

PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

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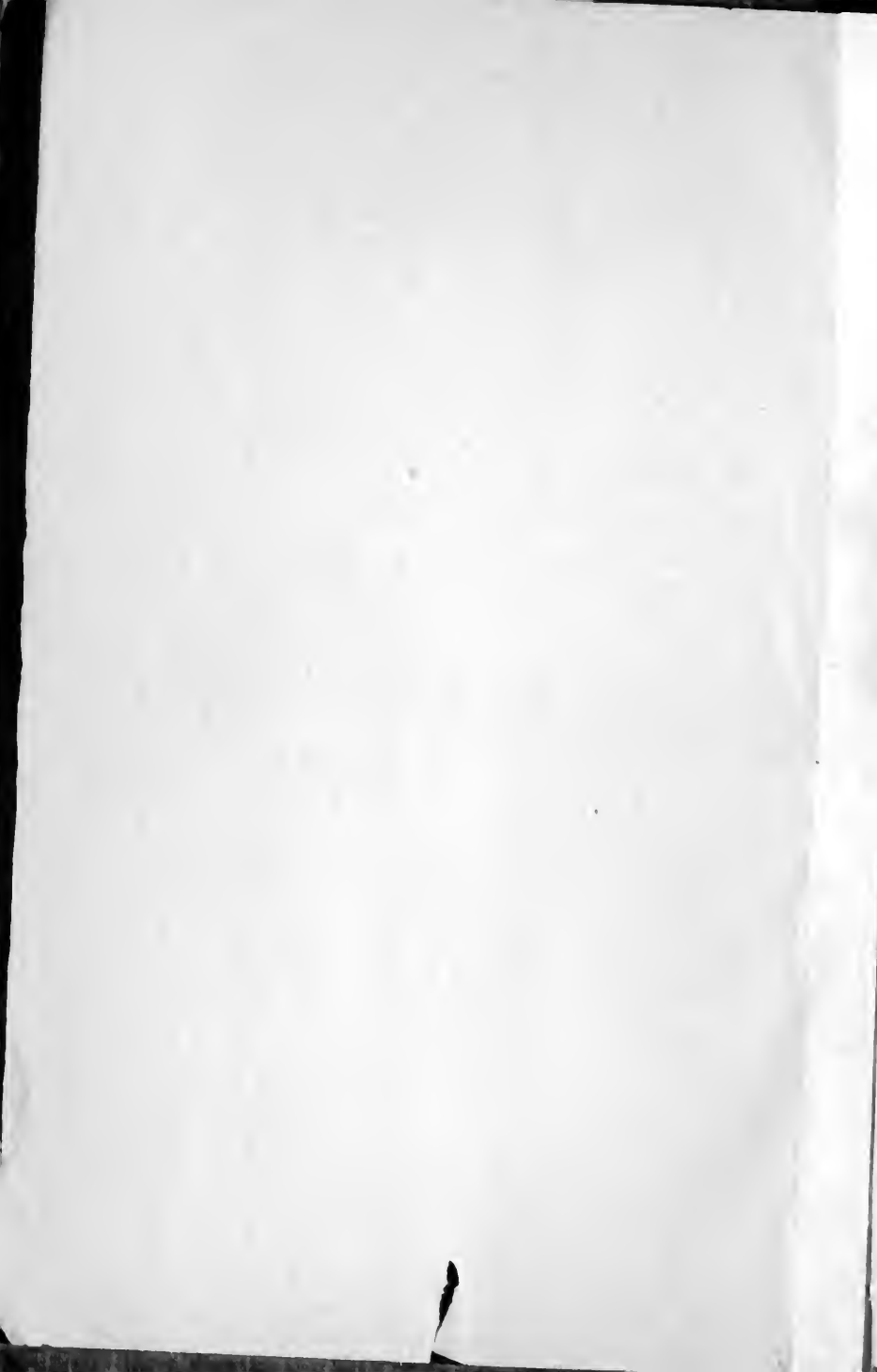
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PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS



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BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

A NEW EDITION, WITH NOTES
AND AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE REV. HINCHCLIFFE HIGGINS

AND A PREFACE BY

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C.

Also some Opinions of Dr. Johnson on
THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION



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PREFACE

TO keep a Diary was one of Dr. Johnson's lifelong, pious, and unfulfilled Resolutions. He evidently thought, could he but accomplish this desire, he would have been aided in his perpetual struggle after stability of purpose, a rule of life and tranquillity of mind. Though, as events proved, Johnson could no more keep a continuous Diary than he could get up early in the morning (and this although he once sat up all night framing resolutions to do both the one and the other), he did succeed in filling a number of notebooks (some of the tiniest dimensions) with prayers and meditations of the most private and searching character. Some, by no means all, of these *Memoranda* Johnson, as his end approached, confided to his friend Dr. Strahan, then Vicar of Islington, for publication after death. His first and his main object in giving this direction was Charity (see note on p. 14). A man of letters gets to regard any manuscript of his as so much money. As for the contents of these notebooks, it may of course be, as subsequent editors have surmised, that Johnson

dimly remembered them, but personally I have no doubt that the governing consideration with him in this respect, was his complete indifference to personal criticism. He knew the little books contained nothing contrary to religion, and he was therefore perfectly content to let what was in them go forth. We were all told in our childhood that 'I don't care' came to a bad end. Johnson, I must suppose, is the proverbial exception, for no man cared less than he what people said or might say.

