days, his father obtained a birth for him as a boy before the mast, in the ship *Harmony* of the port of Philadelphia, commended by one captain *Villet*, and bound to the city of London. And she sailed about the twentieth of November, 1785; when he again viewed himself as happy, to be once more on the watery element; and when the ship had but just cleared the capes of the Delaware, and it being after sunset, she was suddenly overtaken with a violent squall of wind, which had very near overset her; when all-hands were called from below to take in the sails, when Onesimus and another lad went up to take in the fore-top-gallant-sail, and as the sea was rough and the action of the vessel was rather wild, it made the boys sea-sick, which instantly deprived them of their wonted strength, which rendered them unable to take in the sail, and the wind filling the sail, and raising it like a balloon above the head of Onesimus, and he being at the same time on the lee-yardarm, so that he dare not let go his hold of the toppenlift; and in this way he hung with his strength almost gone, in consequence of the deadly sickness at his stomach.



- No. 1. The ship *Harmony* struck with a squall of wind going out of the capes of the river Delaware.
- No. 2. Onesimus hanging suspended on the lee fore-topgallant yard-arm of the ship.
- No. 3. The sailors taking in the sails of the ship.

The other lad being on the windward yard-arm of the ship, got into the mast, and went down on decks, leaving his young shipmate in his perilous situation unable to get into the mast of the ship; and she at the same time having a heavy careen; and there he hung, until all the other sails were taken in that was necessary for the safety of the ship; and the hands seeing the fore-topgallant-sail still flying in the wind, when two of the sailors came up, and got Onesimus into the mast; and took in the sails, and the prodigal by some means got down on deck, but so faint and exhausted that he had to go below.

But how he was saved from his perilous situation he is unable to this day distinctly to explain; but we still believe it to be by the agency, of a greater power than the arm of that delicate lady whose family escutcheon is chance: but in the case of this young prodigal we are led to exclaim with *Jonah*, "salvation is of the Lord." His escape from a watery grave that evening, made

some serious impression on his mind for a few days; but like the nine leprous men in Luke's gospel, he soon forgot this singular interposition of providence, and just like the leprous men, he also experienced no kind of a predilection in his mind or heart at that time, to return and give the glory to God. After these things the ship pursued her voyage, and a stormy passage she had, and all the sailors were wet every day and night for near three weeks, with a northwest gale of wind near all the way, and the sea ran mountainously high; and after their leaving the capes of the Delaware, in about twenty-four days the ship made the land's end of old England, and in about six days after this the ship Harmony got up the river Thames, and moored opposite a place called in those days Irongate, near the Tower of London about the last of December, 1785.

Onesimus we must observe was with many others in the pursuit of some object under the sun, to make himself what he thought happy; but he with countless millions of the sons of guilty Adam, was at that time a stranger to the straight gate, and the narrow way that leads to true and lasting fidelity. And as the sand of the year is run out, we shall close the log-book of the ship Perseverance, and when the wind of the spirit is a few points free, and the mental sky is somewhat serene, we have a few more items to communicate to you about what befel Onesimus while prosecuting his voyage to the country of immortality, and write by the first mail.

ONESIMUS.

To ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

*London, December 31st, 1785.*

## LETTER A.

CONTAINS a short history of his views of mankind, while he was on ship-board in the river Thames, just below London bridge, where he saw so much of the depravity of human nature, that were the Bible as mute as a church mouse, on the doctrine of the fall of man, the thing itself is so self-evident, that if men would let common sense but regain its empire in the human understanding, all further-argument on the subject would be superfluous.

*Dear Sir:*

Our last epistolary spun-yarn left this young prodigal in the city of London, the modern Tyre of the old world ; and it came to pass, that during the first two months of the year 1786, that many new scenes of vice, were continually presenting themselves to his view, by all the people belonging to the ship, and lads the sons of merchants, who went out in the vessel to get some little insight and experience into sea-faring business, and as their friends had supplied them with money, these lads with the mates and crew of the ship, almost every evening brought on board those tangible objects which are more or less calculated to give excitement to certain subsultory passions and physical laws, which in the antecedent days of our youth we are more or less strangers to ; now these objects swarm on the river Thames, which passes this Tyre of the European world, and as the frogs crept up into the palaces of old Egypt in the days of Moses, just so these poor unhappy creatures by thousands crept on board the shipping, which are always in the port of this great city ; what mind, dear old shipmate, which believes in the purity and love which the gospel inspires, but must give an inward sigh, and heave a piteous groan at the awful degradation, in which sin has involved these beautiful creatures, that shew forth such wisdom and design, both in their physical and mental powers ; and that they should be so debased by sin ; therefore for arguments sake, we will give our Bible to the moles and bats, by way of a compromise to the doctrine of infidelity, and then without

the Bible, the fallen and sinful state of mankind is as clear and self-evident, as the noon-day sun. But to return to our subject, these deleterious frogs, as we have already observed, were invited on board by all the ship's crew, with the exception of the subject of our biography ; so that those characters never excited any oscillatory impulse in his mind towards them, but the more he saw in the ship that winter, of the vice referred to, the more he was disgusted with the debasement of our fallen nature ; so that by an over-ruling and restraining providence, he was enabled to pass by the house which the wisest of the Hebrew sages has in vivid colours painted on the sign which is in front of her palace gate, her paths leads to the house of destruction, and her ways to the chambers of death. But we do not hold him up as a paragon of virtue in his being kept from this vice during this winter, but it was certainly owing to some secret cause arising from what we would characterize preventing grace, which gave him a natural disgust to a particular vice, and leads us once more to observe, that in giving this part of the history of this young ungodly sinner, we do not wish to raise him on the stilts of pharisaical pride, for it is very evident, that Onesimus did not act in this case from any respect or regard either to the laws or holiness of the divine character, as he does not distinctly remember that the idea of offending the divine being ever once entered his benighted mind ; but to return, about the first of March, captain Villet took the prodigal to his boarding-house on Tower-hill, to bring a small box on board the ship, and as he was passing over Tower-hill, with the box on his shoulder, he saw a person in a sable garment with a few people collected round him, Onesimus said to himself that he would sheer up alongside and hear what this gloomy-looking fellow had to say for himself, and after listening a few minutes, when he thought to himself that, that melancholy-looking fellow's music was too dull for him to be listening to, when he hauled his pedestrian ship up into the wind's eye, and then shaped his course towards Irongate, when at that instant the captain came up, and bid him hasten on

board with the package, and at the same time giving him a mariner's curse, for stopping to listen to every babbler he saw in the streets, when the captain observed to a gentlemen in his company, that the young lad had the gospel on his shoulder, which he never had had in his heart; it was a small package of pocket bibles for some person in Philadelphia, which drew from captain Villet those pertinent remarks; but the gentlemen with equal truth and propriety, might have applied his sally of wit to his own case, as the language he used in commanding Onesimus to hasten on board, equally proved that the spirit and grace of the gospel had no possession of his heart at that time, any more than the boy he cursed; but we here remark, that the weakness of sinful and fallen man is such, that we condemn others for that which we are guilty of ourselves.

And in a few days after this, the ship having received her return cargo, about the 15th of March, 1786, dropped down the river Thames, to a small town called Gravesend, some where about twenty miles below London, at which place the ship was to receive on board one William Bingham Esq., his lady, two young daughters, and four male, and four female servants, and also a physician; for whose accommodation Mr. Bingham engaged the whole cabin, and the state-rooms of the ship; and at this place the ship took in the sea-stores for this rich, and in those days, a highly distinguished American family; the stores in part consisted of all kinds of poultry which are generally taken to sea, and also sheep, hogs, and a cow for her milk, and also liquors of all descriptions, with many other articles, which the captain thought necessary to give entertainment to his cabin passengers. And the ship being all ready, and the grandees all on board, she weighed her anchor, and sailed for Philadelphia.

ONESIMUS.

TO ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

*Gravesend, on the river Thames, Old  
England, March 21st, 1785.*

## LETTER XI.

A short history of the ship *Harmony*, commanded by captain *Villet*, on her passage from London to Philadelphia; and when about half passage, the ship was nearly dismasted.

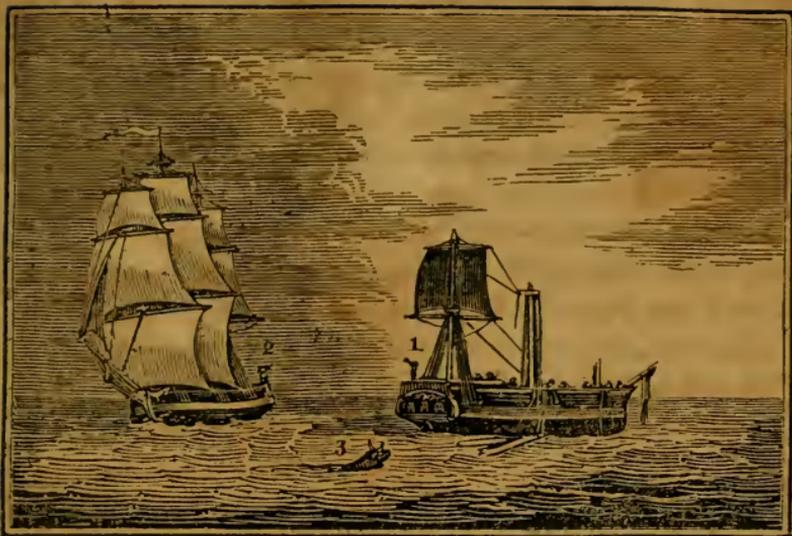
*Dear Sir :*

Our last left *Onesimus* at a place on the river *Thames* named *Gravesend*, with the ship's anchor weighed and all ready for sailing, on the 22d instant she dropped down the rest of the river, and made sail for America. And for about two weeks of the passage things went on without any occurrence to mar the pleasure, comfort and accommodation of all the cabin passengers, with the exception of a little sea-sickness, with some of the ladies for two or three days; and as they were in the full enjoyment of the monotonous rounds of good eating and drinking, (but indulge us in this place to remark, that these wise and rich passengers were insensible as the brutes that perish, that they were under any moral obligation to the great author of all our mercies, and although the power and grandeur of the majesty of God is so imposingly displayed on the mighty ocean, when the little ark called a ship is in the midst thereof, so that we are almost ready to conclude that a rational and intelligent being could not refrain from exclaiming, how great and marvellous are thy works, Lord, God of hosts; who would not fear thee, and worship at thy footstool here on earth; and then with *David* the royal saint, in profound humility exclaim, Lord what is man, that thou should even notice him?) But we return to our history of the passage, the winds were a little variable but mostly favourable, so that in about fourteen days, the ship made half her passage from London to Philadelphia; when on the morning of the sixth of April, 1786, and the captain's watch as it was called, the second mate discovered a strange sail on the ship's starboard quarter, when the lad *Onesimus* was sent to inform captain *Villet* of the same, who soon made his

appearance on deck, and when he perceived the stranger rather gained on his ship, although the stranger was only sailing under his courses, and reefed topsails; captain Villet ordered Onesimus and another lad to go aloft and loose and set the main-topgallant-sails, the wind was not more than one or two points free, and after the sun rose, (as we poor ignorant and unphilosophical sailors say, with the poor illiterate captain of the Lord's host, has said once before us, which has caused our modern philosophers, deists and atheists, to extend, or dilate their risible muscles, so as to produce a high pressure of the foolish steam of their laughter at the old Hebrew's commander of the Lord's host, for the want of a perfect knowledge of modern astronomy on his tongue, when he commanded the sun and moon to stand still; dear old shipmate, suffer us to express ourselves by way of condolence, what a great pity the mighty God of Jacob, did not postpone his greatest of all prodigies, or miracles, until the prolific womb of time had given birth to an army of these paragons of modern wisdom.)

And the sails were set, the wind increased in strength and hauled more ahead, so that the ship lay her course as sailors say, almost in the wind's eye, which caused the ship Harmony under a heavy pressure of sail to labour hard, in a short head sea which soon produced a wild or crazy action in the ship, and at the same time straining her masts and rigging. And after straining the ship under a heavy press of sail for about an hour, during which time the lad Onesimus was by the captain sent to the steward, for several glasses of gin-sling, an article the captain when at sea was rather partial to, but more especially in stormy weather, as it helped to pass away that rather tardy and slow creeping jade called time; this article, viz., the gin-sling, soon gave an oscillatory motion to his blood, which soon flew into the wheels of his imagination, and made them fly round with the greater velocity, so that the captain saw not the danger the ship and masts were in; the boatswain and the experienced crew of the ship became seriously alarmed for the safety of the ship, and prayed

the chief mate to go and inform of her danger ; which he did : but the reply was, there is no cause of alarm, followed with a command to Onesimus, to bring him another small glass ; and just as he had received the same, a heavy head sea struck the ship, and away went the foremast by the board, taking with it the main-topmast close by the cap with all the sails as they were set, into the sea, and leaving the ship a complete wreck in a moment of time. This sudden shock instantly brought all the male passengers on deck, and excited an alarming sensation in the mind of the chief lady and her four maids, who came out of their state-rooms as far as the cabin stairs, to ascertain the cause of so great an excitement throughout the ship ; and at the time of this disaster, the strange ship had got a considerable distance ahead of the Harmony, which when her captain saw that she was dismasted, he put his ship about, and came to her assistance, and kindly tendered to captain Villet all the aid in his power, and to stay by his ship, so that if she was in any danger he would take the passengers and crew on board his own ship ; captain Villet requested th stranger to stay a short time with him, and then ordered the carpenter to examine the pumps, and finding that the hull of the vessel was perfectly sound, and having a spare topmast or two on board, he thanked the stranger for his kind attention to him and all on board, and informed him that his ship was seaworthy, and that he had everything on board to refit himself : when the stranger bid him farewell and wished him safe into port ; the strange sail proved to be a copper bottomed ship belonging to Virginia.



- No. 1. The ship Harmony as she lay dismasted.  
 No. 2. The virginia ship which came to her relief.  
 No. 3. The poor cow that was thrown overboard, swimming after the ship.

After this the carpenter with the seamen went to work day and night, and in three or four days they got an old topmast lashed to the stump of the foremast, and made as much head sail on the ship as they could with the means they possessed; and the mizenmast was left entire: and while the ship lay without sail she rolled so hard, that the poor cow became so chafed that they threw her overboard alive, as they did not wish to distress the tender sensibilities of the chief lady on board, in killing the cow; the poor animal followed the ship a long time by swimming, till at last she fell asleep in death and sunk in a watery grave.

The juremast being finished they made sail on the ship, but very seldom could propel her through the water, more than from three to four miles an hour, which of course, made all the people on ship-board, wear rather a dull aspect. But as captain Villet in order to give every facility to the arrangement and satisfactory accommodation of his cabin table, he engag-

ed a coloured person for his steward ; but he had one fault, to wit, that he was simple enough to be a believer of the doctrine of the Bible ; so the outward piety of this descendant of Ham, soon elicited the attention of all the cabin passengers, but more especially the chief lady of the cabin ; who would very often with her harmonious tongue, create a gentle breeze, and on the little rolling waves which her ephemeral breath would raise, were seen like the flying fish of old ocean ; such graceful and pertinent inuendos as these, our steward is so over righteous that he will make saints of us all, if we are not on our guard ; and in many other witty and pertinent inuendos, did this wise lady let fly her female artillery, at this sable devotee to the altar of the gospel of Jesus Christ ; so that this poor coloured steward at times scarcely knew what he was doing, which of course caused some depreciation in the arrangement and entertainment of the cabin table, which soon elicited and brought into actual service, a company of little complaints, from the pendulous tongue of this fair lady ; which she caused gently to vibrate on the drum of the captain's ear ; to wit, that the steward did not give that satisfaction which he had in the former part of the passage, and as a matter of course, his religion and small Bible, had to be summoned before the bar of her ladyship's delicate appetite, and then brought in guilty, in being accessory in this mysterious defalcation ; and as the captain was more or less wearied with the lady's importunities from day to day, he sent for Onesimus, knowing that he had sailed out of Nova Scotia in small vessels, and expected he had some little experience in cooking and cabin business, and told him that he wished him to go into the cabin and help the steward to get things in a little better order ; when he was well pleased with the offer, knowing that he should get better fare in the cabin than before the mast, as the crew of the ship had to be a little restricted in their provision and water, as they could not tell how long the voyage would last. The next morning Onesimus took fine flour and butter, and made small biscuit and baked them well, and took them warm to the breakfast table, for which

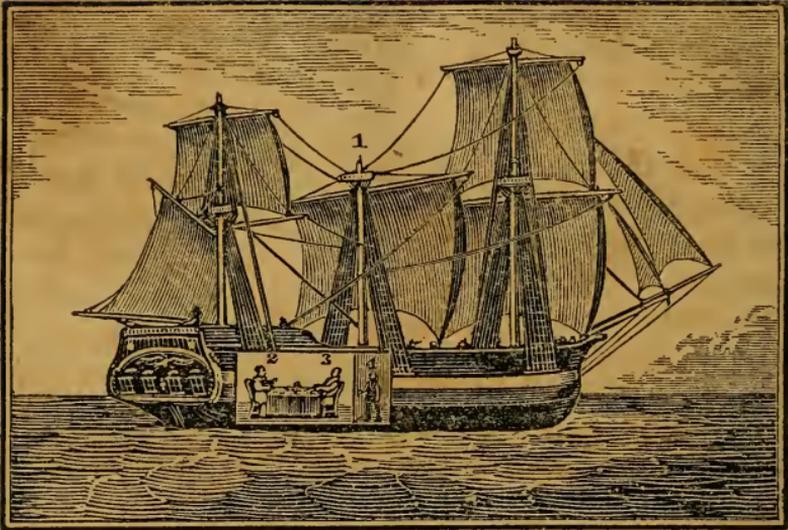
he received the chief lady's praise as a person that understood his business: this little compliment from so great a lady, stimulated him to more assiduity, so that in the course of a few days the cabin was regenerated in its appearance; which pleased the captain so well, that he took him a-one-side and told Onesimus, that if he would take charge of the cabin altogether he would unship the steward and give him his birth if he thought he was able to manage the cabin business himself; he answered the captain that as the voyage was drawing to close, and he viewed himself too young for such a charge, but that he would do the best he could to make the cabin as agreeable to Mr. Bingham and his lady as he possibly could, when the captain acquiesced with his views in this business; and the lad had plenty of good fare to the end of the passage. And it came to pass, a few days after this, and it being a pleasant day, after dinner was over, Mr. Bingham, his consort, the physician and captain Villet, went all on deck to enjoy the gentle sea breeze; Mrs. Bingham called Onesimus and desired him to go and ask the steward for the index of some work she was reading, but he being so exceedingly ignorant of the character of books in general, that he forgot the title of the work, and asked the steward for the index of the bible, when he went on deck and returned the steward's answer to the lady, that there was no index to the Bible in the cabin; when the lady instantly communicated his blunder to the captain, physician, and her consort, when it simultaneously raised the flame of their risibility to the fevered acme of a roar of laughter, in poor stupid Onesimus. But he took special care not to name that conscience disturbing book in her ladyship's audibility any more; but you remember dear old shipmate, that our watchword on shipboard during the voyage of the ship Perseverance, was to be the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; so that you see the wind was dead ahead in this cabin, in the midst of deists, and atheists, so that it looked very dark and squally in the wind's eye, and there appeared very little hope that this youngster, in his circumnavigating voyage would

ever discover the land of immortality; but God's ways are not as ours, nor his thoughts as ours.

But to return to the cabin of the ship Harmony, about a week or ten days after this stream of risibility the lady poured out on the head of this stupid lad's asking for the index of the Bible; dinner being over the captain and Mr. Bingham rose from the table and went on deck, leaving the physician and lady setting at the table, in some colloquial or desultory conversation together; and the subject of our little history was standing close by the cabin door in waiting to remove the wines, dessert and other liquors, from off the table to their usual place of safety; when the lady made a pause for a few moments, and then pronounced these all important words: doctor, what think you of Christ? when the doctor with the etiquette of a well bred gentleman of the age of reason, respectfully replied: madame, I believe Christ to have been an artful and designing person, who took the advantage of the ignorance and gross superstition of the times<sup>!</sup> in which he lived to promulgate his doctrine of the soul's immortality in the world, in order to disturb the present felicity of mankind: when the lady with a show of female wisdom and etiquette, kindly responded to the doctor: sir your views of the character, person and doctrines of Christ, are in accordance with my own; and I believe that when we die, there will remain no more of us than there does of the poultry in the coops on deck; when the lady further observed to the physician, that for a lady, about sixty years in this life was the extent of female happiness, and that she had no desire to live any longer than she could enjoy the pleasures of this world; when the physician and lady said no more on the subject of Christ, and the soul's immortality.

And it came to pass, that as Onesimus stood in wait till this gentleman and lady, had reciprocally interchanged their views to each other—on their text, what think ye of Christ? that the subject was brought with much interest to his mind, as also the doctor's shrewd and learned reply; so that he never after this discourse could for any length of time, banish the lady's text of

what think ye of Christ, from his mind ; and it being the first time for about seven years, that he had thought either of Christ or his soul's immortality ; viz., the sermon he had heard the Rev. gentlemen preach in 1779, from who is the king of glory, when he wept and prayed for a few weeks : thus our dear old shipmate may see, that when the almighty wishes the aid of officious man in the great work of a solitary sinner's salvation, he has always the most suitable and efficacious means under his own control, and if so in the case of this ignorant and stupid Onesimus, how much more so, when his time shall fully come for filling the earth with the knowledge of his truth, and glory of the gospel of his Son : so that once more we are led to hear our watchword whistling through the rigging of the ship Perseverance, the wind of the spirit of God bloweth where it listeth, but it is the Lord that must open the adder's ear of sinful man, to hear the sound thereof.



- No. 1. The ship Harmony, commanded by captain Villet, sailing under juremasts from London to the city of Philadelphia, with a young prodigal on board.
- No. 2. The lady asking the doctor what he thinks of Christ.
- No. 3. The wise physician (a disciple of the age of reason,) giving the lady his views of the person, character and doctrine of Christ.
- No. 4. Onesinus listening at their profound wisdom, in their expatiating on the doctrine, person and the character of the Son of God, when the holy spirit fastening their discussion of the subject on his mind, which he could never shake off.

*A Note to the wise ladies, who live in this wonderful age.*

Dear ladies, when the indulgent providence, has been so kind to you, as to place you in this dying and sinful world, above the wants and privations of the poor, and your mind has been more or less cultivated by education, so that when you are seated round the festive board, on which is spread the creatures of God; don't do nor say, as the physician and lady did on board the ship Harmony, in 1786; viz., be cautious how you bring out the Lamb of God, and place him in the midst of the decanters filled with wine on the festive board,

nor as they did place a fool's cap on his head, and call an artful knave; how much more ladies, would it be becoming your delicate nature and angelic form and finer sensibilities of your sex, would be such ideas as these passing through your mind, and gliding off your sweet tongues, which would give a fragrance to the ambient air that surround your persons, and cause God and angels to love and admire you; when all thy mercies, Lord, my rising soul surveys, why are not all those softer passions, with which God hast so wonderfully distinguished our sex, transported into wonder love and praise; and may the lady's text be so ingrafted into your minds, so that you may never be able, to shake it off in time, nor to all eternity, and the grace and spirit of the Lord enable you to give a more happy exposition of the text than the lady and physician gave of it, on board the ship Harmony, in April, 1786. And may Israel's God, give light to your mental vision, and direct the eye of your souls to converge all their energies on that glorious and divine person, whom the princely pen of one of Israel's wisest kings has painted in all the glowing colours, which either nature or art contains, when his rich and excursive mind flies over the vast museum of nature's wonderful works, and also all the exhibitions of art, in order that his excursive powers of mind, might grasp some figure or imagery, either in earth or heaven to set forth the person and glory of Jesus Christ, before his beloved spouse the church, in order to draw her heart and affections from off the ephemeral joys of a time state; when his spouse, viz., the church, points us to Christ the bridegroom leading the spouse along the banks of the river of life, and directing her attention to every exhibition of the works and power of God, and every expression of the personal glories of Jesus Christ, so when the Lord discovers that his bride is so transported with his glory and beauty, that the holy fire rises on the altar of her devout soul, and carries her out of sight of all created objects; when her sparkling eyes and rolling vision simultaneously converges on his Godhead and exclaims; but still at the same time she seems to want some more expressive language than her earth

born tongue can in her militant state command ; he is altogether lovely : when the Lord observing the soft and delicate constitution of his blood bought bride, to sustain her here below, when the Lord takes the golden phial filled with myrrh, frankincense, and other aromatic spices of the east of the paradise of God, and gently presenting the same to the olfactory nerves of her blood washed soul, when she instantly revives, and says his fruit is sweet to her taste : May the reader's soul catch the zeal and love of the church, and exclaim, his loveliness my soul prepossesses and left no room for any other guest ; dear reader, the choice of this important text of holy writ, by a lady on board the ship Harmony, for her and the physician to investigate, is one of the first magnitude under the sun, and is equally worthy the serious attention of all the reflecting powers of the human mind ; yes, the grandeur and rising importance of this text will in the great theatre of a coming world, elicit the profound attention of men and angels, which people the vast empire of the worlds of glory, when his friends and enemies shall hear his voice as the sound of many waters, then will the gay lady on board the ship Harmony, in 1786, learn that there remains something more of the human subject after death, than of the poultry on the deck of the ship Harmony ; and the fastidious physician with all his skeptical brethren will then learn, when perhaps too late for their eternal happiness, these two all-important traits in the wisdom, power and character of Christ ; first, that he is the only physician of a sin-sick soul, and the other trait in his person and character is, that they shall then learn to their eternal undoing that Christ was no artful deceiver of mankind, likewise that he will not follow in the wake of thousands of earthly physicians, and bury with them all his imperfect work under ground, for the want of a perfect knowledge of their disease, and how wisely to apply the balm of Gilead in all their diversified cases, so that he will not do as they have done in thousands of cases, bury their blunders under the sods of the valley. Dear old shipmate, in that day he shall show the fastidious and scoffing gentlemen of the eighteenth and nine-

teenth centuries, that he who declares he can measure the waters of the sea in the hollow of his hand, can also with equal ease, analyze the whole of our little globe of water and earth, from its centre to its circumference; and find an immortal spirit for the sons and daughters of sinful Adam; and their bodies too, notwithstanding all the deleterious revolution through which the body shall, or may have passed in this militant state, then shall the weight and solemn importance of these five little words, what think ye of Christ, arise in all their native grandeur, when all the passing glory of proud Egypt, old Assyria, Chaldea, Media and Persia, Greece and mighty Rome, with the nations of the earth, that have in a greater or less degree rose out of the last iron-bound empire are no more, then shall the crest of his Godhead out-dazzle all created glory, either in earth or heaven; then we humbly ask, who shall wear the foolscap, Christ and his friends, or his skeptical and atheistical enemies? let common sense give the answer; to wit, that all the fore-named gentlemen will have their turn to wear the foolscap in the presence of the spirits of just men made perfect through the blood of Christ and also in the presence of God and holy angels; while the tedious hour-glass of eternity is running its interminable sands through the same; when the glory and grandeur of Christ, who had for a few moments to wear a fool's cap in the cabin of the ship Harmony, before the lady and physician, we say dear old shipmate, the curtain of darkness and skeptical vanity shall then be raised, and his mediatorial kingdom in that decisive day, and his refulgent glory shall cause the sun in our heavens to look pale, and cause all the before named nations and empires, to retire into oblivion, and pass away like a summer cloud evaporates or disappears under the burning rays of a solar sun.

Then shall all those nations and empires whose names we have so often called over on the deck of the ship Perseverance, with all other nations of the earth whose names and characters are so numerous, that we cannot speak of them in detail, shall drop their poor ephemeral wings and retire into the shades of eternal forgetful-

ness, as being unworthy the notice of intelligent beings : having ended our few remarks on the lady's text, what think ye of Christ? about the 20th of May, the ship made the capes of the Delaware, and when she reached a small town on the river named Chester, the lady and suit went on shore after a tedious passage of more than eight weeks ; and she gave Onesimus a small piece of gold and he saw her no more, although he was invited by some of her servants to call and see her ; but he viewed himself too low bred to visit such great folks, and as we have no doubt nearly exhausted your patience and almost deafened your ears with some of the discordant sounds of our sea-faring words and figures, we will close the log-book and put up the inkhorn till we get a breeze off the land.

ONESIMUS.

To ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

*Off Chester, on the river Delaware, May  
22nd, 1786.*

## LETTER XII.

ONESIMUS engages with captain Villet to go again as a lad before the mast in the ship Harmony to London, but staying out of the city a day or two more than he ought, when he went into the city the captain had shipped all his hands, and being disappointed he finally gave up the idea of a sea-faring life, and his father and some of the rest of the family became excited about the salvation of their souls, which finally led Onesimus to go and hear the gospel, and to quit the sea altogether, when he was led at last to hear the blowing of the wind of the spirit, and to him at that time the awful sound thereof.

*Dear Sir:*

Our last rough scrawl left Onesimus on board the ship Harmony off Chester, in the river Delaware, the next day she got to the city; when he went home to his father's, a little way out of town, to stay till she was ready to sail, as he had agreed with captain Villet to go as a lad before the mast in his ship to London; but in consequence of his oversight in staying a day or two over the time when he was to return on board of the ship; the mate informed him that all the hands were shipped, and being disappointed he thought he would try and content himself on shore, until the ship returned from London in the ensuing fall; and it came to pass that after being on shore a few months, that he became more and more reconciled to live on land, so that his predilection for a sea-faring life finally wore off; and during the fall of 1786, and the winter and spring of 1787, the lady's text would at times pass through his mind, what think you of Christ, when he as often strove to banish so serious a thought from his reflections; and in those days the true fear of God, was not to his knowledge, experienced in the neighbourhood where his father lived; and as he had attended no place of public worship since the year 1779, he generally passed the Lord's day in walking in fine weather in the different fields and roads through the surrounding country, most-

ly by himself—for he was never fond like many others of his age of being in much company, nor going like the young folks of the neighbourhood, to dances, or any other public amusements; so that it was by this singular turn of mind, that he was preserved in those days from the grosser vices of many young persons; but notwithstanding this trait in his character, the true fear of God was not before his eyes, with the exception of the lady's text, which would once in a while dart through his mind like a flash of lightning, but in every other respect the true fear of God was not as the scriptures say, in all his thoughts either by day or night; after this to the end of the year 1787, there is nothing that can be distinctly recollected at this length of time, that is worthy of notice in the log-book of the ship *Perseverance*; there seemed almost a dead calm, as the wind of God's spirit did not blow a gale at that time on his guilty soul.

Somewhere about the commencement of 1788, his father and part of his family were elicited by the popular preaching of one Joseph Pilmore, who had antecedently been in connection with the Rev. John Wesley, and if our memory is correct, Mr. Pilmore, and a Mr. Boardman, were the first of the methodist ministers who introduced Mr. Wesley's doctrine and discipline into North America, at the city of New York; but the war of 1776 coming on, Mr. Pilmore returned to England, and from some misunderstanding between these reverend gentlemen, Mr. Pilmore left the growing interest of Mr. Wesley and joined himself to the fellowship of the church of England; and in a few years after the peace of 1783, Mr. Pilmore came over to America, as an episcopal clergyman of the church of England; and on his coming to Philadelphia, (he was either by the wardens or trustees of St. Paul's Church of that city, invited to preach on Lord's day evenings, of which one Parson McGaw was the Rector,) Mr. Pilmore became so popular, that the church or meeting-house was especially on Sunday evenings, filled with hearers to a state of overflowing, and among his admirers was his father and part of his family; and Onesimus observing his father and some of the rest of his family speaking in

terms of the highest praise of his sermons, when he thought to himself, since there is so much said about this preacher, he would go and hear for himself; so accordingly on the following Lord's day evening, he left his father's house in an opposite direction from the city, for he was ashamed that either his father or any of the rest of the family, or any of the people of the place, should entertain the most distant idea of his going to a place of worship; so when he thought himself at a sufficient distance so as not to be observed, he turned about and went into the city by a different road from that which the rest of the family went, and by the time he reached St. Paul's Church, it was so crowded with people, not only the pews but all the aisles of the church, were so filled with hearers, that this prodigal sinner could scarcely find room to stand in the main aisle of the church; but he stood during the whole of the discourse, and as parson Pilmore was describing the love of God through the meritorious grace and righteousness of Jesus Christ towards sinful man, and the high dignity to which the grace and power of the gospel would finally raise a poor sinner; when Onesimus, like the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, that his heart burned within him, and at the same time he most ardently wished he could be a true christian, as he thought the character, beauty and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, were set forth by Parson Pilmore that evening, so that it brought the tears from this prodigal's eyes, when he formed a strong resolution in his own moral strength, that he would hereafter strive to be a christian, and as he was returning home to his father's house between 2 and 3 miles, the wind of the spirit in a most powerful manner brought the lady and physician's views of Christ into his mind, on board the ship Harmony in the month of April, 1786, when they were seated round the festive board; whom they exhibited as standing on the stage of a mountebank, labelled before Jews and deists, as an artful impostor; which caused Onesimus to seriously revolve in his mind the different shades of colour which Mr. Pilmore, and the physician and lady, the former with the pencil of truth, and the latter with the pen of

falsehood—gave of Christ as they drew the portrait of his person and character ; so when he went home he kneeled in a large loft where he slept, and said over to himself the Lord's prayer, which he had not done since 1779, when he experienced for a few weeks a serious mood under Elder Sprout, from the 24th Psalm, as we have once noticed in our log-book, which he had forgot altogether, and we indulge ourselves to say, what countless millions do the same, and know not that the true spirit of prayer is from a broken and contrite heart, than the lady's poultry in the coops on the deck of the ship Harmony, in 1786. And it came to pass that during the week that he longed for the ensuing Lord's day evening, that he might have the privilege to hear that angel of God once more ; so when the next Lord's day arrived, he set off in the evening of the same, taking at the same time, all the care he possibly could, so as not to be discovered going to a place of worship, for he had now formed a scheme in his mind, that he would serve God ; and at the same time he kept it an entire secret to himself, and he went again on the second Lord's day evening, and stood as on the former occasion in the aisle of the Church, and heard the Rev. gentleman with increasing attention, and after he had attended several sabbath evenings, he became more conscientious than ever in his repeating before he went to rest on his knees, the Lord's prayer ; so that under the ministration of the gospel in St. Paul's Church for a few weeks, his mind and judgment became so far enlightened, that he was convinced, that the use of vulgar and profane language must be entirely laid aside, or else a poor lost sinner has no claim to the name of a christian ; notwithstanding his assiduous attention to all the ceremonies and outward ordinances of the church of Christ on earth : and Onesimus seeing and hearing the name of God daily and hourly by young and old taken in vain, in a city professing to be the disciples and followers of him, who enjoined on all that took his name upon them, to let your communication be yea, yea ; nay nay : for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil : and he not fully understanding that it was one thing to take the