Pious authors of the first rank are sufficiently rare to make us thankful for *Prayers and Meditations*, and Johnson's piety is as indisputable as it is interesting. It represents a type always prevalent among the laity, but exceedingly ill-represented in our literature. It is not the primitive piety of the Early Church, nor is it the Evangelicalism of a later day, still less the 'enthusiasm' of the Methodist Revival. There is something mediæval about its gloom—something Jansenist about its mysticism, whilst there is not a little of the Eighteenth Century in that 'obstinate rationality' which, as the doctor himself half proudly, half ruefully admitted, made communion with the Roman Church an impossibility for him.

Religion to Johnson was an awful thing. He never learnt to take his ease on Zion. In the tavern, indeed, he could stretch out his legs and hold his own and far more than his own with all comers, but in Church, or in the grim solitude of his chamber he knelt in self-abasement, with

fear and trembling. There is no taint of professionalism about his faith. He is nothing of the cleric. He owns to hours of doubt and darkness. The world was always very near to him, nor does he ever pretend to have got rid of the flesh. Ill thoughts pursue him even to the Altar on the occasion of his annual communions on Easter Sunday. His constant prayer was to be loosed *from the chain of his sin*: 'though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sin, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us.' Johnson has been blamed for the timidity of his piety by more confident spirits, but who can doubt its representative character? 'Samuel Johnson in the era of Voltaire' purifying and fortifying his soul, and holding real communion with the Highest, 'in the Church of St. Clement Danes,' was to Carlyle a thing to be looked at 'with pity, admiration, and awe.' In these *Prayers and Meditations* the reader is admitted, let him not abuse the occasion, into the innermost sanctuary of a soul. It is a welcome retreat for the student of Eighteenth Century Literature. 'What think you of our new set of Fanatics, called the *Methodists*? I have seen Whitefield's *Journal*, and he appears to me as mad as ever George Fox the Quaker. These are very fit missionaries you will say to propagate the Christian faith among Infidels. There is another of them, one Wesley, who came over from the same mission.' So a future Bishop, the learned Warburton, may be discovered writing to the

ingenuous Mr. Des Maiseaux in the second volume of Nichol's *Literary History*. What with untutored enthusiasm on the one hand, a somewhat heartless scepticism on the other, and the mid-channel full of the downright irreligion of the Warburtonian school, Dr. Johnson's trembling piety and utter sincerity is a true haven of refuge.

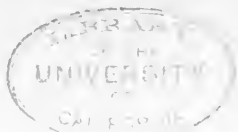
It is strange in reading the *Prayers and Meditations* to come across Johnson's frank admission, made in his sixty-third year, that he 'had never looked upon a very great part' of the Bible. But this defect he had managed to cure by the following year (see p. 75).

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

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INTRODUCTION

THE RELIGIOUS SIDE OF DR. JOHNSON'S CHARACTER

WISHING, about a year ago, to purchase a copy of *Prayers and Meditations*, the writer had to advertise for it in the *Publishers' Circular*. So far as he knows, it is many years since the last edition was issued from the press. Moreover, in conversation with a considerable number of acquaintances, all of whom were readers of Boswell, he discovered that not one of them had ever seen the book. Some knew of it in a furtive kind of way, and others had read extracts from it in Boswell and elsewhere. That was all. It was thought, therefore, that a new edition of the work would be welcomed by the public. For though it is asserted that while everybody reads Boswell, only the literary student buys the collected works of Johnson, it seemed likely, for several reasons, that *Prayers and Meditations* would form an exception. In the first place, the book is comparatively small, and occupies a unique position among the compositions of the author. In the next place, it is intrinsically worthy to take permanent rank among books of devotional literature. And in the third place, and chiefly, it gives an insight into the religious

character of Johnson, without which no completely accurate judgment of the man can be formed.