name of Christ upon us, and another thing to have him by his holy spirit live and rule in our hearts by faith, therefore he thought it very strange that such open sinners should call themselves christians ; so that at intervals through the week, his old enemy the Devil, most powerfully pressed on his mind, the discourses and views of the lady and the doctor, in the cabin of the ship Harmony, that perhaps their doctrines and views were true, seeing that such vast numbers who call themselves christians, live and act as if they no more believed in the holiness of God, and the divine sanction of his laws, and their personal immortality after death, as the lady said, and the physician confirmed the same to be his views—than the poultry that was shut up in the hencoops on deck : and for many weeks after this did Satan that roaring lion, pester his mind with these foolish and atheistical views about the existence of the soul in another world ; but by this time the holy spirit, as the only efficient agent in the great work of a sinner's salvation, had at last taken this wondering prodigal in hand, when by the agency of him who is only able to quicken a dead sinner, were brought to his mind the most awful presentations of the damning nature of sin, which were daily more or less by the wind of the holy spirit in a most alarming manner, brought with power to his guilty soul, for him to flee the wrath to come, so that the unbelieving and atheistical temptations of Satan, only coerced him more and more to go and hear the gospel ; as through that, as the only medium through which, an efficient physician and salutary balm can heal a law condemned sinner's soul : after this he read and closely examined the ten commandments, and some of the other precepts of the law of Moses, and discovered that the law not only commands, but goes so far as to pronounce, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them ; so that this scripture, with the preaching of the holy prelate as he viewed him at that time to be, so powerfully wrought upon his mind, that he went the most assiduously to work in his own way to the kingdom of heaven, by endeavouring to live and be as holy

as he possibly could ; thus he went on for some months, by taking the most secluded roads, lanes and over fields, to keep himself from being taken notice of by the young people of the village, through which he must pass if he went in a straight direction to the city to hear the gospel. Thus Onesimus went on in this covert way as he then vainly supposed, to obtain the mercy and favour of God by works of his own legal righteousness, and at times rather pleasing himself, that he had found that path, which no fowl knoweth, and the vulture's eye hath not seen, the lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed it by ; Job, xxviii. 7-8. Thus he went on with his legal righteousness, (and we are fully justified in saying, cowardly hypocrisy,) till about the breaking up of the ice in the river Delaware, about the last of February, 1789 ; it seems that he had made choice of this icy railroad, to shun the taking up of the cross before men, and pleased himself, as we have once observed, that he so slyly outwitted the Devil, and all his enemies, who wished to retard his way to the world of immortality ; and it came to pass, that on one sabbath evening a little after sunset, and it growing rather dark, and Onesimus not being in the least apprehensive of danger, when suddenly he found himself sinking above his knees in the water of the river Delaware, about a mile from the city of Philadelphia, at one of the cracks, or splits in the ice ; but he being young at that time, he made a sudden spring as the ice was going down under him, and leaped on the fast part of the ice, by which agility of his youthful nature, under the mercy and long suffering of God towards him, this returning prodigal was in a moment of time saved from a watery grave ; and when he found he was safe on the fast ice, he stood and paused a short time, when the wind of the spirit, which bloweth where it listeth, brought this passage of scripture in a most powerful manner to his mind : Whosoever therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his father, with the holy angels, Mark, viii. 38.

These words were by the agency of the holy spirit, brought immediately to his mind, as he did not know at that time, there were such words in the gospel, as he was very superficially acquainted with the scriptures in those days, when he thus reasoned with himself; your own conscience well knows, that shame and the fear of men, which often bringeth a snare to the soul, because you were afraid to outwardly confess the name and cause of Christ before the young people of your neighbourhood; that caused you to take this dangerous way on the ice to hear the gospel, and if you had sunk under the ice, you should have been most certainly drowned, and your soul sent to hell and have been damned forever: and before he left the ice, he instantly resolved that in the fear and strength of the Lord he would take up the cross, and go on the main road to the city to hear God's word the next sabbath.



- No. 1. ONESIMUS leaving his father's house, in order to elude the young people, and make them believe he was only going to see and mix with the folks skating on the ice.
- No. 2. He is sinking in the river in consequence of the ice being broken, when the spirit of the Lord brings this scripture with great force to his mind; Whosoever therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his father, with the holy angels, Mark, viii. 38.
- No. 3. Onesimus when he saw he was saved, calls on the name of the Lord.
- No. 4. The people skating on the ice of the Delaware.

The next first day having arrived, Onesimus took up the cross, and set off with the rest of the family to the city to worship; when the young people and neighbours of the village, through which he had to pass, stood at the doors of their houses making their remarks, that he was going to be very godly, indeed; as it was rather a singular thing in those days, for young men to go into the city to worship God. And it came to pass, that from this time forth, that he continued to attend on divine worship at St. Paul's church, in south Third St. Philadelphia, from two to three times on each succeeding Lord's day.

The Rev. Mr. McGaw mostly performed the service of the altar, in the ministrations of the forenoon and afternoon services, which it appears the doctor claimed as a matter of right, he being the rector of the church; and the Rev. Joseph Pilmore performing the service on Lord's day evenings, generally to an overflowing audience, while the congregation who attended the ministration of doctor McGaw, were mostly small; and as the doctor having all his sermons written, and then reading them off to these poor sheep of Christ, more in the manner of the ancient Greek and Roman orators, delivering their ethics on the morality of their supposed deities, and other abstract subjects of either natural or moral philosophy, than that of the glad tidings of salvation to a perishing and lost world, the consequence of the doctor's being so richly imbued with classical refinements from various ecclesiastical authors; and his polemical discrepancies on points of high church supremacy, and apostolical ordination; but we just observe that the true nature of the case is that the official documents of apostolical supremacy in the true line of either Peter or Paul's authority, has the dolorous misfortune, to lay concealed under the garments of the scarlet lady, for about twelve hundred years; so it is not very unlikely, but this lady might during the warm months which took place in twelve years we say, might chance often to perspire, and in that case the humid gas that had had so long a location under the lady's scarlet robes, might in some degree have caused the apostolical hand writing of both Peter and Paul, to become so very pale, that it would require the vision of the vulture's eye to clearly read the apostolical documents, about this wonderful and at the same time unbroken chain of apostolic and episcopal ordination; or this golden chain of episcopal supremacy by being located in the damp air for twelve hundred years, might perhaps have caused this golden chain to rust; so that we believe it will be very apt to part asunder: if there should arise by the power of the holy spirit of God, a heavy storm over the gospel sea, by that wind which bloweth where it listeth; and the

old hulks of national churches might perhaps be driven off from their moorings.

Our old shipmate will be so kind as to pass by this long digression, while we were listening to the rector's style and manner of preaching; therefore doctor McGaw's reading did not make so powerful an impression on the mind of Onesimus; which the discourses of Mr. Pilmore did, they of course wanted the stamina and evangelical unction of the fire of the Holy Ghost; which every true preacher of the Gospel, that is truly sent of God ought to possess: about this time his father and part of his family, began to attend on the preaching of the Methodist ministers in St. George's Church, in Fourth st., Philadelphia, in the summer of 1789; from this time, Onesimus went in the forenoon and afternoon of the Lord's day, to hear the Methodist ministers, and in the evening of the same to attend on Mr. Pilmore's discourses; but he soon became more arrested by the zeal, spirit, and evangelical animation of the methodist clergy, which was better suited to the unlettered and ignorant mind, and dull apprehension of this guilty sinner, than the tedious liturgy of the Church of England. As the Methodist ministers in those days seemed to aim more at the heart than at the head of a poor sinner, their ideas, and manner of preaching, were more easily comprehended by the uncultivated mind of a young sailor; they did not use much of their time to round off and finally finish their periods, and polish off their sentences, as many do in these days, who undertake to preach the gospel with excellency of speech, and enticing words of man's wisdom; so that under the preaching of the Methodists, he became more and more alarmed with the fears of hell and eternal damnation; therefore their preaching was more in accordance with the awful condition sin had involved his soul in.

In the autumn of 1790, Onesimus quit attending the evening discourses of parson Pilmore, and attended exclusively on the ministration of the gospel under the methodist ministry, when he was led more extensively to see his sinful and ruined state by nature, and the imperious necessity of complying with our Lord's injunc-

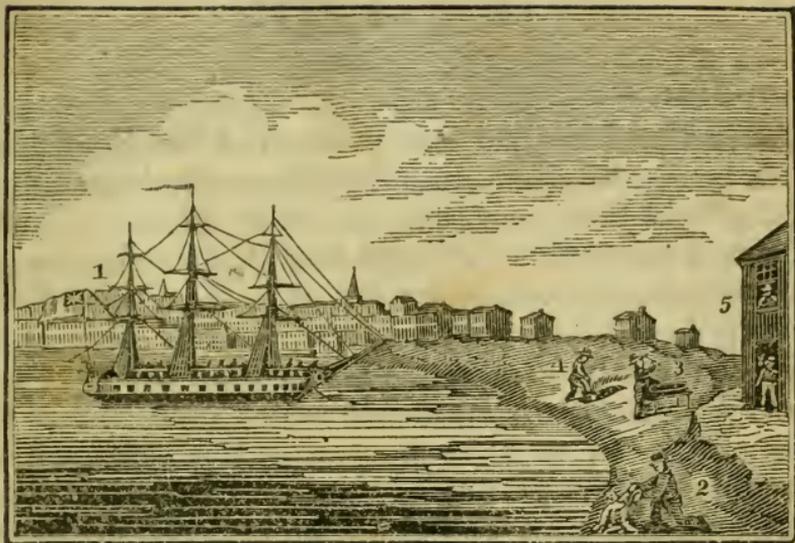
tion to Nicodemus, and through him to every unconverted sinner : Marvel not, that I said unto thee, ye must be born again ; John, iii. 7.

Thus he attended through the winter of 1790, and 1791, on the Methodist preaching for the reasons already assigned, so that oftentimes under their preaching, the awful terrors of hell and eternal damnation, were brought home to his alarmed conscience, till at last the fear of finally falling under the wrath of God, pursued him night and day ; he began now to view the methodist people, but more especially their clergy, as the most righteous and holy people on the face of the earth, and at the same time himself the most unrighteous and unholy wretch out of hell ; so that he was afraid to speak to any of them, in order to open his mind about the awful state of his soul. But still he continued to attend all their prayer and preaching meetings, where he heard of many that obtained the evidence of their being converted, or in the language of our Lord, born again ; some in a few weeks and others in a few days, and in a few solitary cases in a few hours ; so that their passage over the gospel sea into the haven of peace with God, or a knowledge of the pardon of their sins ; so that numbers were brought in a short time from their being open and profane sinners, to that of praying, and shouting persons, in the different meetings, in a public manner. But this ignorant and law condemned sinner, was as unable to open his mouth and pray in public, as he would have been to create a world ; and as for his undertaking to arrange his ideas together, either in writing, or the sound of words, and place them before God, with a dark mind and unsanctified conscience, and an hard heart, was as the prophet saith—if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil ? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil ? saith the Lord : so that he oftentimes wondered how it was that these people learnt to pray in so short a time in public. The young people of the methodist society observing him at their prayer meetings so frequently, and seeing him oftentimes in great distress of mind, called on him to go to God in prayer, and never rise from his knees, and they were

sure the Lord would set his soul at liberty; but his heart was so hard, and his mind and soul so dark, that as we have before said, he could no more open his mouth in prayer, than he could create himself wings and fly to heaven; some may talk about moral power to serve God and save their souls, and get to heaven, but this wretched law condemned sinner had no good thing in him, but as the prophet says—"his whole head is sick, and his whole heart faint:" when he became at times so low spirited when he heard and saw so many young people praying and rejoicing in the Lord, and he dared not raise his eyes nor voice to God for mercy: when he thought he would still make another start for the kingdom of heaven, when he began to fast every Lord's day, and to pray in secret every night and morning as well as he knew how, in order that perhaps at last God would have mercy on him; thus he went on a new railway to the kingdom of heaven. In the spring of 1791, a market boat was upset returning from the city up the Delaware, a little above his father's house, and three of the women were drowned, and brought on shore and laid in a room in his father's house; this sudden death of these women most powerfully alarmed him, and the spirit said to him as the prophet did to ancient Israel, prepare to meet thy God. Shortly after this, he had a young brother about seven years of age drowned in the Delaware, which further alarmed him of dying in an unconverted state, and being sent to hell forever; so that almost every death that occurred in the neighbourhood, went more or less to awaken his legal fears; during this spring a very heavy southeast storm came down on the Delaware in the night, and washed up the bones of a British sailor, that had died on board a British ship of war, that lay at anchor in the Delaware off his father's house, who they brought on shore and buried about a foot and a half under the earth on the bank of the river, nearly opposite his father's house, while the British army were in the city of Philadelphia in 1778; the next morning after the storm had ceased, as Onesimus was walking on the shore of the river, and viewing the deleterious effects of the late

storm, when he saw the wreck of a coffin partly washed out of the sand of the river, by the waves which the storm had raised, and the broken pieces of the coffin with the bones of the sailor, more or less strewed along the shore of the river ; which caused this young sinner to pause, and seriously reflect on his last end, when the spirit of the Lord which bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, so is everyone that is born of the spirit ; and in the language of the apostle John, but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born not of the blood of Abraham, or any royal descent, nor of the will of man ; that is, any ancient or modern schemes, which the modern wisdom of fallen man may devise as a substitute for the atoning blood of Christ ; nor of the will of the flesh, that is, all earthly wisdom of this sinful world, not possessing either physical or moral power to give divine life to a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins : and as Onesimus was deeply excogitating in his mind over the bones of this poor British sailor, the spirit of the Lord most powerfully presented to his view all the passing glory of this world, such as empires, kingdoms with their princes, and other great personages of the earth, which as smaller satellites in their ephemeral governments, are daily revolving round these orbs of earthly vanity ; and as he stood on the shore viewing with intensity of thought the bones of the sailor : when he exclaimed to his soul, in language almost similar to that used by the royal saint, Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him ; when he groaned within himself and reflected—must he at last come to this state of humiliation ! when he most sincerely wished he could ascertain if there was any truth in his own immortality, and the supreme divinity of the son of God, so that he could with the full confidence of David, say return unto thy rest, O ! my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. Our dear old ship-mate sees we presume by this time that when the Lord's time is come to evangelize the world, he can make the most powerful gospel orators if he pleases out of dead men's bones. This sermon which this British sailor's

bones preached, followed by the declarations of the sweet singer of Israel, rested on this law condemned sinner's mind from day to day for some weeks, and was made by the spirit which bloweth where it listeth the most evangelical discourse he ever heard ; and after he had stood a while on the shore, with these serious reflections rushing through his mind he paused, and then went to work and obtained some tools and boards, and made a rough coffin, and collected together his bones and placed them in his new coffin, nailing them up, and went and digged a grave a sufficient distance from the Delaware river, where they lay in peace to this day (1839).



- No. 1. A British ship of war lying at anchor in the Delaware off Kensington, about a mile above the city of Philadelphia, in the year 1778, on board of which the sailor died, and was taken on shore, and buried on the bank of the river.
- No. 2. Onesimus in the act of gathering up the poor sailor's bones, in order to put them in a coffin.
- No. 3. He is in the act of making a coffin to receive the bones, in order to their safe-keeping, till Gabriel shall say to them in the bright morning of the resurrection, as Martha did to Mary; "The master is come in the glory of his power, and calleth for thee."
- No. 4. Onesimus in the act of digging a grave, for to bury the sailor's bones.
- No. 5. His father's family viewing him gathering up the dead man's bones, and wondering what he intends to do with them.

And as our watch is called on board the ship Perseverance, we will turn into our births till the morning watch, and if the Lord of the gospel seas will grant us a gentle breeze, and a clear sun, we will write to you again on this solitary and dolorous subject.

ONESIMUS.

TO ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

1790.

## LETTER XIII.

*Dear Sir :*

After Onesimus had safely interred the English seaman's bones, he strove to become more serious and outwardly holy than ever, and in order to attain such a degree of perfection as would finally place him on such advantageous terms in the sight of heaven, according to what he heard in the pulpit every Lord's day, so that if he could only make himself as perfect and holy as he heard described, the Lord was bound both by his promise and oath, to bless him with the evidence and knowledge of the pardon of his sins. When he set out more faithfully than ever to attend all the prayer and preaching meetings through the week, as well as on the Lord's day : he now began as he thought to pray more fervently than ever, and spent much of his time in secret, in reading and searching the scriptures, oftentimes on his knees at the throne of grace ; thus he went on for some weeks during the summer of 1791 : and it came to pass, that after this legal effort to obtain the favour of the almighty, the adversary came to him, and whispered in his self-righteous ear, that he certainly was a good christian : and as he went to the city on the sabbath day to worship, when passing by his neighbours and other careless sinners, as he then thought them to be in the broad road to hell, he would say to himself ; how much better and holier am I, than these wicked people, who swear and break the sabbath : till at last he became so lifted up with spiritual and pharisaical pride, that he vainly thought himself one of the most holy and sanctified persons on the earth ; and it came to pass, that after he had been walking for some weeks on those vain stilts of carnal pride, trying by every possible means, both of his physical and mental powers, to make himself as perfect and holy in the sight of God as possible ; when he thought he had almost ascended the mount of christian holiness, but still being prone to self-con-

ceit in matters relating to his secular business, so that being opposed by his father in the execution of some piece of work, his father wishing it finished in his own way, and he insisted that his plan was the most advantageous manner of executing the same; when he experienced the passion of anger to rise in his unsanctified heart, because his father would not yield to his plan of executing the business, when he was brought to the dolorous experience, that all his self and pharisaical righteousness, had not changed his failing—his unsanctified heart; so that he was brought by this small breeze of the wind of the spirit from off Sinai's lowering bluff, to see and feel himself a poor lost and miserable sinner; and that his legal righteousness in the sight of God, in the language of one of his prophets—were as filthy rags: after this little squall from Sinai had blown over, when with Adam—he found that all his figleaf covering of self-righteousness could not hide his sinful and unbelieving heart in the sight of heaven, and he now experienced the power of unbelief in a far greater degree than he had ever done before; so that all his past pharisaical hypocrisy spread its wings and left him almost wallowing in the slough of despair, so that he often thought the heavens were brass, and quite impervious to all his prayers, and that God had no mercy in reversion for him; but still his experience and the awful condition of his soul was such, that he would not turn back to either the love of the world, or open sin of any kind; and as he still retained his intense desire after his soul's immortality, so that he still continued to fast and pray, but not now as a vain and proud pharisee, but as a guilty and wretched sinner; and as he read his Bible, his soul was led to ponder on a passage of scripture, in the second book of Kings, viii. 4; And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate, and they said one to another, why sit we here until we die? If we say we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there, and if we sit still here, we die also: Now therefore come, and let us fall into the host of the Syrians; if they save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall but die. And it

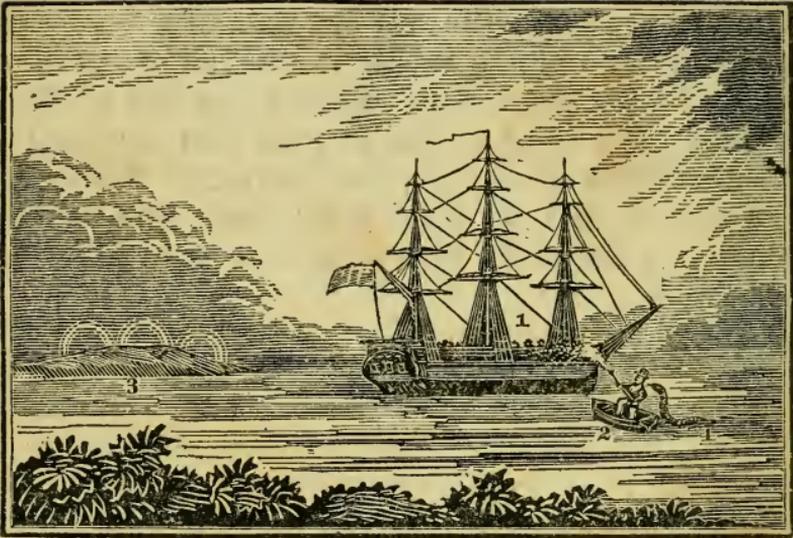
came to pass, that after reading the case and almost hopeless condition of these poor leprous persons, and in their desperate case, forming so magnanimous a resolution to go and cast themselves on the mercy of an hostile enemy; for it was very evident that they could not on any reasonable principles, have entertained the least distant hope, that the Syrians would have ever suffered four leprous men, to come into the camp of a large army of healthy soldiers; so that these four leprous men in their last resolve, were a living commentary of the apostle Paul's illustration of the faith of Abraham; 'in the full confidence he placed in the promise of his God, so very contrary to all the long established laws of our nature, in the entire physical imbecility of Abraham and Sarah, ever being the parents of an legitimate offspring, when Paul exclaims; Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations. When Onesimus saw that the dernier resolve of the leprous men was worthy to be pursued in his own case: when he said to himself, why sit I here until I die? If I turn back to the world and sin, then the famine of eternal life is in the world; as John declares, that all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life: so that he almost despaired of ever obtaining the mercy of God, when in the language of the four leprous men, he said to himself—if I enter into the city, there is nothing but death and eternal damnation raging in this sinful world, and I shall die there. And if I remain here, I shall die also: when he arose with the sentiments and magnanimous resolution of the four leprous men, at the gate of Samaria: when he said to himself the second time, O! my soul, let it fall into the attributes of the mercy, truth and justice of God: and if he reject me, I shall but be damned and lost forever. But if the almighty perhaps shall finally shew mercy towards me, I shall live: so he rose in the twilight, or while his mind walked in darkness, and had no light; when the voice of God through the pen of his prophet Isaiah, saith unto him: let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God; Isaiah, l. 10. This scripture came by the wind of the

spirit with much power to his mind, and he set out with a renewed determination to cast himself unreservedly on the compassion of heaven: Shortly after this his father observing that he was under great exercise of mind, invited some of the Methodist clergy to his house, in order to have some religious conversation with him; but when he saw them coming in at the gate before his father's house, he went off where he was not to be found, as he at that time viewed himself such an unholy and guilty sinner, so that he was entirely unworthy to converse with such holy and sanctified persons, as he at that time conceived the Methodist clergy to be; when he inwardly sighed, and wished that it would please God to make him one day as good as he at that time viewed the Methodist ministers to be; and when he went to meeting the ensuing sabbath and viewing these men of God as they came in at the meeting house door, and walked up the aisle of the same towards the pulpit, they appeared to this poor self condemned prodigal, more like celestial beings, than belonging to a race of sinful men, in a word they appeared to be like the angels of God: and on the ensuing Lord's day he rose early and took a light breakfast, and went into the city to an early prayer meeting, in the house of Mr. Smith, where a number of young persons met in an upper garret for social praying and singing; and many of them appeared to be happy in the Lord, and professed to experience the evidence of the pardon of all their sins. But Onesimus stood at the door of the room, and was afraid to go in among them, notwithstanding he experienced the guilt and power of sin to rest onerously on his heart and conscience; when Satan whispered in his ear, and told him to take a candid view of those poor wretches on their knees at prayer, which at that moment became so revulsive to his carnal mind, and disgusting to his unhumiliated heart—when with the Jews in our Lord's days on earth, he said to himself—this is an hard case for human nature to bear, and must we be brought to debase ourselves in this sort, in order to obtain the evidence of the pardon of our sins; so after standing some time listening to their prayers and viewing their humil-

iation, he left them calling on the name of the Lord ; and like the young man in the gospel, he went away very sorrowful, for he was very rich with the leprosy of the carnal mind ; and he did not go any more that summer, to the young men's sabbath morning prayer meetings, and as we have already said he left the meeting with a sorrowful mind : still he went to hear the preaching in the forenoon of the same day, when his soul was somewhat refreshed under the sermon, which was almost invariably the case under the preaching of the gospel in those days ; after the forenoon service was over, he went out of the city on the commons towards the Schuylkill, and in one of the fields he sat down, and took out his small pocket bible and read the same, and tried to view and meditate on the works of nature, fasting at the same time from early in the morning till late in the evening : shortly after this as he was in the act of throwing up water, with a wooden instrument or scoop, such as sailors use in wetting the sides of their vessel, in warm latitudes or dry seasons of the year—the sun being at the same time a few degrees above the horizon ; and it came to pass, that as the rays of light from the sun passed through the falling drops of water, that at a little distance he saw that it created for a moment, a number of small rainbows ; which gave the adversary an opportunity in consequence of his dark and doubting mind, to take advantage of his weakness, and then whispered in his ear—how remarkable easy it was for that sly—that artful Egyptian magician Moses, in the short account he has given mankind, in his cosmography of that wonderful display of the energies of the author of nature ; how easy, said Satan, it was from this little experiment you have made respecting this wonderful phenomena in the visible heavens, for so shrewd a character as Moses was, to make the dull and uncultivated Hebrews whose time was occupied in the brickkilns of Egypt, we say how easy it was for this artful Moses, to take the advantage of the Jews, by making them believe that this wonderful sign in the natural heavens, was a special production of the divine agency, by calling it an everlasting covenant between God and

every living creature, or between Noah and his posterity: when the Devil whispered into his mind, you see this day by ocular demonstration, from the ordinary conjunction of the elements upon or through each other, that you can make the seal or token of a covenant, (and God said unto Noah, this is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth,) so that you see that you have at this moment discovered the grand secret of this artful contrivance of that old magician Moses; and you now see you can make more little rainbows than Moses did for old Noah.

L



- No. 1. The ship Perseverance having her decks and sides wet in dry weather.
- No. 2. Onesimus in the act of watering the ship's sides, when he sees small rainbows on a little island, at a short distance.
- No. 3. The small island on which his little rainbows appears, as he throws up the water in the air.
- No. 4. The old Leviathian, or sea-serpent, in scripture called the Devil and Satan, with his barbed or forked tongue, whispering into his ear, that he now had a fair opportunity of detecting old Moses, with his pious fraud, which he so artfully imposed on the children of Israel, when they were poor ignorant slaves in the land of Egypt.

Thus said Satan, or suggested to his mind, that Moses obtained his rainbow and everlasting covenant from a common or natural cause; and had the Egyptian-like address and magical wisdom to impose the same on the poor, ignorant, and superstitious Hebrews, as a special and miraculous act in favour of old Noah and his posterity. So that these little rainbows, that he made by throwing up the water with his wooden scoop that afternoon, was the cause through the agency of the Devil, of worrying his mind more or less for some weeks, during which time the adversary most powerfully tempted him

to doubt the truth of the whole five books of Moses, and of course the whole of the Bible altogether. But after the rainbow war with the Devil, had a little subsided, he still went to worship; and as he was wandering about the commons of Philadelphia, early on Lord's day morning, and being much tempted and worried in his mind about the truth of the scriptures, and the immortality of the human soul, and also the full or supreme Godhead of Christ; he perchance met several small children belonging to some poor families, who lived in a small cabin on the commons that summer; and the little ones being rather dirty and most of them but half clothed, when some hidden agency at that time not to him distinctly known, most powerfully whispered in his ear, and seemed at the same time to reason with him; and then asked him why he made such a fool of himself, as to think and trouble himself about the immortality of his soul; and then told him to take a view of these little dirty wretches, and can you believe that such poor miserable creatures as they are, have an immortal principle or soul, that is destined to live forever? When he was led to reflect on the conversation of the lady and doctor, in the cabin of the ship Harmony in 1786, and their views of Christ, and their own immortality; when he was led also to reflect on the popular sentiments of that day, how many of the great and wise men of this world, such as kings, princes, statesmen, philosophers, lawyers, physicians, and thousands of the wise and rich people in every nation, how few of them give themselves any serious concern about Christ and a coming world? When the Devil gave Onesimus a hard thrust, which was instantly followed with a most powerful temptation to curse God, Christ, and the Bible, and the foolish nonsense of immortality: when Satan left him for a season, and he groaned within himself, and wished with Job, he had never been born to experience such a life of doubt and perplexity. When he went towards the city, and said to himself, that he would go and hear another sermon before he gave up the ship Perseverance; and when he got into the meeting house and

heard the preaching, his doubts for the time being passed away, during the rest of that sabbath day; nevertheless, they returned to him most powerfully through the rest of the week, when the Devil presented to his mind his little rainbows, and the poor and dirty little children; but he still went on his way in the use of the different means of grace, so as to abstract his mind from the things and concerns of this vain and sinful world, in order if it were possible to obtain a realizing view, and a satisfactory evidence of the truth of the Bible: and in order thereunto he would leave his father's house early, but more especially so on Lord's day mornings, and go into the grave yards and meditate among the tombs, always having his Bible with him, he therefore read the scriptures most attentively, and thought how happy must they be who had faith to believe the gospel report, and lay hold of the promise of eternal life, but he was so full of doubt, fear, and unbelief, so that he could not by a living principle of faith, lay hold of a single promise in all the oracles of God, so as to apply them in a special sense to his own case; so that the apostle John's elucidation of the new birth, was fully illustrated in his own case; to wit, that as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man (nor modern schemes), but of God: thus the wind of temptation in his case, bloweth where it listeth, and he oftentimes heard the sound, and felt the effects thereof; but as yet he could not distinctly tell from whence it came, nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the spirit; so the more he fasted and prayed, the further he seemed to be from the kingdom of God, and as he was so little acquainted at that time, with the different views entertained by the various sects in the outward christian world about abstract points of doctrine, for all that he understood about the plan or scheme of the gospel—was, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom with Paul he might truly say, that he was the chief. And it came to pass, shortly after these things, that as he

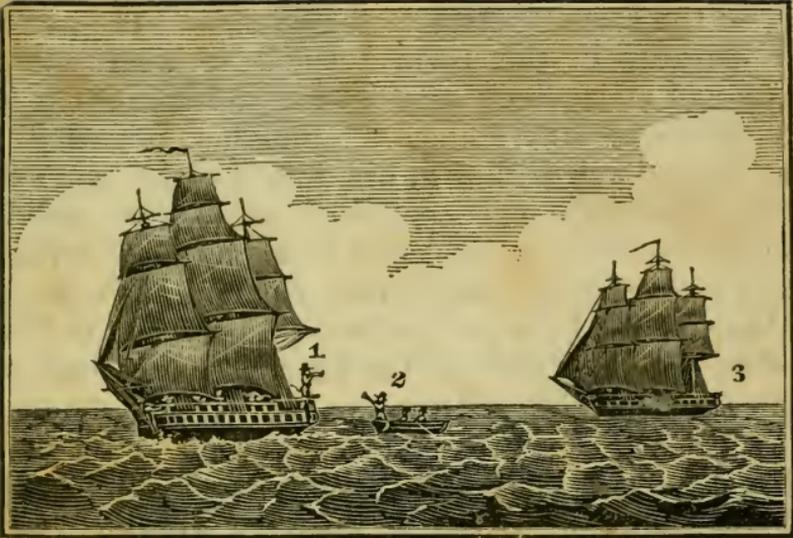
was on a Sunday morning (about the latter end of August, 1791,) in deep thought ambulating the commons, between the city and the Schuylkill river, he perchance saw the bones and skulls of some animals laying on the ground : when he went and took up one of the skulls, and viewed and examined the skull as minutely as he could, when he thought there was so little difference in the construction and organization of the human subject, with that of the rest of the animal creation, so that there was nothing certain either in the formation or construction of mankind, so as to lead to any certainty in order to decide the case at issue ; viz., whether man is—or is not an immortal being, and all the rest of the creation only ephemeral beings ; so that in the article of death they perish forever. When the tempter insinuated to him to go and find out the exact line of demarcation between the rational and irrational part of the creation, when Satan brought to his mind the physicians who had dissected such millions of mankind, as well as beasts and birds ; and many of them never could discover the least trace of that amphibious creature of two worlds, with which Moses the prophet, and apostle of Christ, have enslaved mankind. After the Devil had suggested these skeptical ideas to his mind, Satan then pressed on his thoughts a number of other difficulties that lay in the way of the soul's immortality in the cases of generation, gestation and abortions, also with the cases of drowned persons : when he suggested to him to go and make the experiment, and take a number of flies and drown them in water, till you are fully convinced that animal life has fully to all appearance departed from them : and as the idea was entirely new to him, he went and drowned some flies, and then let them lay out of the water for some time, and examined them and fully satisfied himself that they were all dead ; when he went and pulverized a piece of chalk, and took his apparently dead flies and then buried them in his pulverized chalk, on a table before the sun : and in less than an hour he saw a small and desultory motion in his little mountain of chalk, and soon after his little drowned army of insects came out of the dark dungeons of death, and after vi-

brating their little wings in the rays of the sun a few times, they spread the same and flew off: leaving poor Onesimus like an aspen leaf trembling in the wind's eye of doubt and fear.