It is true that careful readers of Boswell cannot but notice how frequently he draws attention to the scrupulous piety and evangelical faith of his hero. But amid the great mass of material which Boswell brings together, the endless anecdotes, the brilliant conversations and disquisitions on all manner of subjects, and the constant movement of distinguished personages across his pages, those side references to the religious faith of Johnson are apt to be neglected, or, at all events, to receive only a cursory attention. In *Prayers and Meditations* we see the veil lifted. We are allowed to look into the private soul-life of Johnson. The hilarity of the tavern supper, the discussions of the literary club, the strenuous political controversy, the social circle at Thrale's, at Strahan's, and at Sir Joshua Reynolds',—all this we leave behind; and we follow the stalwart fighter home to the privacy of his room, and his solitary communings with God and his own heart. And there we see a different man from the loud talker, the ardent and sometimes ferocious disputant, or the convivial friend as he was known to his associates in the outside world. A different man, and yet the same. For in the humility as of a little child in which he bows before the Throne of Grace; in the remorseless condemnation of his vices and sins, his sloth and broken vows; in his earnest and penitent pleas for pardon and amendment; we see something of the same vehemence of passion which marked his daily life among men.

A recent American writer, one who loves and admires Johnson's prayers, objects to the publication of the *Meditations* in the minutiae of their introspection, the mingling of pious ejaculations and descriptions of bodily sickness and remedies. From these published details he thinks Johnson himself would shrink, and that no good end can be served by them. This rather late and superfine objection is completely answered by the fact that Johnson himself gave the Diary to Strahan for publication; and by the further consideration that it is good for posterity to see the inner life of a great man who lived over a century ago, who, to us, is one of the most important personages of those times, and who was the last man likely to wish that any part of his life should be cautiously hidden from view. For, surely, no great man so habitually and fearlessly showed himself to others as he really was—in all the strength and weakness, the greatness and littleness of his character. And there were few things that his rough, blunt honesty despised more than squeamishness, or any sort of false sentiment, in matters of this kind. May it not also be urged that no sympathetic heart can rise from the perusal of these disjointed diary-jottings of the soul-life of Johnson without being the better for it himself, and without having a tenderer regard for the writer of them?

How few people, comparatively, ever think of Johnson as a profoundly religious man. Yet such he was. And religion influenced his daily life and thought in a remarkable degree. None the less so, because it happened to be tinged with ceremonialism on the one hand, and, on the other hand, sometimes lapsed into superstitions and scruples

which seem odd in so strong a character. Of Dr. Campbell he said, 'Campbell is a good man, a pious man. I am afraid he has not been in the inside of a church for many years; but he never passes a church without pulling off his hat. This shows that he has good principles.' That is sheer formalism. So, likewise, is his scrupulous observance of fast-days. His inclination to believe in ghosts, apparitions, dreams, and witchcraft, reveals, on the other hand, a credulity verging on superstition, and is in keeping with his habit of touching all the posts between the Mitre tavern and his lodgings. But it would be very foolish to conclude from these odd, half-concealed characteristics that Johnson's religion was superficial, credulous, or merely ceremonial. As will be seen from his Opinions on revealed religion and doctrine, which are printed at the end of this volume, he had very clear and decided views on the great dogmas of the Christian Church. And it is equally clear from his habits of personal devotion that what the old divines used to call 'the root of the matter' was in him. Day by day he tried to live, in the sight of the Eternal, a life of devout and Scriptural piety. That he enumerates and mourns his failures to do so with painful penitence and sorrow, only emphasises the sincerity and genuineness of his religion. As a matter of fact, no man of his time had larger, healthier, and saner views on the real nature of godliness and practical Christian duty. In some religious circles of the day the revival of evangelicalism and the rise of Methodism had led to formalism and precision of dress, and to a corresponding outcry against elegance and fashion.

'To the arguments urged by some very worthy people against showy dress,' Macaulay says, 'Johnson replied with admirable sense and spirit, "Let us not be found, when our Master calls us, stripping the lace off our waistcoats, but the spirit of contention from our souls and tongues. Alas! sir, a man who cannot get to heaven in a green coat, will not find his way thither the sooner in a grey one."' And though, as Macaulay goes on to say, Johnson himself was under the tyranny of scruples, and gravely records in his Diary that he once committed the sin of drinking coffee on Good Friday, this by no means detracts from the fact that in all essential things his religion was sound and Scriptural.

Correctness of opinion, orthodoxy in doctrine, do not alone or pre-eminently constitute a religious man. Supremely above these things in importance is what a great modern preacher once called 'orthodoxy of the heart.' And orthodoxy of the heart, we know, may co-exist with indecision or even positive heresy on some dogmas of the Church as generally received and interpreted. Right through the history of the Christian Church have not saintly lives of the finest type been found among those who have been branded with the sin of heresy? And who that reads the religious literature of to-day, or mixes in thoughtful religious circles, will controvert the fact that some of the most devout and sweet-souled Christians one meets, must be reckoned among those who, on some of the generally accepted Christian dogmas, are outside the pale of orthodoxy. So that, to base Johnson's character as a religious man either on the general

soundness of his views on Christian doctrine, or his ardent churchmanship, or both, would be to fashion a chain of very inconclusive reasoning. But all the same religion, to be vital, must have some sure foundation of rational belief. And the *Christian* religion, assuredly, based as it is on a historic Person and a divine Revelation, can have no motive force on conduct unless it is founded on accepted dogma. Otherwise it is mere speculative opinion, or uncertain emotion, and cannot be trusted radically to change and determine human life and destiny. No man will live, or die, for an opinion, however beautiful, which in his heart he feels may, or may not, be true.