And a few days after the fly experiment, several persons were drowned in the Delaware, and one or two of them were resuscitated, or restored to life by the application of the apparatus in those cases provided. When the adversary onerously came down upon him, and advised him to give up the voyage in pursuit of the soul's immortality: and you have now, said the tempter, made such plain physical and ocular demonstration, of the impossibility ever to fully ascertain the future existence of the human race: which you see this day you have so evidently and most indubitably made manifest in the case of the fly experiment, and the drowned who were resuscitated, or like the flies brought back to life again. When Satan suggested to his mind, where was the spirit or soul of the drowned persons during the suspension of animal life? Why, says the Devil, just exactly in the very same predicament of the spirits or souls of the flies you drowned, and thus brought them to life again, and could those little insects give you any satisfactory account where their little spirits had been during the time of their vacation from the school of animal life. Neither has it ever been known to this day, that from the number of drowned persons who have been restored to life again, they have never given their friends or mankind in general, any clear or satisfactory account of either the existence or state of the soul, during the suspension of all the functions of animal life, as the body lay immersed in the water. When the Devil whispered in his mind, do you not clearly see, that the fly and the man were both alike equally unconscious of their own immortality. When Satan continued his metaphysical parable, and brought to his view a whole cargo of wild and civilized men, and wild and tame animals; and then beginning with the lowest condition of some of the branches of the human race, and then informed him that notwithstanding the apparent want of the faculties of speech, which seemed to

be necessary to constitute them intelligent beings, yet the instinctive power of many of them do outlive and outshine many of the lower grades of the race of men. And Satan then referred him to the ourang-outang, and all the rest of the ape and monkey tribes, but in a more special point of view, the wonderful instinct of the beaver, in its remarkable sagacity and almost human art in planning and forming its dams as a reservoir to retain the water, and breed fish for the future sustenance of himself and family. And then displaying its wisdom like an artist, in the construction and building of its habitations, almost with the apparent wisdom of old Noah, with first, second and third stories; so that in case of a flood, or the rising of the water in heavy rains, the beaver with the antediluvian patriarch, might save himself and family in times of danger. Satan then referred him to the wonderful sagacity of the elephant, and then asked him to contrast the sagacity, instinct and apparent intelligence, of some of the irrational part of the creation, and compare the same with the stolidity and worse than brutish ignorance of countless millions of what is called the human race. After this the Devil pestered his mind with the process of the embryo, in the season of gestation; when Satan asked him if he had any knowledge of at what acme or stage of this hidden and mysterious operation of nature: this immortal principle is so very secretly communicated to the embryo of the parent, so that if both should die the same hour after its arrival in its liquid location—what then says Satan to him, becomes of this little humming-bird of immortality? so that if it should perhaps lose its immortal plumage in one hour, why not on the principles of sound logic lose the little spectre in one year, and if lost for one year, why not in the name of common sense may it not be lost forever. So that you see the chance of the immortality of mankind, is a very flimsy castle built by designing men in the air of religious vanity: so that you had better take my friendly advice and give up making yourself such a melancholy fool any longer: curse God if you believe there is any such a

being, that can exist independent of the eternal laws of matter, and quit going to Methodist meetings any more: when the enemy pestered him more or less throughout the following week with a cargo of wild men, beasts and birds, so that he longed for the returning Lord's day that he<sup>d</sup> might hear the gospel once more.



- No. 1. The gallant ship of nature commanded by Satan, with a full cargo of wild beasts, in order to confound the mind of Onesimus, and cause him to relinquish his foolish pursuit of ever finding the region of the immortality of the human soul.
- No. 2. Onesimus in his boat, hailing the ship of nature; when Satan under the mask of friendship advises him not to pursue so dangerous a voyage, as it would only terminate in the loss of himself and ship; as no one has ever yet been heard of who has embarked in that hazardous expedition in search of that unknown region, so as to inform us in what latitude or longitude the country lies in. And it came to pass, after the Devil had given him what counsel he thought proper, Onesimus wished him safe into port (of hell), and bid him farewell.
- No. 3. The ship Perseverance met by the Devil, who by way of disguised friendship, advises Onesimus to turn back to the world again.

And he arose early on the ensuing sabbath, and after the morning service was over, Onesimus went out to the commons near the Schuylkill, to his old place of resort in the summer season of the year, for about an hour: and knowing that there was to be a prayer meeting in one of the poor sister's houses in Cherry alley, between the fore and afternoon services, where a number of very zealous young people met to spend an hour

or more in singing and prayer; and as he came rather early, when he found but three elderly sisters in the room with a few old rush bottomed chairs, and a pine table in the centre of the room, and an old smoky bible lying on the same. And as the whole of the persons and apparatus in the room seemed to wear such a gloomy and melancholy appearance to him at that moment, Satan artfully whispered into his ear, what an arrant fool he was making of himself, to spend his youthful days in such a place and with such poor and low company as this: when some powerful and invisible agency seemed to be raising him from off his seat, and told him to go and throw the dirty old book into the little fire that was remaining on the hearth, till his heart was almost ready to sink within him, for fear he should do the awful deed: the invisible agency or secret power at that moment was so great, that it took all the physical and mental prowess that this poor sinful and unregenerated sinner could call into requisition, to keep himself on his seat. Just at the time of this hard struggle with the Devil, the young praying brethren came in, and began to sing and pray; when the adversary left him for that season, and their prayers relieved his soul from the awful and dreadful struggle he had had that hour with the Devil. And as soon as the prayer meeting had been ended he went to meeting, and experienced some comfort under the sermon, and Satan was never suffered to tempt him to burn the scriptures in such sort any more.

About this period there was a great excitement in the Methodist society, and numbers of young and some old people, were in a few days or weeks, reported to have been converted, and professed to find peace with God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: and many of these newly converted sinners to all appearance, were filled with the love of God, and also exhorting poor sinners to repent and seek the Lord. But Onesimus was too full of doubt and unbelief, to lay hold of the promised blessing, when he was led to conclude that he was so vile a sinner, that there was no mercy for him either in heaven or on earth.

We shall now close the log-book of the ship Perseverance, till we have another breeze from off the bluff of mount Sinai, and if our ship clears the mount in safety, we will write to you again on the subject of immortality.

ONESIMUS.

TO ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

*Port of Philadelphia, 1791.*

## LETTER XIV.

*Dear Sir:*

Our last letter left Onesimus almost without hope, and on the borders of despair, and in sight of the lowering bluff of Sinai; and when the month of December 1791, came in, there was a day of fasting and prayer set apart by the governor of Pennsylvania, or else by the clergy of the city, we do not at this length of time distinctly recollect which, when his father and family went to the city to worship. But Onesimus tarried at home, and concluded that he would spend the fast day in the exercise of fasting, praying and reading the scriptures; and as he had heard some of the methodists and their class leaders often assert, that a true and sincere seeker of religion, need not go without the blessing: which was the language in use by the methodists when speaking on the subject of our watchword, ye must be born again, or the wind bloweth where it listeth, so is every one that is born of the spirit. When he said to himself, I shall on this fast day make the demonstration, and put the almighty to the test of his word of promise. As soon the family were off to the city, he took his Bible, and went into a small room in his father's factory, with a full determination in his own mind and moral strength, not to leave the same until the Lord had given him the evidence of the pardon of his sins. And when he had locked himself up in the little room, he opened his Bible and read a chapter, and then kneeled and prayed as fervently as he could, and rose and read a chapter and prayed the second time, and thus he continued kneeling, praying and reading for about twenty rounds, (as near as he can recollect to this day), till the day had nearly worn off, but there was none at that time that appeared either to hear or regard his prayers: so that Onesimus had at this time to give up taking the kingdom of heaven by holy violence, and had to come out of his room with a hard and unbelieving heart, and

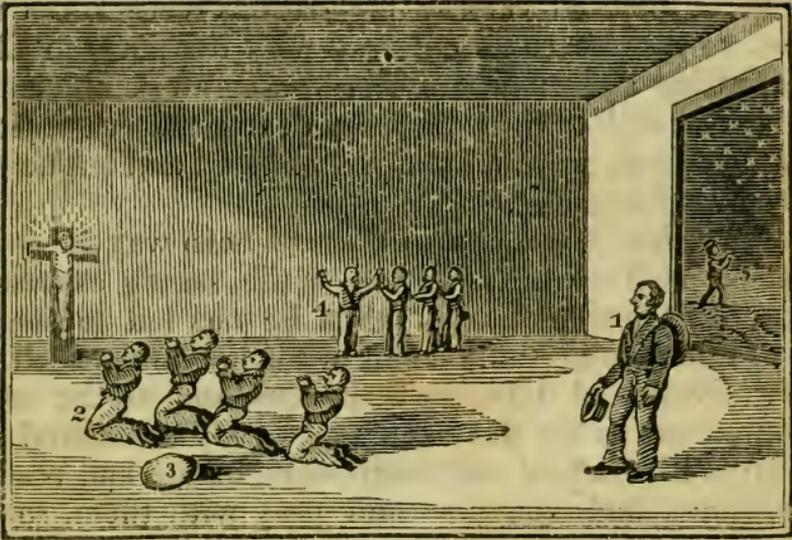
with a mind overcast with legal darkness, when Sinai's loud trumpet sounded louder and louder in his ears:—"cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And after this legal effort to storm the citadel of Zion, or to take the kingdom of heaven by the violence of reading, fasting and praying, he became melancholy and was very near the verge of despair, and at the same time had lost sight of the magnanimous fortitude of the four leprous men at the gate of Samaria; when Satan the god of this world suggested to his mind that he had sinned away his day of grace, and that it was now too late to cast himself on the mercy of God, but with the four leprous men he also saw the danger of entering again into the city, or returning again to the unfruitful works of darkness. He now began to see like the blind men in the gospel—spiritual things at a distance—so that if he was ever saved it must be by the sovereign and unmerited grace of God: when this scripture presented itself to his mind, "And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Therefore criest thou unto me, speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward,'" Exodus, xiv. 15. Notwithstanding Pharaoh and his army were in their rearward, Pihahiroth, Migdol and Baal-zephon, were on either side as ports of entry, or strong fortifications, and the Red Sea in their front, so that there appeared no possible way of their escaping the rage of Pharaoh and his army, yet the Lord through Moses commands Israel to go forward. When the spirit said unto him, your case surely is not more desperate than theirs was? the same spirit brought to his mind that very comfortable invitation to Israel under their seventy years captivity: "Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope, even to day do I declare that I will render double unto them. When he longed to ascertain whether such a poor law-condemned sinner as he was in his own estimation at that time, dare to claim the encourageable appellative in the sight of God, of a prisoner of hope. Shortly after this he was most powerfully tempted by the Devil to believe that he had committed the unpardonable sin, or the sin unto death,

which St. John rather seems to doubt whether it was lawful for the church of Christ to pray in his day for the forgiveness of the same, but nevertheless, the word of command given unto Moses in the behalf of Israel, oftentimes revibrated through his mind, that it was still his duty to go forward, although the Devil as a great mountain stood before him in order to hide the door of hope and mercy from his sight, in order to block up his way to the kingdom of heaven, as he did in the case of Zorobabel, and the Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebukes thee, O! Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebukes thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire, iii. 2-4-7. When another passage of scripture came by the agency of the holy spirit suddenly into his mind: Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God; Isaiah, l. 10. This was truly the case in those days with the deep exercises of his mind, for he most certainly wished to fear the Lord, but he walked under a heavy cloud which was at that time so very impervious to his soul that scarcely a single a ray of hope could pass through the moral darkness that hung over his distressed and almost melancholy mind.

About this time several of the young men of the methodist society, observing that he attended the public worship of what they called St. George's Church in Fourth street, for some length of time, and was often seen by them in great distress of mind, and had oftentimes been invited by them to come to their class meetings, but as those meetings were so very repulsive to the pride of his carnal mind, so that he kept aloof from them; but by this time the Lord had caused a smart breeze from Sinai's bluff to blow away all his hopes of ever obtaining the pardon of his sins by all his praying, fasting, and reading the scriptures on his knees before God, which could not save him should he continue in the exercise of those means to to the hour of his death: so that if God did not show him mercy for the sake of the merits and atonement of Jesus Christ, he must be

dann'd forever. After this he had such an awful view of the holiness of God and the righteous sanction of his royal law, with a discovery of the exceeding sinfulness of his fallen nature, so that when he went to meeting he often wondered that the earth did not part asunder and swallow him up, as in the case of Korah and his company: thus he went on in this fearful exercise of mind for some weeks, till about the last of the year 1791, when he went to one of the methodist class meetings in which a number of young men met for the purpose of praying with and for each other, and stating the various trials and temptations they were exposed to from the vain allurements of this sinful world, such as the powerful excitements of sense, and the insidious suggestions of the Devil. But as soon as he entered the class-room, a small gleam of hope passed through his mind, that perhaps God at last might have mercy on him; the young men prayed that evening most fervently for him, when he experienced a small degree of encouragement not to give up the ship Perseverance, but to press forward to the kingdom of heaven, but did not obtain that evening a clear knowledge of his justification in the pardon of his sins, in the sight of God. After the class meeting ended, he went home to his father's house with a distant hope that kind heaven at last was about being propitious towards him. After this he longed for the evening to arrive when the class-meeting should meet again; so he went the second time, (the house is still standing, No. 163 north Front Street, Philadelphia.) and as soon as he entered the room, a divine hope darted through his whole soul that God was about to show mercy towards him: when he went to the northeast corner of the room, where the class met, and kneeled and then began to call on the name of the Lord to have mercy on him. The young men at the same time, also prayed most fervently at the throne of grace in his behalf, and as the enormous burden of sin and death lay heavy on his soul and rested on his mind, when he fully experienced what Paul had written of the law-condemned sinner to be true, in his own case: O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from

the body of this death? At that moment, he whose voice is as the sound of many waters, said both by his word and spirit, come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. And at that moment the heavy load of sin and death fell to the ground, when he was enabled by faith to see the Saviour transfixed on the cross; when he rose from his knees and declared to his young brethren what the Lord had done for his soul. The meeting being ended, he went home to his father's house, about two miles from the house where the prayer-meeting was held, and looking up on the natural heavens, every star proclaimed the power and wisdom of its divine author. So that on his way home he wanted the wings of the celestial dove that he might at once fly away from this sinful world, in order to worship God and the Lamb forever. He now stood in no need of arguments to prove the existence of a wise and powerful God, and the truth of the gospel of his dear Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: and as Paul writes to the Church of Christ at Rome, that the invisible things of the nature and attributes of God was now clearly seen by this young sailor, even his eternal power and Godhead.



- No. 1. The young sailor enters the class-room with the body of sin and death on his back.
- No. 2. The sailor with the young brethren on their knees calling on God the father, through the name and merits of his Son Jesus Christ, to have mercy upon him, and deliver him from this body of sin and death.
- No. 3. The heavy load of sin and death falls to the ground, when the young sailor had by a living faith a view of the Saviour transfixed on the cross.
- No. 4. The young sailor declaring to his young brethren what the Lord had done for his soul.
- No. 5. The young sailor on his way home to his father's house, who now wants no theological argument to prove the existence of a God.

And it came to pass, that during the whole of that auspicious and memorable night, that his whole soul was so filled with the love of God that he could say with the apostle John, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Till in the embrace of sleep he swooned away, and when he awoke in the morning with a new spiritual vision, the sun seemed to preach the glory and majesty of its God, and the whole empire of nature seemed to join with the sailor in one universal anthem of joy and praise, so that

he could truly say, salvation is of the Lord : after this he went on his way rejoicing, and telling to every one what a dear Saviour he had found. The change was so great that all earthly inclinations were taken from him, so that he could only say with the poet, to all the fascinating allurements of sense, away all ye objects that divert or seek to draw from my dear Lord my heart, for his loveliness my soul hath prepossessed and left no room for any other guest.

After this he went on in the new born way for several weeks, until a work entitled, "the saint's everlasting rest," fell into his hands, when he was led to see that such numbers of the people in his neighbourhood who were living and dying in their sins, and as the author pointed out as the duty of every newly converted soul, to go to his friends' and neighbours' houses and read the scriptures and converse and pray with them, so that during the months of January, February and March, 1792, Onesimus and a young person of the methodist society by the name of Jesse Smith, adopted Baxter's plan of warning poor sinners to flee the wrath to come. When they went from house to house through the same village, that he about a year before was ashamed to be seen going through on the Lord's day to a place of worship : but in this new business the young sailor was the chief pioneer in endeavouring to be instrumental in bringing his friends and neighbours to the knowledge of the truth. And as soon as the evening shades had spread its sable empire over the earth, they went from house to house knocking at the doors they went in, and as it was the case with Paul and Barnabas at Lystra and Derbe cities of Lycaonia, so in this case Onesimus was the chief speaker : and when they entered a house the sailor took out his small Bible and read a chapter, and was soon led by the holy spirit of God, who so enlarged his heart as to make some sententious remarks on the small portion of scripture he had read to the family, and then went to prayer with them. And although this was rather a daring experiment in those days, as many of the heads of those families were rough and uncultivated people, but the solemn appearance and rather

awful voice of this sailor, seemed in general to overawe the people into submission : so much so, that they were in no one case ordered out of their houses, although in those days he was heavily surcharged with the sulphur and brimstone of hell-fire, so that he often discharged a volley of the most awful denunciations of the scripture against unrepentant sinners ; yet notwithstanding his rough and sailor-like way of preaching, the glorious gospel of God our Saviour the Lord, was his panoply against the rage of men and devils in those days of abounding infidelity in the city of Philadelphia. Shortly after this he became so very zealous for the cause of his new master and immortality, that if he met any person using bad language in the streets of the city, he would exhort them to repent, or else tell them they would be damned and sent to hell. Shortly after this as he was returning home from the evening preaching, in what was called St. George's Church, in company with a number of the zealous young brethren, they passed a house in the Northern Liberties where a number of persons of both sexes were singing and dancing, when the sailor said to his brethren that he experienced it to be his duty to go into the dance house and warn them to repent of their sins ; when his brethren signified to him that he would endanger his life by such a rash act, when he answered them that the loss of life would be nothing in the scale of his duty to the cause of his Lord and Master, and he being at that time so full of zeal as he thought to promote the honour and glory of God his Saviour, so that if a sword had been presented at his breast at that time, it would not have silenced his tongue from reproving open sin in any person ; for the justification of his person and the pardon of his sins was so clear in those days, that he was desirous of wearing a martyr's crown in order to leave this world of sin and unbelief, and go to a dispensation of holiness and glory. So he went into the dance house and opened the artillery of the Bible upon them, the man stopped his fiddle and the rest their dancing, and looked amazed at each other ; and after he had warned them to flee the wrath to come, he left them to reflect on what they

had heard : when they all left the house and there was no more dancing that night. After this daring experiment in the case of the dance house, he went on exhorting and warning his fellow sinners to escape the damnation of hell : during all the spring of 1792, and until about the first of June, there was nothing worthy of special notice transpired. And now our sea-faring brother will kindly indulge us to close this letter, and when the wind of the holy spirit bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof from the gospel heavens, and it filleth the sails of the ship *Perseverance*, we will write to you again something more of what befel him during his voyage in search of the immortality of the human soul.

ONESIMUS.

TO ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

*Philadelphia, May 20th, 1839.*

## LETTER XV.

*Dear Sir :*

Our last scratch of the goose quill left the sailor a zealous reprovcr of the open sins of the age, after this in June, 1792, there was a meeting in Kensington next door to Mr. George Eyre, master shipwright, the place was filled to overflowing; and after waiting for some time, and the expected minister not coming, the spirit of the Lord moved him to go forward: and after singing and praying, he took out his small Bible and when he had opened it, the words which first elicited his attention were these: "Go to the ant thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise. Which having no guide, overseer or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest;" Proverbs vi. 6-7-8. This being the first time he had ever preached from a text of scripture, and had no idea of opening his mouth in the meeting, and of course had not premeditated a single thought on the subject of the text, or in any way whatever connected or arranged his ideas on this portion of holy writ, yet such was the liberty of soul which the Lord gave him on that occasion, that it solemnly arrested the attention of all present. Through the week there were many observations made by them who heard the sailor's first sermon, while others were wondering who taught him how to preach, and like the Jews in our Lord's case, some of them marvelled, saying—how knoweth this sailor letters never having learnt them. From this time forth he gave himself up to prayer, fasting, reading and expounding the scriptures to the people in his own anti-theological manner of warning his fellow sinners to flee the wrath to come, both in the city and in the streets thereof and on the commons. And also in private houses testifying both to deists, atheists, and at the same time to all other sinners repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus this young sailor went on

as we have already observed, in his rough and uncultivated manner of calling sinners to repentance, and being at the same time most grossly ignorant of all the metaphysical investigations, and speculative refinements of the abstract doctrines of the theological schools, and at the same time equally as full of stolidity respecting the polemical and didactical divinity of the day, neither at that time was he able to comprehend the learned disputations of the wise and renowned doctors of the outward christian theology respecting the hypostatical ingredients and eternal elements that constitute the distinct natures of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost: so that he was not able to understand the great arcanum of the fashionable and refined theology of our time, together with the foolish and unprofitable disputations about the other abstract doctrines of the christian theology, and the various discrepancies in their views of the same; which has so most shamefully distracted the outward christian world: to wit; whether the expiatory sacrifice of the Son of God, was—or was not—available for the whole, or only a small part of mankind. Therefore we humbly ask the profound sons of the christian theology, gentlemen is it not high time that we cease to perplex the sons and daughters of Adam with such foreign ideas: that is, whether the atonement of Christ had in its capacity, height and depth, or length or breadth enough to pardon the sins of the whole world of mankind; or, only a very small part of them. Therefore we conclude that your speculations are far beyond the reach of our solution as well as the Rabbi in Israel, so that the most profound doctors of the gospel are not able to fully comprehend the true modes of their own existence: then how much less are they able to define the secret designs of the supreme being, or the incomprehensible nature of the almighty. Gentlemen of the schools of the outward christian theology of 1839, do you not see that the humiliating declaration of our Lord to Nicodemus the ruler of the Jews, ought to shame and confound us all: that is, every vain and captious doctor in the outward christian world. Hear ye proud sons of

the letter of the gospel, what our Lord says to Nicodemus, If I have told you of only earthly things, and ye believe not, (or rather we presume our Lord meant ye comprehend not, which we humbly believe is most certainly deducible from his reply to our Lord, how can these things be? when our Lord answers him,) how shall ye believe, if I tell ye of heavenly things. We think we hear the voice of the divine majesty as the sound of many waters, which is so solemnly contained in the book of Job: gentlemen gird up your loins like men of wisdom, for I would demand of you, and answer thou me; where was thou when I laid the foundation of the earth? declare if thou hast understanding, when the morning stars sang together and all the celestial sons of God shouted for joy. And again, have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death, or knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? or canst thou with all thy vain philosophical pride, set the dominion thereof in the earth? if thou can'st not answer these plain and simple interrogatories which entirely relate to our condition and circumstances in this world, then we humbly ask is it not high time for the honour and glory of God and the gospel of his Son, to lay aside our speculative folly, so that instead of our perplexing the minds of our fellow men with foreign and abstract ideas; to wit, whether the almighty did or did not, in what in creeds is called his unchangeable council, calmly and deliberately set apart from eternity some of the sons and daughters of Adam to everlasting felicity, and the wretched and miserable balance to eternal misery and woe. Therefore we are led to humbly draw this simple inference from the foregoing reflections on the general character of the theoretical theology of the times in which we live, and are led to pray the great head of the church to send a small breeze from the holy spirit, which the Lord says bloweth where it listeth, in order to blow away this speculative chaff to the moles that live under the ground, and the bats that fly in the darkness of the night. So that rational and intelligent beings might discard those unprofitable speculations from the church

of christ altogether : we shall now brace the yards and trim the sails of the ship Perseverance, as we see under our larboard quarter a dark cloud arising over the city of Philadelphia : when the young sailor's mind began to be very seriously exercised with some awful forebodings respecting an affection of a very calamitous nature that was coming on the city, so that when ever he went into the same, and walked its streets, a heavy burden rested on his mind, and at the same time his sleep departed from him. About this time a work entitled "the age of reason" had been introduced into Philadelphia, which was received with much applause by all the free-thinking and skeptical portion of its inhabitants ; so that it came to pass, that after this wonderful sally of the deistical wit, from the pen of this modern Goliath of the new school of natural philosophy, and the condoling doctrine of eternal sleep, that the churches and meeting houses of this city were almost literally forsaken, especially by the male part of its citizens.



- No. 1. A frigate of the new class named Thomas Paine, just arrived from the schools of the French philosophy, with a new and valuable cargo of books, entitled the Age of Reason.
- No. 2. Mr. Paine, with one of the most improved French telescopes at his philosophical eye, veiwing the stars in the galaxy, or what is called by the common people the milky way.
- No. 3. Captain Volney hailing the ship Perseverance.
- No. 4. Captain Onesimus answering the captain, that he is bound on a voyage of discovery in search of the immortality of the human soul: when captain Volney the French commander of the frigate, with his national politeness of French manners, advises captain Onesimus to give up his voyage, and follow his new frigate to the pleasant land of eternal sleep.

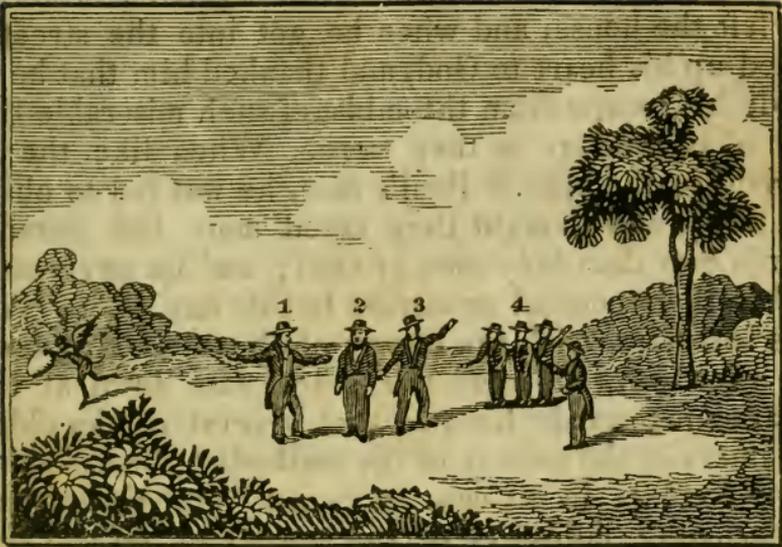
Soon after the arrival of this marvellous production from the pen of this new apostle of deism, the young sailor was accosted by several of the freethinking gentlemen of the city, who were candid enough to acknowledge that they did not possess sufficient prowess or philosophical gallantry of mind, to write the marvellous volume themselves: and others would say that this voluminous production of the profound wisdom of the age of natural philosophy would soon banish the gospel from the earth. When some of the deistical gentlemen

would with a sneer of atheistical risibility, ask him where his Christ the son of Joseph was, or what he was about that he did not come and present himself to the world as the hero of his church, and arrange his gospel artillery against this new armament which Mr. Paine and the French philosophy had sent out on the gospel seas, with the most positive orders to kill, burn, destroy and sink the whole of the gospel armament in whatsoever seas or latitudes they were to be found. By this time many of the freethinking gentlemen of the city began to know this young sailor in consequence of his openly reproving them for their bad language, and other open sins, so that they would frequently ask him where his Christ, the Devil, the woman and the apple-tree, were located: since Mr. Paine had so clearly demonstrated it to be altogether a theological farce. His answer to them in general was, that his God would give them in due season a most clear and satisfactory answer: and it is our special duty to remark what vast numbers of the inhabitants of this city of brotherly love—as it has been by some denominated—embraced this new doctrine of eternal sleep after death. But it is time to proceed with captain Onesimus and his ship *Perseverance*; through the summer of 1792, his mind became more oppressed than ever with a sense of some great affliction that within the short space of a year, would most certainly overtake the city; after this about the last of June 1792, the burden of the Lord on his mind became so intensely great, that he lost his appetite for animal food altogether, and at the same time all the physical desires of his nature had subsided, so that he had neither power nor predilection to indulge in any physical enjoyment whatever, save that which was barely necessary to sustain his existence.

And it being the season of the methodist conference in Philadelphia, when on the next Lord's day between the fore and afternoon services, so that in consequence of the distress and burden of his mind, which began every day to greatly increase, when he thought to himself that he would call on an elderly and venerable minister, and ask his counsel by stating the deep exer-

cise of his mind unto him in christian confidence. When he went and knocked at his door, and asked for elder Dickens, who came and presented himself to the distressed and burdened sailor at the door: when he desired a private interview with this aged minister, which was granted by the Reverend gentleman, who kindly conducted him into a small parlour, where the young sailor opened the burden of his mind to this venerable father as he thought in God's spiritual Israel: and humbly expecting that he would give him some counsel suitable to his singular case and deep exercise of mind, respecting the affliction coming on the city. But the aged brother made no reply to his case, but desired him to accompany him into a large back parlour, in which there was a number of the ministers of the methodist conference, when Mr. Dickens spread before this conclave of ministers his confidential communication, no doubt remembering the sententious remarks of one of the wisest of the Hebrew sages, that in the midst of counselors there is wisdom and safety: when the sailor stood in the midst of the ministers almost overwhelmed with fear and astonishment at the want of that christian confidence which Onesimus had to that hour always placed in the methodist clergy, whom he viewed till then to be the most holy persons in the christian world. After Mr. Dickens had laid open to these ministers, the distress and exercise of the young sailor's mind to all present; each one began by way of condolence to give him their kind and christian counsel: the Rev. Jesse Lee told him of a very singular dream which he had one night as he was sleeping with his lady; to wit, that the Devil came and took away the pillow from under their heads; and when they awoke to their great astonishment behold it was only a dream. Another minister by the name of Mr. Askins, acted in his case as his skilful physician, and highly recommended to him a strong decoction made from the bark of the sassafras tree, and for the sailor to drink the same several times through the day, so that he entertained not the least shadow of a doubt but all his burden of mind would

soon spread its wings and depart from him. And several of the other ministers present, displayed their profound wisdom in pouring forth a volley of their risible artillery on the head of this poor ignorant young sailor, and his forebodings of a calamity over the city of Philadelphia, which is set forth in the following plate.



- No. 1. A Reverend gentleman who kindly by way of christian condolence informs this burned young sailor of a singular dream he had one night while sleeping with his lady: To wit, that Satan came and took away the pillow from under their heads, and went off with the same, and when they awoke, behold it was a dream.
- No. 2. The young sailor standing in the midst of a holy conclave of Reverend gentlemen, in the summer of 1792.
- No. 3. A Reverend gentleman who without money or price acts as his kind physician, when he directs him to make a speedy application of the healing balm or bark of the sassafras tree, in order to dipsel the burden from his mind.
- No. 4. The rest of the holy clergy who were present on this dolorous occasion, smiling at the young sailor and his judgments of heaven coming on the city of Philadelphia.

And this burdened and distressed young lad stood in the midst of the ministers speechless, and almost overwhelmed with astonishment; and at the same time could scarcely believe his own audibility, that it were possible that these ministers that he once imagined were so holy that he was afraid to speak unto them, under such a deep sense of his own sinfulness and personal unworthiness did he labour at that time. When he further thought to himself, can it be possible that these men of

God can tantalize and make sport of the awful distress of my soul : when he was led to sigh and groan in spirit, and wished himself out of their presence, and as soon as they ended all their counsel which related to his case he left the house, and when he got into the street he lifted up his heart to God, and thanked him that he had made his escape from the midst of such miserable theological comforters as they were. When like the barbarians in the apostle Paul's case, he was led to change his mind, and thought they acted more like Satan towards him than holy men of God ; and he never asked either their counsel or advice to this day, 1839. After this interview with the clergy of the methodist order, for a few days his mind was much cast down at their treatment towards him, so that several of the elderly members of the society of the methodist church viewed their conduct in his case as entirely anti-christian and unbecoming ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And it came to pass after this interview with the clergy, that the burden of his mind became more heavy than ever, respecting the calamity he both felt and saw was suspended over the city, when he warned every person he met or conversed with that he was sure the almighty would shortly send some heavy judgment on the inhabitants of the city for their sins and unbelief. When the people said that Onesimus would soon lose his senses if he went on much longer with his awful forebodings about the judgments of heaven coming on Philadelphia. In the autumn of 1792, the burden of his mind greatly increased, so that about the last of October as he went into the city, he could scarcely refrain from crying out as he walked the streets of the same, woe, unto the inhabitants of this place. And here lest we should wear out the locker of our shipmate's patience, we will close our log-book, and if the wind and clouds of an awful providence should increase in their alarming aspect, we will write to you again on this sorrowful subject.

ONESIMUS.

TO ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

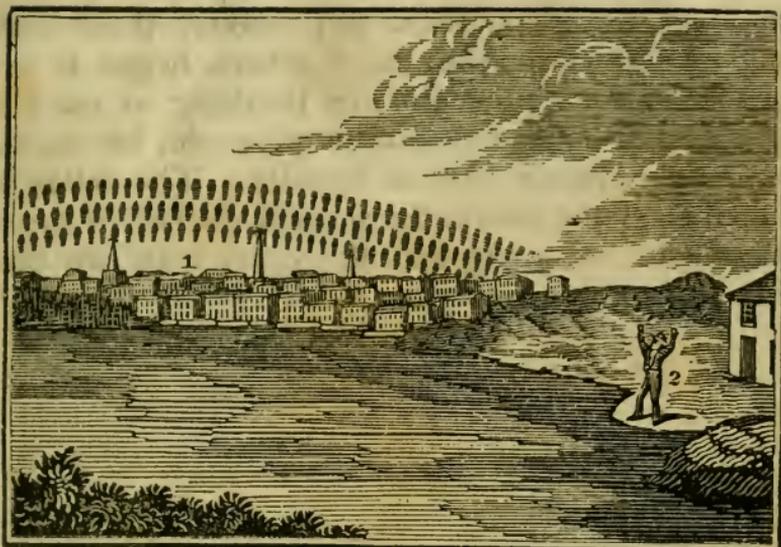
*Philadelphia, October 30th, 1792.*

## LETTER XVI.

*Dear Sir:*

Our last scroll from the log-book of the ship *Perseverance*, left our young shipmate with an onerous burden on his mind respecting the forebodings of a singular affliction he saw was coming on the city, and he was at the same time grieved in spirit at the incredulous reception of his prophecy, by the clergy of that day. But still his Lord was with him and finally brought him from under their medical prescription of the Devil, who so very unceremoniously ran off with the pillow from under the Rev. gentleman and his consort's head; and the Lord in his wise providence removed from him the necessity of using the universal panacea of the bark of the sassafras tree, so kindly prescribed by another of the Rev. gentleman, in order to displace from Onesimus' mind the distress and calamity that he said was coming on the city. Still through the autumn of 1792, his mind had no rest day nor night, in consequence of the burden that hourly rested on his spirit, so that during the fall he lived on bread and other light articles of vegetable sustenance, so that all his physical propensities were at that season reduced to a state of entire deadness. And with Paul he could truly say, I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, is by faith in the Son of God; who loved me and gave himself for me. After this his distress became so very intense, that he had to give up all the secular concerns of this life: and about the first of December, 1792, as he rose always before the dawning of the day, in order to embrace an opportunity to spend an hour in secret prayer at the throne of grace, in an upper loft: which he had for about a year used for the express purpose of reading his Bible, meditation and prayer; and as his manner was when he came down out of the loft, he went to the shore of the river Delaware to wash

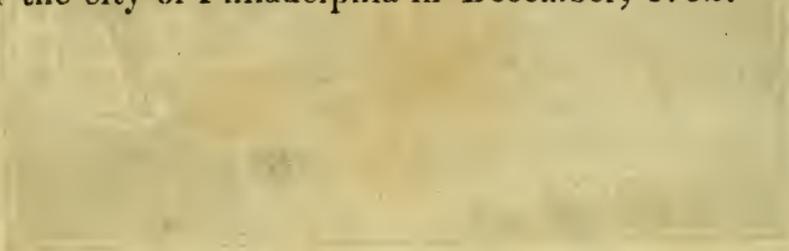
himself, and looking towards the city he saw about ten minutes before the rising of the sun, three rows of coffins arranged at equal distances from each other, from one end of the city of Philadelphia to the other; the said coffins appeared in an inclined direction, with the foot of the coffins towards the tops of the houses, the rows at equal distances apart. Which singular appearance or strange phenomena, as he stood on the shore of the Delaware, and viewed the army of coffins for about five minutes, when they all suddenly disappeared just before the sun rose on the city. This strange sign of the coffins over the city, caused him to be very serious and solemn all that day and night, in order to ascertain what this strange phenomena of the coffins was intended to signify, but he communicated the vision to no person that day. When he rose early the next morning and went as before observed to secret prayer, and came down from his upper loft, and after washing himself at the river, he looked towards the city and saw the three armies of coffins the second time arranged in three rows exactly as he saw them the morning before: when his mind became more distressed than ever, but he kept the vision to himself the second day also, but was much troubled in his spirit, which is set forth in the following plate.