The clearness which marked Johnson's belief in the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion is what might be expected from his keen logical faculty and decision of character. But more admirable still was his firm persuasion that saving faith meant a great deal more than intellectual consent to the truths of Christianity; that it meant, indeed, the daily worship of God, penitence for sin, and personal trust in Christ as the Saviour of men. This is made abundantly evident in his *Prayers and Meditations*. No sympathetic reader of this book can see its author, as the hour of midnight steals on, kneeling in solemn silence before his God, or listen to him as with strong cries and tears he confesses his sins and pleads for pardon, and doubt the sincerity of his piety. There the gruff, overbearing dogmatist feels and pleads his weakness, and humbly clings for protection from the penalty of sin, and the woes of time and eternity, to the skirts of the Most High. Equally marked, also, was the influence of re-

ligion on Johnson's everyday life. His steadfast adherence to truth, his keen distinction between right and wrong, vice and virtue, and his brooding sense of responsibility for the work given him to do were accompanied by unstinted benevolence and the most generous kindness to all who were in need. His house was a refuge for the infirm and the destitute among his friends, and the untiring patience with which he bore the peevish ill-temper of Mrs. Williams and the gentle consideration he showed her, excited not only the admiration, but almost the anger of his friends. Few men had more glaring defects of Christian character, but few men showed a more anxious desire to amend what was amiss, and to live in the fear of God, and the service of his fellows. Dr. Strahan knew Johnson intimately. In the original preface to this work he writes thus of him: 'The integrity of his mind was not only speculatively shadowed in his writings, but substantially exemplified in his life. His prayers and his alms, like those of the good Cornelius, went up for a continual memorial; and always from a heart deeply impressed with piety, never insensible to the calls of friendship or compassion, and prone to melt in effusions of tenderness on the slightest incitement.' Murphy, the editor of his collected works, who knew him equally well, is equally emphatic in his testimony. In his essay on Johnson he says: 'Since virtue, or moral goodness, consists in a joint conformity of our actions to the relations in which we stand to the Supreme Being and to our fellow creatures, where shall we find a man who has been, or endeavoured to be, more diligent in the discharge of those essential duties? His

first prayer was composed in 1738; he continued those fervent ejaculations of piety to the end of his life. In his Meditations we see him scrutinising himself with severity and aiming at perfection unattainable by man. His duty to his neighbour consisted in universal benevolence and a constant aim at the production of happiness.' Such is the judgment of men who knew Johnson intimately.

Upon two speculative religious subjects the opinions of Johnson have been much canvassed, viz., his belief in apparitions and dreams, and his practice of praying for the dead. Those questions need not be discussed at length here. They involve opinions or pious hopes, which, in the judgment of many people, may be either cherished or rejected without any infringement of the Christian faith. It is beyond controversy, that appearances of departed spirits are occasionally recorded in the Bible, and that good men in ancient times were profoundly influenced by dreams and visions. Johnson, undoubtedly, admitted the *possibility* of apparitions, and in one of the prayers in memory of his wife, he expresses the desire that God may permit him to enjoy his wife's ministrations by 'appearance, impulse, or dreams.' In his *Rasselas*, also, he maintains the credibility of apparitions. But beyond that he does not go. He takes the same ground in his prayers for the dead, though from his long-continued use of these prayers it may be inferred that, on this question, he approached more nearly to certainty of faith. Still, he is always careful to note that he offers such petitions 'as far as might be lawful' for him to do so. If this must be reckoned as a superstition, then, as Strahan observes, it is of all

superstitions 'the least unamiable, and most incident to a good mind.' But is it a superstition? Without giving adhesion to the gross development of the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, many Christian people of to-day have been graciously led to believe in the probability of an intermediate state. So many of our loved ones die, of whom it may be said, as was said of Rob Roy, that they were 'ower bad for blessing, and ower good for banning.' Indeed, who, even of the best among us, will affirm that he is prepared by a life of saintly consecration to enter at once the heaven of the pure in heart, who alone can see God? Anyway, there are some thousands of stricken hearts in Britain to-day to whom the growing belief in an intermediate state has brought the comfort of God. It is a message of living and loving hope in the dreary waste of life's bereavements.

Surely the least we can do is to let the great hope bide!