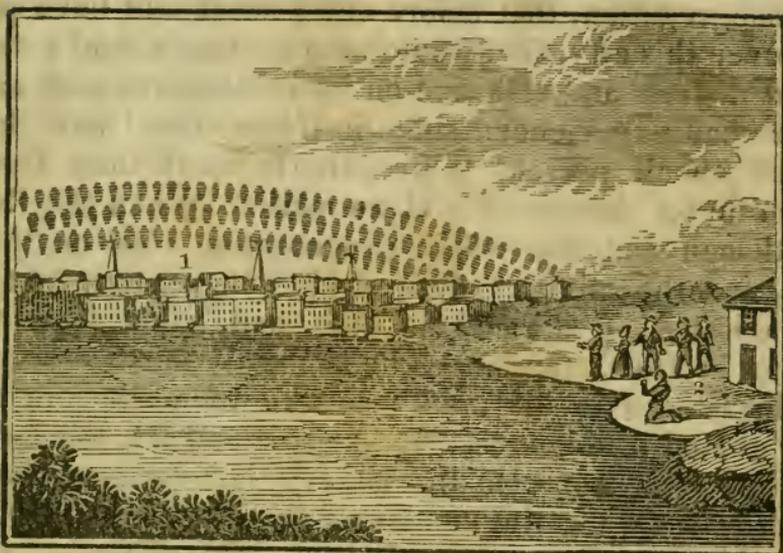
- No. 1. Is a view of the city of Philadelphia, with three rows of coffins arranged over the same, exactly as the young sailor saw them the first morning, just before the rising of the sun in December, 1792.
- No. 2. The young sailor standing on the bank of the Delaware, looking at the awful appearance of the coffins over the city, with his hands raised towards heaven in order to ascertain if possible what was coming on the city, this being the second time which he saw the vision.

He rose as usual on the morning of the third day, and after solemn prayer in secret for the Lord to support him through the same, and if it were his sovereign pleasure, to graciously reveal to him what the signs of the coffins over the city were designed to signify. He came down out of the loft and went as before observed to the river Delaware to wash, and again looking towards the city, when he saw the three armies of coffins over the same, this being the third and last time that he saw the coffins over the city of Philadelphia. When he called his father and family to come out of the house to the shore of the river, and look at the same. When they all came out with a number of his father's workmen to look at his coffins over the city; but it was not

given to them see the same. Some of the people derided him, and others laughed him to scorn, when he kneeled on the shore of the river, and prayed that God might have mercy on them and convert their souls. His father and family with many others, began to conclude that in consequence of his thinking so much on things relating to another and better world, he was fast approximating into a state of insanity. The following plate will show the reader the signs of the coffins as seen the third and last time, that the young man saw them over the city of Philadelphia in December, 1792.



*[The following text is extremely faint and illegible, appearing to be bleed-through or a very light print. It seems to contain several paragraphs of text, but the words are not readable.]*



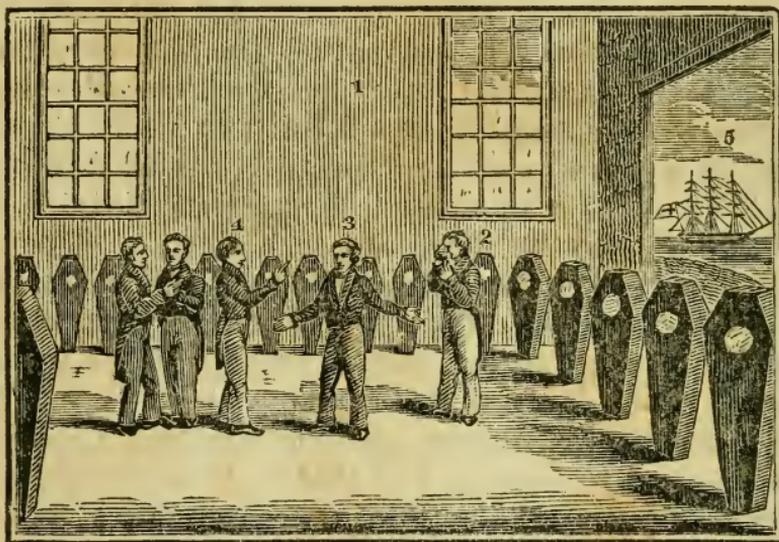
- No. 1. The vision of the coffins as seen the third successive morning over the city of Philadelphia by Onesimus, and his calling his father and family out of the house to see the same.
- No. 2. The workmen deriding and laughing at him, when he falls on his knees by the river and prays to God to have mercy upon them.

And it came to pass, that on the same day, that he saw the coffins for the last time over the city of Philadelphia, in December 1892, that he went into the city on the evening of the same, to a place of worship in south Second Street, called in those days Ebenezer. The building is yet standing it being about three miles from his father's house; that is, the same site of ground on which Dr. Dyott had his extensive glass manufactory, it being the very site on which the young man stood when he saw the signs of the coffins for three successive mornings in broad daylight. When the young man went to the aforesaid meeting with a full determination to warn the minister and his congregation of the approaching calamity that he saw was coming on the city. And when he entered the meeting, he saw the Rev. John Mc Claskey in the pulpit, who preached that

evening; and when he had gone through the services of the evening, he rose and stepped upon one of the seats, and with a loud voice declared to the minister and his congregation, that before one year should have passed over this city, God would most certainly send a very great distress and affliction on its inhabitants, such as it never had experienced since its foundation: and then called on all present to prepare to meet their God; when he set down and said no more. When the Rev. gentleman and the whole congregation rose on their feet, and the minister desired his congregation not to be agitated or alarmed at what had fallen from the young brother's tongue, as he certainly must be wrong or disordered in his mind: to which Onesimus in the fear of God made no reply, but rose and left the meeting and went home to his father's house. about three miles from the meeting, under a full conviction of having done his duty that evening in the sight of God, But here it is proper to remark, that notwithstanding the Rev. gentleman made so light of the young brother's prophecy that evening, yet his declaration so alarmed his congregation, so that the next day the Rev. John Mc Claskey, and two other methodist ministers by the names of Willis and Green, came out of the city to his father's house, inquiring for the young brother who was at their meeting last evening. When his father led them into a large loft, over which there was an upper loft as we have already observed, into which the young brother went to read, meditate and pray: when his father prayed him to come down out of his homely study, who was at the same time on his knees at prayer with his Bible spread open before him; but in obedience to his request he came down into the under loft, when his father introduced him to the three before named gentlemen, and after the usual etiquette respecting his health and welfare, they observed to him that they thought he did wrong in reading the Bible so much, and his retiring so much in his study at prayer, and that he ought to associate himself more with the young members of the society, and no doubt those alarming signs which were preying on his mind would soon depart

from him, and at the same time his father stood behind him weeping at the supposed insanity of his son. And the three Reverend gentlemen stood before him, who further observed to him, our visit to you this morning is to forbid you acting again in any of our meetings—of either prayer or preaching—as you did the last evening, by making such an awful declaration as you made in our church last night about the judgment of heaven coming on the people of Philadelphia. When the young brother was for a moment almost ready to sink down on the floor in their presence, but the Lord was still with him, and in a moment of time the large room in which Onesimus, his father and the three Reverend gentlemen were standing was filled with coffins, and in each lay a white winding sheet: these things he saw with his natural vision; and the walnut colour of the coffins with the same clearness and identity as he saw his father and the three Reverend gentlemen that were before him. When the young brother cried out to them, do you not see all around you the coffins and the winding sheets lying in them, all over the room? when the Reverend gentlemen assured him that there was no such signs to be seen, and that he must certainly be deceived by the Devil and his own imagination, and repeating their ministerial charge to the poor sailor not to act again as he had done the evening before, or else they should be under the necessity of enforcing the discipline of the church against him. When the Reverend gentlemen withdrew from the young brother, and he saw the coffins and winding sheets no more to this day, May 20th, 1839. This interview with the three Rev. gentlemen in the presence of his father, took place in December 1792, in the forenoon of the day between the hours of ten and twelve o'clock; in an old building that is to this day standing within the enclosure of the late Dr. Dyott's glass works on the river Delaware, about two miles from Market or High street, Philadelphia.

This plate shows the exact position of the young sailor, his father and the three Reverend gentlemen, with the coffins that contained the white winding sheets in each of them :



- No. 1. The building in which the signs of the coffins were seen in December, 1792; and is yet standing within the enclosure of Dr. Dyott's glass establishment, about two miles from the city of Philadelphia, on the river Delaware.
- No. 2. Onesimus' father stands behind him shedding tears, with a handkerchief to his face, in consequence of the supposed insanity of his son.
- No. 3. The young sailor showing the three clergymen the coffins which were around them, and a winding sheet lying in each coffin.
- No. 4. The Rev. John Mc Claskey warning the sailor never to dare to alarm his church and congregation with the signs of his coffins and winding sheets any more.
- No. 5. The ship *Perseverance* after a long and stormy voyage arrives safe into the royal port of Mount Zion, the city of the living God, with her colours flying bearing the sign of the Cross.

And here indulge us to close this dolorous part of our narrative, and for the present shut up the log-book of the ship Perseverance, till we shall have a clear sky and the wind of the spirit of the Lord is a few points abaft the beam; and if the Lord would spare such a very unprofitable servant as Onesimus in this world a little longer, we shall in that case inform you of something more about the young brother and his prophecy; and whether his God in his wisdom and providence, did prove him to be a true or false prophet in this case. Amen.

ONESIMUS.

TO ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

*Philadelphia, December 31st, 1792.*

## LETTER XVII.

*Dear Sir :*

Our last scratch of the goose quill informed you of the several supernatural appearances which the young sailor saw in the month of December, 1792, and how his prophecy was rejected by the Reverend gentlemen of the methodist church, and laughed at by many of the members of their society, with hundreds of the citizens of Philadelphia.

After this it came to pass some time in January, 1793, there was a quarterly meeting to be held, about twenty miles or more out of the city. And as the Rev. John Mc Claskey was to superintend the same; when some of the members of the methodist society were led to conclude from the little discourses they heard from him in the summer of 1792, and his exhortations at prayer meetings—with his reproving of sin both publicly and privately—that perhaps his distress of mind might in a great measure arise in consequence of his disobedience to the heavenly call, in his not giving himself up fully to the ministry of the word. When some of his friends prevailed on the Reverend gentlemen of the methodist order to take the young lad with them to the quarterly meeting, in order to give him a fair opportunity to exercise his gifts at a distance from the city: when perhaps the country air might cause the awful spectres of the coffins to spread their dolorous wings and leave him in the possession of a sane mind. And it came to pass at the quarterly meeting that when the Rev. John Mc Claskey and the rest of the ministers at the meeting, had all exercised themselves in preaching, when near the close of the same, the Rev. Elder called on the burdened sailor to come forward and try and exercise his gifts: but at the same time very cautiously laid the sailor under some special restrictions not to say a single word about the visions of the coffins, and the great distress and other serious calamity that he had

prophesied was coming on the inhabitants of the city. And it came to pass, that in consequence of this ministerial embargo, that the Lord withheld that evening the gracious and ordinary influence of his spirit from him, in that through a principle of the fear of man he obeyed them more than the spirit of the Lord. So that when he arose to address the people, he had but very little to say to them; in consequence of which he became low spirited, and his mind for the moment much cast down. When the Reverend gentlemen and some of the members of the methodist society reported when they returned to the city, that they were very seriously apprehensive that Onesimus was as much mistaken in his being called to preach the gospel as he was in his being called to the prophetic office.

And here indulge us to conclude our short scroll and shut up the log-book of the ship Perseverance, and when the wind of the spirit bloweth where it listeth and we hear the sound thereof, we will write to our sea-faring brother again: so fare thee well at this time, from on board the ship Perseverance bound to the shores of the glorious country of immortality, in the humble search of the human soul.

ONESIMUS.

TO ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

*January 21st, 1793.*

## LETTER XVIII.

*Dear Sir:*

Our last lines brought the ship *Perseverance* commanded by captain Onesimus back to the city of Philadelphia, from his dolorous excursion to the quarterly meeting; which made the most unfavourable impression on the minds of the methodist people with respect to his preaching and prophesying talents. And when the month of February, 1793, came in, there was at that time in this city, much talk and theological speculation respecting this poor deluded sailor, and his imaginary army of coffins. When some of the Reverend gentlemen demanded of the young brother, the exact character and nature of the judgment which is to kill us all. When his answer to them was—that all that was revealed to him respecting either the nature or character of the calamity which the coffins and winding sheets were designed to signify had not been distinctly revealed to him: therefore, that all that he could inform them in the case, was that the vision was true, and the full interpretation thereof, God shall give you before this present year of 1793 shall pass over your heads. After this the ministers let him alone, and said no more to him on the subject: But like the Jews in Paul's case at Rome, they had great reasoning among themselves, about his prophecy; and said one to another it was marvellously strange indeed, that the Lord should pass by all the elderly and venerable ministers of our society, and reveal this thing to a young person who has but lately joined our church: but notwithstanding as it was the case with Paul at Athens, a sister named Wilmore and others with her of the pious members of the methodist society, whose names are not distinctly recollected at this length of time, who were more or less apprehensive that perhaps there might be some small degree of truth in his prophesy. When sister Wilmore and

others put the question very close to him: to wit, whether the grand enemy of his soul was not deceiving him? When his answer to them was that as sure as God existed, and as he had a soul to be saved, this calamity which the coffins and winding sheets are intended to signify shall come to pass. This year (1793) during the months of January, February and March, nothing of a special character transpired. The month of April came in, when a number of both saints and open sinners would ask him when his army of coffins were coming to drive out the inhabitants from the city: he prayed them to exercise their patience, and God would give them the deleterious opportunity of viewing his army of coffins marching through your city.

But notwithstanding all the sarcastical jeers of the Reverend gentlemen of 1793, the young sailor most firmly believed the visions of the coffins were from heaven, and at the same time he was as firmly persuaded in his own mind, that what he saw over the city in December, 1792, would be most certainly fulfilled in 1793. After this he still continued his daily ambulations either in the city, or else a few miles in the adjacent country. And at the same time as before observed, living on vegetable diet; and the burden of his mind still continued, but not in that intense and awful degree that it did when he first saw the coffins over the city. And he now became both by the Reverend gentlemen and the citizens of Philadelphia, the entire object of the most uncharitable animadversions of both saints and sinners, even as he walked the streets of the city. But he still retained his full confidence in God, that he had not permitted Satan nor any other invisible agency to deceive him: therefore he bore all their insidious reflections with christian patience, until the wheels of time should become its own most infallible expositor; so that like Jonah, he set down under the booth of the word of the Lord, while the north wind of reproach was blowing upon his head, to wait its issue. About the first of May, as the distress of his mind became less intense, when he went to work at his usual avocation, and although he now worked at his lawful calling, yet he re-

mained very sparing of his words, like the ancient Lacedæmonians with their iron money: so that he did not converse with any person about the things and business of this world any more than the necessity of his calling did most imperiously call for at his moral accountability. Thus the month of May passed over his head without any other special occurrence that we can at this length of time distinctly recollect: and as he had no desire or intention for many years of ever publishing the vision to the world till his return from Richmond, Virginia, this winter; that is, 1838. And as Onesimus had made no notes of this wonderful vision and its exact fulfilment, a vast number of the minor incidents and small occurrences of the same, has slipped his memory: nevertheless all the special occurrences of this singular vision, with the persons and things of that day, are fully and distinctly remembered with as great a degree of clearness and perspicuity as if they transpired but yesterday. And when the month of June came in, he became more cheerful, and the burden was taken in a great measure from off his mind, so that he began to use a little animal food, and did more or less at times listen to his father reading the news of the war, and the revolution in France and the rest of Europe: but he still continued to attend the methodist meetings of prayer and preaching, but did not either exhort or preach himself, but humbly in the fear of God waited the fulfilment of his prophesy. During the month of June there was nothing of a special nature transpired, except that some of the over zealous disciples of Mr. Paine, and as we have already observed his marvellous book entitled the Age of Reason, some of them would come out of the city to his father's house, to have some sport with the sailor about his army of coffins, and the imbecility of Christ his Lord and master in suffering this bright and morning star of modern wisdom and philosophy, to clip the wings and shade the glory of him who nearly eighteen hundred years ago, proclaimed himself the morning star of immortality and the root and offspring of David. But as he was mostly apprised of their coming, he had selected about a hundred passages of scripture out of the old an

new Testaments, that were heavily surcharged with the alarming elements of hell-fire: when he would take out his little book which he always carried with him, and with a loud and terrific voice which he possessed in those days, read the same in their ears: so that they seldom would stand more than a dozen rounds from his brimstone artillery, which generally caused them to retreat and leave him in possession of the field of battle: and go and tell his father that his son smelt so strong of the pole-cat of hell-fire, that they could not stay in the place with him. And as he was so very little acquainted in those days either with logic or metaphysical reasoning on the high subject of natural philosophy, he thought the best way to cause his deistical and atheistical enemies to sheer off, was to send a few of the old torpedos drawn by an hasty requisition from the Law, the Prophets and the Gospels, charged with brimstone; which the arsenal of an sin-hating God and his vast resources so amply possessed. Now it was by this short method of warfare, that the sailor caused those paragons of the new philosophy of France and Mr. Paine to quit the sea of action, and leave him surrounded by his small armament of coffins. But it is worthy of special remark, that most of these laughing gentlemen of the age of reason, were among the earliest victims of the yellow fever of 1793. The month of July came in, and nothing special or alarming transpired: by this time many began to entertain strong doubts respecting the truth of his prophesy of a great calamity which he so positively declared would most certainly come on the city during the year 1793. But in the language of the apostle Peter, he declared to them all, that the Lord is not slack concerning his promise (in this case), as some men count slackness; and that the vision of the coffins shall shortly speak and will not lie.