H. H.



PRAYERS AND
MEDITATIONS

COMPOSED BY

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

and published from his manuscripts by

GEORGE STRAHAN, A. M.

Vicar of Islington, Middlesex; and

Rector of Cranham, in Essex





PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

IN 1785

THESE Posthumous Devotions of Dr. Johnson will be, no doubt, welcomed by the public, with a distinction similar to that which has been already paid to his other works.

During many years of his life, he stately observed certain days¹ with a religious solemnity; on which, and other occasions, it was his custom to compose suitable Prayers and Meditations; committing them to writing for his own use, and, as he assured me, without any view to their publication. But being last summer on a visit at Oxford to the Reverend Dr. Adams,² and that gentleman urging him repeatedly to engage in some work of this kind, he then first conceived a design to revise these pious effusions, and bequeath them, with enlargements, to the use and benefit of others.

Infirmities, however, now growing fast upon him, he at length changed this design, and determined to give the manuscripts, without revision, in charge to me, as I had long shared his intimacy, and was at this time his daily attendant. Accordingly, one morning, on my visiting him by desire at an early hour, he put these papers into

¹ Viz. New Year's Day: March 28th, the day on which his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson, died; Good Friday; Easter Day; and September the 18th, his own birthday.

² Master of Pembroke College, at which Dr. Johnson received part of his education.

my hands, with instructions for committing to the press, and with a promise to prepare a sketch of his own life to accompany them. But the performance of this promise also was prevented, partly by his hasty destruction of some private memoirs, which he afterwards lamented, and partly by that incurable sickness, which soon ended in his dissolution.

As a biographer, he is allowed to have excelled without a rival; and we may justly regret, that he who had so advantageously transmitted to posterity the lives of other eminent men, should have been thus intercepted in constructing the narrative of his own. But the particulars of this venerable man's personal history may still, in great measure, be preserved; and the public are authorised to expect them from some of his many friends, who are zealous to augment the monument of his fame by the detail of his private virtues.¹

That the authenticity of this work may never be called in question, the original manuscript will be deposited in the library of Pembroke College in Oxford. Dr. Bray's associates are to receive the profits of the first edition, by the author's appointment; and any further advantages that accrue will be distributed among his relations.²

¹ Since this Preface was written, the following publications have appeared, viz:

'Anecdotes of the Late Dr. Johnson, during the last Twenty Years of his Life,' by Hester Lynch Piozzi. 3rd Edit. 1786, small 8vo.

'The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.,' published with his Works, by Sir John Hawkins, 8vo, 1787.

'The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.,' by James Boswell, Esq., first published in 2 vols. 4to, and afterwards (1793) in 3 vols. 8vo.

'An Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.,' published with 2nd Edit. of his Works, by Arthur Murphy, Esq., 8vo, 1792.

'The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., with Observations on his Works,' by Robert Anderson, M.D. London, 1795.

² The profits of the First Edition were accordingly paid to Dr. Bray's associates; and those of the second have been distributed among Dr. Johnson's poor relations and connections, all of whom are

I have now discharged the trust reposed in me by that friend, whose labours entitle him to lasting gratitude and veneration from the literary, and still more from the Christian, world. His *Lives of the English Poets* are written as he justly hopes, *in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of Piety*. This merit may be ascribed, with equal truth, to most of his other works; and doubtless to his sermons, none of which indeed have yet been made public, nor is it known where they are extant; though it be certain, from his own acknowledgment, both in conversation and writing, that he composed many. As he seems to have turned his thoughts with peculiar earnestness to the study of religious subjects, we may presume these remains would deserve to be numbered among his happiest productions. It is therefore hoped they have fallen into the hands of those, who will not withhold them in obscurity, but consider them as deposits, the seclusion of which from general use, would be an injurious diminution of their author's fame, and retrenchment from the common stock of serious instruction.¹

But the integrity of his mind was not only speculatively shadowed in his writings, but substantially exemplified in his life. His Prayers and his Alms, like those of the good Cornelius, went up for a continual memorial; and always, from a heart deeply impressed with piety, never insensible to the calls of friendship or compassion, and prone

since dead, except Humphrey Hely, who married — Ford, sister to the Rev. Cornelius Ford, and first cousin to our author. This poor man, who has seen better days, is now a tenant of Whicher's Alms-houses, Chapel Street, Westminster.

¹ In 1788 appeared one volume, and in 1789 a second, of 'Sermons on Different Subjects, left for publication by John Taylor, LL.D., late Prebendary of Westminster, etc., published by the Rev. Samuel Hayes, A.M., Usher of Westminster School. To the second volume is added a sermon written by Dr. Johnson, for the funeral of his wife. And from internal and other evidence, the whole contents of both volumes are now generally ascribed to the same author.

to melt in effusions of tenderness on the slightest incitement.

When, among other articles in his *Dictionary*, Lichfield presents itself to his notice, he salutes that place of his nativity in these words of Virgil, *Salve, magna parens*. Nor was the salutation adopted without reason: for well might he denominate his parent city great, who, by the celebrity of his name, hath for ever made it so—

'Salve, magna parens frugum, *Staffordia* tellus,
Magna virum.'

Virg. *Georg.* lib. ii. l. 173.

More decisive testimonies of his affectionate sensibility are exhibited in the following work, where he bewails the successive depredations of death on his relations and friends; whose virtues, thus mournfully suggested to his recollection, he seldom omits to recite, with ardent wishes for their acquittal at the throne of mercy. In praying, however, with restriction,¹ for these regretted tenants of the grave, he indeed conformed to a practice, which, though it has been retained by other learned members of our Church, her Liturgy no longer admits, and many, who adhere to her communion, avowedly disapprove. That such prayers are, or may be, efficacious, they who sincerely offer them must believe. But may not

¹ Our author informs us, that his prayers for deceased friends were offered up on several occasions *as far as might be lawful for him*; and once, *with Preface of Permission*: whence it should seem that he had some doubt concerning the lawfulness of such prayers, though it does not appear that he ever discontinued the use of them. It is also observable that in his reflections on the death of his wife, and again of Mr. Thrale, he wishes that the Almighty not *may have*, but *may have had*, mercy on them; evidently supposing their sentence to have been already past in the Divine Mind. This supposition, indeed, may seem not very consistent with his recommending them to the Divine Mercy afterwards. It proves, however, that he had no belief in a state of Purgatory, and consequently no reason for praying for the dead, that could impeach the sincerity of his profession as a Protestant.

a belief in their efficacy, so far as it prevails, be attended with danger to those who entertain it? May it not incline them to carelessness; and promote a neglect of repentance, by inducing a persuasion, that, without it, pardon may be obtained through these vicarious intercessions? Indeed the doctrine (I speak with deference to the great names that have espoused it) seems inconsistent with some principles generally allowed among us. If, *where the tree falleth, there it shall be*; if, as Protestants maintain, our state at the close of life is to be the measure of our final sentence; then prayers for the dead, being visibly fruitless, can be regarded only as the vain oblations of superstition. But of all superstitions, this perhaps is one of the least unamiable, and most incident to a good mind. If our sensations of kindness be intense, those whom we have revered and loved during life, death, which removes them from sight, cannot wholly seclude from our concern. The fondness, kindled by intercourse, will still glow from memory, and prompt us to wish, perhaps to pray, that the valued dead, to whose felicity our friendship can no longer minister, may find acceptance with Him, *who giveth us*, and them, *richly all things to enjoy*. It is true, for the reason just mentioned, such evidence of our surviving affection may be thought ill-judged: but surely they are generous; and some natural tenderness is due even to a superstition, which thus originates in piety and benevolence.

We see our author, in one place, purposing with seriousness to remember his brother's dream, in another, owning his embarrassment from needless stipulations; and, on many occasions, noting, with a circumstantial minuteness, the process of his religious fasts. But these peculiarities, if they betray some tincture of the propensity already observed, prove, for the most part, the pious

tenour of his thoughts. They indicate a mind ardently zealous to please God, and anxious to evince its alacrity in His service, by a scrupulous observance of more than enjoined duties.

But however the soundness of his principles might, in general, be apparent, he seems to have lived with a perpetual conviction that his conduct was defective; lamenting past neglects, forming purposes of future diligence, and constantly acknowledging their failure in the event. It was natural for him, who possessed such powers of usefulness, to consider the waste of his time as a peculiar delinquency; with which, however, he appears to have been far less frequently, and less culpably chargeable, than his own tender sense of duty disposed him to apprehend. That he meritoriously redeemed many days and years from indolence, is evinced by the number and excellence of his works; nor can we doubt that his literary exertions would have been still more frequent, had not *morbid melancholy*, which, as he informs us, was the infirmity of his life, repressed them. To the prevalence of this infirmity, we may certainly ascribe that anxious fear, which seized him on the approach of his dissolution, and which his friends, who knew his integrity, observed with equal astonishment and concern. But the strength of religion at length prevailed against the frailty of nature; and his foreboding dread of the Divine Justice, by degrees subsided into a pious trust and humble hope in the Divine Mercy.

He is now gone to await his eternal sentence; and as his life exhibited an illustrious example, so his death suggests an interesting admonition. It concerns us to reflect, that however many may find it impossible to rival his intellectual excellence, yet to imitate his virtues is both possible and necessary to all; that the current of time now

hastens to plunge us in that gulf of Death, where we have so lately seen him absorbed, where there is no more place of repentance, and whence, according to our innocence or guilt, we shall rise to an immortality of Bliss or Torment.

GEORGE STRAHAN.

Islington,
August 6, 1785.



PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS

The Year 1738 ♀ ♀

ON MY BIRTHDAY. Sep. $\frac{7}{18}$

The double dates, September 7th and 18th, mark the difference of *Etat* 29 eleven days between the new and the old style of reckoning. Taking the N.S., Johnson was born September 18, 1709. Though he refers to this prayer as the first of which he has a copy, the following passage from Johnson's diary, dated September 7, 1736, may be legitimately included among his prayers. 'I have this day entered upon my twenty-eighth year. Mayest thou, O God, enable me, for Jesus Christ's sake, to spend this in such a manner that I may receive comfort from it at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. Amen.' Whenever the word 'transcribed' appears at the foot of the prayer, the reference is to a parchment book into which Johnson began to copy his MS. prayers in the year 1768. See Strahan's note under that year.

September $\frac{7}{18}$.

O GOD, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Father of all mercies, I thine unworthy servant do give Thee most humble thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to me. I bless Thee for my creation, preservation, and redemption, for the knowledge of thy son Jesus Christ, for the means of grace and the hope of glory. In the days of childhood and youth, in the midst of weakness, blindness, and danger, Thou hast protected me; amidst afflictions of mind, body, and estate, Thou hast supported me; and amidst vanity and wickedness Thou hast spared me. Grant, O merciful Father, that I may have a lively sense of thy mercies.

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Create in me a contrite heart, that I may worthily lament my sins and acknowledge my wickedness, and obtain remission and forgiveness, through the satisfaction of Jesus Christ. And, O Lord, enable me, by thy grace, to redeem the time which I have spent in sloth, vanity, and wickedness; to make use of thy gifts to the honour of thy name to lead a new life in thy faith, fear, and love: and finally to obtain everlasting life. Grant this Almighty Lord, for the merits and through the mediation of our most holy and blessed Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons and One God, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

Transcribed June 26, 1768.

This is the first solemn prayer, of which I have a copy. Whether I composed any before this, I question.

The Year 1744-45 ♪ ♪

NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

Ætat 36

At this time Johnson was not only living in poverty, but in close friendship and intercourse with the notorious Richard Savage. Perhaps from these combined causes, his life was irregular, and not without reproach. There is a humble and penitent acknowledgment of this in the prayer. It is clear, also, from the last sentence in the prayer, that at this period, Johnson did not believe in purgatory, or the intermediate state. That faith came to him subsequently, as it has come to many others, in the hour of his most poignant sorrow.

January 1.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, in whose hands are life and death, by whose will all things were created, and by whose providence they are sustained, I return Thee thanks that Thou hast given me life, and that Thou hast continued it to this time; that Thou

hast hitherto forborn to snatch me away in the midst of sin and folly, and hast permitted me still to enjoy the means of grace, and vouchsafed to call me yet again to repentance. Grant, O merciful Lord, that thy call may not be vain; that my life may not be continued to increase my guilt, and that thy gracious forbearance may not harden my heart in wickedness. Let me remember, O my God, that as days and years pass over me, I approach nearer to the grave, where there is no repentance; and grant, that by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, I may so pass through this life, that I may obtain life everlasting, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Year 1747-48 ♪ ♪

NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

In the year 1747 Johnson announced his most important work 'A *Etat* 39 Dictionary of the English Language,' and issued the famous plan addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield.

January 1.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who hast not yet suffered me to fall into the grave; grant that I may so remember my past life as to repent of the days and years which I have spent in forgetfulness of thy mercy, and neglect of my own salvation; and so use the time which Thou shalt yet allow me, as that I may become every day more diligent in the duties which in thy providence shall be assigned me; and that, when at last I shall be called to judgment, I may be received as a good and faithful servant into everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Year 1749-50 ♀ ♀

NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

Ætat 40

January 1, after 3 in the morning.

ALMIGHTY God, by whose will I was created, and by whose providence I have been sustained, by whose mercy I have been called to the knowledge of my Redeemer, and by whose grace whatever I have thought or acted acceptable to Thee has been inspired and directed; grant, O Lord, that in reviewing my past life, I may recollect thy mercies to my preservation, in whatever state Thou preparest for me; that in affliction I may remember how often I have been succoured; and in prosperity may know and confess from whose hand the blessing is received. Let me, O Lord, so remember my sins, that I may abolish them by true repentance, and so improve the year to which Thou hast graciously extended my life, and all the years which thou shalt yet allow me, that I may hourly become purer in thy sight; so that I may live in thy fear and die in thy favour, and find mercy at the last day, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYER ON THE RAMBLER

The 'Rambler' was started on March 20, 1750, and published twice a week for two years. 'In 1750 he came forth in the character for which he was eminently qualified, a majestic teacher of moral and religious wisdom. With what devout and conscientious sentiments this paper was undertaken, is evidenced by the following prayer, which he composed and offered up on the occasion.'—Boswell.