The month of August came in, and the Reverend gentlemen who forbid him to warn their congregations began to smile at each other respecting the sailor and his prophesy. But he answered them in the language of one of the ancient fathers, to one of the proconsuls of the Roman empire in the days of Julian the emperor of

Rome : when the proconsul with a sarcastic smile on his countenance, asked the christian father what the carpenter's son was about to suffer such a storm of persecution to light on his followers. When the elder answered the fastidious Roman officer—making a coffin sir, for your master : who was at that time prosecuting a war against the Persians, and it seems that he had signified to his friends who were favourable, of fully establishing the heathen mythology throughout the Roman empire, and of finally banishing the Galilean disciples out of his kingdom by causing the brilliancy of heathen philosophy to out-vie the doctrine and precepts of the gospel of the carpenter's son. But it is said that the Roman emperor received a deathly wound in this Persian war, which imperiously constrained the Roman emperor in his expiring moments to exclaim ; thou O, Galilean, hast in all things the most decided pre-eminence ! So the young sailor most solemnly declared to those fastidious Reverend gentlemen who forbid him to warn their congregations, that Christ the son as was supposed of Joseph the carpenter, had not quite forgot the old calling of his supposed father, Joseph ; and would in a few days be here with his army of coffins, therefore Reverend sirs, only give the sailor the year 1793, and his God shall give you a full and satisfactory answer. After this the Reverend gentlemen said no more to Onesimus on the subject of the coffins : concluding wisely, as they thought, that the army of the coffins had spread their wings and left the city, so that all fear and alarm was over.

The month of August came in, and worldly prosperity, with Deism and Atheism more or less spreading its baneful influence throughout the United States, France and the rest of Europe. About this time Mr. Gibbon's decline and fall of the Roman empire, one of the most sublime historical works in the English language, for the depth of his excursive knowledge, and the strength of his discursive mind over the past history of mankind : but notwithstanding all his brilliant talents as a writer, yet on the sublime subject of immortality, we must with the apostle Paul say ; thou fool, that which thou sowest

is not quickened except it die. So that notwithstanding this gentlemen with all his acquired and assumed wisdom, could not clearly see or comprehend how that rationality with all its subordinate functions and faculties, could ever retain its empire of thinking and reasoning, when once dismissed from its mutual congress with the brain ; which led him to profess—to believe—that all would cease to exist in the article of death. This gentleman's writings, with another fascinating production of a French gentleman by the name of Volney, and Mr. Paine's wonderful "Age of Reason," all arriving in the city of Philadelphia, in the space of a few years before the yellow fever of 1793, which almost caused the empire or system of infidelity to overawe the christian world, but more especially the Philadelphians in 1793. You will pardon our aberration from the vision of the coffins, or, in our sea-faring language, suffering the ship Perseverance to fall off to leeward, in order to present to you our views of those wonderful gentlemen and their marvellous writings : and now by your kind indulgence we shall close our log-book, as it looks very squally under our lee bow, so that we believe it is high time to reef our topsails and courses, and send down our top-gallant yards and masts on deck, and get our ship in readiness to meet the gale ; if perhaps it may please the almighty to cause the ship to outride the storm. In that case we shall write to you again, in order to inform you how the ship Perseverance behaves herself in a heavy sea and a hard gale of wind from off the coast of infidelity.

ONESIMUS.

TO ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

*August 1st, 1793.*

## LETTER XVIII.

*Dear Sir :*

In our last sea letter we reminded you that we were rather apprehensive a storm was near at hand, in consequence of the squally appearance of the weather under our lee bow, and that it were time for the ship *Perseverance* to have every thing on deck and aloft put in the best seamanship order, so that she might outride the gathering storm : or in other words, the city of Philadelphia might prepare to meet her God, with the filling of those coffins and winding sheets that the sailor saw over the city in December, 1792.

August came in, and all was in apparent safety, and the alarming sound of *Onesimus*' prophesy had almost ceased to undulate the moral air, till the eighth of August 1793, there suddenly arose a little cloud about (in a moral sense) the size of a man's hand : viz., the fishing boats belonging to a small village in the upper part of Kensington, which then went by the name of Fishtown, the fishing boats belonging to the same, as they lay at Market st. wharf that day selling their fish, the hands were suddenly taken ill and brought home in their boats to the small village, which is about a quarter of a mile from the site of ground where the sailor stood when he saw the army of coffins over the city eight months before ; viz., in December, 1792, and the next day they were all dead corpses. And in a few days the whole city was in a state of the utmost consternation in consequence of the awful work of death seizing the inhabitants in every part of the city, which struck with the most awful terror the citizens who were flying out of the same into the country in every direction, as the contagion was daily more or less spreading throughout the whole city ; so that the alarm became hourly the more terrifying. So that as soon as one or more of a family were taken with the yellow fever, they were

generally forsaken by the rest: so that in many cases, the children forsook their parents, and the parents their children, and the husbands their wives and the wives their husbands. So that neither the ties of consanguinity, nor the bands of conjugal affection, had strength to hold them together: and what was the most remarkable of all, the holy ministers of the gospel fled in general from their congregations, and left them to die without the benefit of prayer from the cross-bearing clergy of that day; but more especially so the three Reverend gentlemen who forbid the sailor to warn their people, these were among the first of the Reverend gentlemen who fled from their charge: forgetting in the midst of this excitement, that wise command of the apostle James, "Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him." And also the same apostle's sententious views of pure religion and undefiled before God, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. After this, the alarm become so great, that all private business was suspended: President Washington with his court left the city, the bank officers and all other kinds of public functionaries fled out of the city; so that all business was stopped, except that of making of rough coffins and digging of graves. It was now that the young sailor more clearly understood what the signs of the coffins and white winding sheets were designed to signify, which he saw eight months antecedent to this awful calamity. The depopulation of the city was so great, that the grass grew in the streets; so that by the last of August 1793, more than three fourths of its inhabitants had fled into the surrounding country. So that it was chiefly the poor, that had neither friends nor money to take them away, that remained in the city: and of this small balance of its population, which in those days could not exceed more than ten thousand inhabitants, yet out of this remnant of its inhabitants, there died from a hundred to a hundred and twenty per day: so that death seemed to be written in every countenance. And although the sailor lived out of the city, and the Reverend

gentlemen had all deserted the sheep of their pastures when the wolf of the yellow fever came, yet he went to the city more or less every day, and visited the sick and dying, and as far as it was in his power he administered to their temporal and spiritual wants. And on the Lord's day he went into the city to St. George's church in Fourth street, and met an elderly brother by the name of Wilmore, who with the young sailor exhorted about thirty or forty of their poor brethren to put their trust in the Lord, and although their ministers had forsaken them, yet the Lord was their shield and support in the time of danger.

The month of September came in, and the yellow fever raged with greater violence than ever, it was awfully distressing to the feelings of humanity to hear the cries and groans of the sufferers forsaken by both friends and relatives. This young sailor went to the chambers and beds of the dying of many of them, and done what he could to relieve their distress, and exhorted and prayed for them, and buried the dead: graves by scores had to be ready to receive the dead corpses, so that early in the morning of each day, the carts were going through the streets of the city in order to take out the dead. Those deistical gentlemen who came out to his father's house, like the lords of the Philistines did in Samson's case, to make themselves sport, and who also laughed at him, but the amphitheatre of death, or rather the awful yellow fever of 1793, fell upon them, and they made merry with the young sailor no more.

Early in September, a young person by the name of Jesse Smith, the same person who in the winter of 1791, went with Onesimus from house to house in the vilage of Kensington, to pray and exhort the people to flee the wrath to come, was taken down with the yellow fever. The family with whom he lived were so alarmed that they fled into the country, and left him to suffer without any one to administer those kind offices which the imperious case of his awful condition called for: the news of his forsaken situation was brought to the house of Onesimus' father, and Onesimus went in haste to the

house, where he found him entirely forsaken and lying in a suffering condition: so he went into the city, and prevailed on Dr. Rush to come out of the city and visit him: the doctor ordered his head shaved and an entire blister to cover the same; this being done, and every other article and mode of treatment which the doctor prescribed attended unto, when he stayed with him and helped him out and into his bed as the imperious nature of his case required; and then prayed and exhorted him throughout the whole night to put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. When a little before sunrise he fell asleep in Jesus full of faith and with a bright prospect of a glorious immortality. Then he went and obtained a walnut coffin, and had him decently interred in the Kensington burial ground; and attended the same, and exhorted the few, that followed his remains at a distance, to prepare to meet death and their God. After this his father and family believing the yellow fever to be contagious, prayed him not to go so often into the city, as he might be the cause of communicating the fever to the rest of the family, so that in order to relieve their fears on his account, he refrained from visiting the city except on the Lord's day, when he went only to a place of worship. But still he secretly wished if it were the will of providence, that he might take the yellow fever, in order to bid a final farewell to this sinful world; as he was led to conclude in those days, that his work on earth was done, and that as God had so exactly and most wonderfully fulfilled the signs of the coffins, so that Onesimus was at that time perfectly reconciled to depart out of the world: and as Paul says, to be with Christ which is far better; and in the involuntary language of the false prophet Balaam, to exclaim:—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like theirs."

Through September and part of October, the fever rose to its full acme, a great many of the physicians became the victims of the yellow fever of 1793, in consequence that most of them were unacquainted with the proper mode of treating the disorder. The distress and

melancholy that sat brooding in almost every countenance was really distressing to humanity to behold: and here indulge us to specially remark, that the new French philosophy of eternal sleep in the article of death, nor Paine's Age of Reason, gave its votaries no support nor consolation in the approach and hour of death: reader it is only the name of Jesus Christ, and no other, that can give buoyancy to the departing spirit as it is about passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death. And it came to pass, that in November, 1793, after a few heavy frosts, that this awful yellow fever subsided: when the people generally returned into the city of Philadelphia, so that the different places of public worship were well attended during the winter of 1793 and 1794. And the drooping crest of christianity once more raised its head over the vultures of vice and infidelity; so that there were for some subsequent years but little rejoicing in the tabernacles of deism and atheism. Those three holy and magnanimous heroes of the cross, who forbid him to warn their people, were among the first who returned and filled their pulpits when the danger was over and gone. When Onesimus in the simplicity of his mind in those days—was led to draw this inference—that surely those gentlemen who forbid him to warn their churches would on their return into the city, call on the young man and make some brotherly or christian apology to him, in consequence of their unkind treatment, and the unchristian discipline they exercised towards him: but no apology has been made to this very unworthy disciple to this day, as it seems those Reverend gentlemen were so most unmercifully out of sorts with the great head of the church, in his passing by their great ecclesiastical hierarchy, and selecting a poor young lad in order to employ him on this dolorous embassy: they acted in his case, as our Lord sets forth the conduct of the priest and levite, towards a certain man that went down from Jerusalem to Jericho: to wit, they passed him by on the other side.

And here we will close the log-book of the ship Per-

severance, and turn into our births, and if the Lord of old ocean, shall send a clear sky, under the glorious rays of the sun of immortality, we will write to you once more about the coffins and also the yellow fever of 1793.

ONESIMUS.

TO ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

*Philadelphia, November 30th, 1793.*

## LETTER XX.

*Dear Sir:*

Our last sea letter informed our much esteemed christian brother, that the ship *Perseverance* had at last after a most boisterous and long voyage, made the highlands of the celestial coast; when the captain of our salvation who is also the high admiral of the whole gospel armament, ordered the post pilot of the city of the living God, to bring captain *Onesimus* and his ship *Perseverance* safe into the royal city and port of immortality. Or in other words, he discovered to a degree of certainty, the truth of the gospel of the Son of God; which has left him no shadow of a doubt of the entire immortality of the human soul after death.

And it came to pass, that exactly eleven months after the young sailor made so public a declaration before the Rev. John Mc Claskey and his whole congregation, in the Ebenezer church in south Second street, Philadelphia, in December, 1792; that in August, 1793, that a year it came and passed away from off the city. When God sent the awful yellow fever, so that in the space of the many thousands of its inhabitants that had fled into its surrounding country, had mostly returned home to the city, and we ask a candid world of intelligent and rational beings, we ask again—what act of the overruling wisdom, power and providence of God—could be more true and conclusive to prove, that there is a just and holy God that does whatsoever he pleases in the armies of heaven and with the inhabitants of the earth. And it came to pass, that he faithfully attended the public worship of God under the three Reverend gentlemen who forbid him to warn their people against the judgment of heaven: and it is further our duty to calmly remark, that although God had by this young lad, placed in the hands of these holy ministers of the gospel of that day, so clear an evidence in the vindication of the truth of the gospel and immortality of the human

soul, against the doctrines of deism and atheism, which were at that time so very extensively spreading throughout America. But notwithstanding the prophecy of this young man placed within the range of the mental powers of those Reverend gentlemen a most advantageous opportunity to defend the truth, and to warn their fellow sinners against the awful sin of unbelief, yet these men of God scarcely ever mentioned to their hearers the awful calamity of the yellow fever of 1793. So that we reiterate again, although we by no means admire or recommend a writer to the approbation of the world, who is over profuse in his use of tautology, yet our duty both in the sight of God and man, forbids us to refrain from remarking the excessive ecclesiastical modesty of those humble and meek sons of the church, respecting this most notorious warning that the sailor gave them of the approaching calamity coming on the city, and the exact fulfilment of the same; there never was since the world began an occurrence passed over with such ministerial silence before.

But since it was all passed over, and the sons of the church were by the sparing mercy of God once more safely inducted into their pulpits again, they no doubt thought it would be most extravagantly unadvisable to bring the sailor's visions of the coffins and winding sheets and his prophecy, either before the church or the world; so that in consequence of their holy and prudential wisdom in his case, they viewed it best to give the whole affair an indefinite go by, which they have with the most striking scrupalosity observed to this day, May 30th, 1839. And it came to pass, that when the sailor discovered that those Reverend gentlemen were so very shy of him, that it caused a reaction on his mind; so that speaking in general terms, with a few exceptions, he has ever since been rather shy of the gentlemen in holy orders to the present day. And when Onesimus saw that the Lord had so marvellously brought to pass all that he had in the name and the authority of his Lord and Master declared should come to pass within the year 1793, when he became fully reconciled to let the whole matter die, and go into the grave with

him: and he now wished to end his days as a private member of the methodist society. So that after this he turned his whole attention to the business of this world, and strove hard to banish from his mind all ideas of ever preaching the gospel. And it were worthy to remark, how the physicians and others in the newspapers of that day, endeavoured to explore the whole of the animal and vegetable empire of nature in order to discover the latent cause of the yellow fever of 1793: but after all their deep reasoning on the subject, but few of them as Solomon says, drove the nail in a sure place. But after the fever of 1793, he never had any warning of the subsequent fevers of 1797 and 1798, any more than any other person: after this, as we have already observed, he tried to banish from his mind the spirit and desire of preaching, but the spirit of the Lord which bloweth where it listeth, did not give him up to his own desire in that case.

We shall now close the log-book of the ship Perseverance, in the borrowed language of the apostle John, "This is the disciple which testifyeth these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true." Amen.

Suffer me to remain with the most profound sentiments of respect to your christian character,

ONESIMUS.

TO ELDER JOSEPH MAYLIN.

May 31st, 1839.

THE END!









**LAUREL**  
**BOOK SHOP**  
THERINE AND KARL GODECKE  
33 West Third St.  
LAZLETON, PENNA.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01004 2168