ALMIGHTY God, the giver of all good things, without whose help all labour is ineffectual, and without whose grace all wisdom is folly; grant, I beseech Thee, that in this my undertaking, thy Holy Spirit may not be

withheld from me, but that I may promote thy glory, and the salvation both of myself and others; grant this, O Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Year 1752 ♪ ♪

PRAYERS¹ composed by me on the death of my Wife, and repositied among her Memorials, May 8, 1752.

Deus exaudi.—Heu!

Mrs. Johnson died March 17, O.S., or March 28, N.S., 1752, and *Ætat* 43 was buried at Bromley in Kent. When Johnson married her in 1736 she was Mrs. Elizabeth Porter, the widow of a Birmingham mercer. At the time of his marriage Johnson was 27 and Mrs. Porter was 48. Notwithstanding this disparity in their ages it was a true love match, and their married life was very happy. The loss of his wife plunged Johnson into the deepest grief, and he cherished her memory to the end of his days in the most tender and beautiful way. The anniversary of her death was sacredly kept and used by Johnson as a spur to penitence and to a more devoted Christian life. The religious devotions inspired by his wife's memory are closely connected, also, with Johnson's conditional belief in the efficacy of prayers for the dead, and the possibility of departed spirits ministering to the sorrowing survivors by 'dreams or appearances.'

April 24, 1752.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who lovest those whom Thou punishest, and turnest away thy anger from the penitent, look down with pity upon my sorrows, and grant that the affliction which it has pleased Thee to bring upon me, may awaken my conscience, enforce my resolutions of a better life, and impress upon me such conviction of thy power and goodness, that I may place in Thee my only felicity, and endeavour to please Thee in all my thoughts, words, and actions. Grant, O Lord, that I may not languish in fruitless and unavailing sorrow,

¹ [Viz., The four following prayers.]

but that I may consider from whose hand all good and evil is received, and may remember that I am punished for my sins, and hope for comfort only by repentance. Grant, O merciful God, that by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit I may repent, and be comforted, obtain that peace which the world cannot give, pass the residue of my life in humble resignation and cheerful obedience; and when it shall please Thee to call me from this mortal state, resign myself into thy hands with faith and confidence, and finally obtain mercy and everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

April 25, 1752.

O LORD, our heavenly Father, almighty and most merciful God, in whose hands are life and death, who givest and takest away, castest down and raisest up, look with mercy on the affliction of thy unworthy servant, turn away thine anger from me, and speak peace to my troubled soul. Grant me the assistance and comfort of thy Holy Spirit, that I may remember with thankfulness the blessings so long enjoyed by me in the society of my departed wife; make me so to think on her precepts and example, that I may imitate whatever was in her life acceptable in thy sight, and avoid all by which she offended Thee. Forgive me, O merciful Lord, all my sins, and enable me to begin and perfect that reformation which I promised her, and to persevere in that resolution, which she implored Thee to continue in the purposes which I recorded in thy sight, when she lay dead before me, in obedience to thy laws and faith in thy word. And now, O Lord, release me from my sorrow, fill me with just hopes, true faith, and holy consolations, and enable me to do my duty in that state of life to

which Thou hast been pleased to call me, without disturbance from fruitless grief, or tumultuous imaginations; that in all my thoughts, words, and actions, I may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally obtain, what I hope Thou hast granted to thy departed servant, everlasting joy and felicity, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

April 26, 1752, being after 12 at night of the 25th.

O LORD, Governor of Heaven and Earth, in whose hands are embodied and departed spirits, if Thou hast ordained the souls of the dead to minister to the living, and appointed my departed wife to have care of me, grant that I may enjoy the good effects of her attention and ministration, whether exercised by appearance, impulses, dreams, or in any other manner agreeable to thy government; forgive my presumption, enlighten my ignorance, and however meaner agents are employed, grant me the blessed influences of thy Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May 6, 1752.

O LORD, our heavenly Father, without whom all purposes are frustrate, all efforts are vain, grant me the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that I may not sorrow as one without hope, but may now return to the duties of my present state with humble confidence in thy protection, and so govern my thoughts and actions, that neither business may withdraw my mind from Thee, nor idleness lay me open to vain imaginations: that neither praise may fill me with pride, nor censure with discontent; but that in the changes of this life, I may fix my heart upon the

reward which Thou hast promised to them that serve Thee, and that whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever are pure, whatever are lovely, whatever are of good report, wherein there is virtue, wherein there is praise, I may think upon and do, and obtain mercy and everlasting happiness. Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Father, etc.—The grace, etc.

May 6. I used this service, written April 24, 25, May 6, as preparatory to my return to life to-morrow.

Μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν Κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπάρτι.
Αποκ. xiv. 13.

BEFORE ANY NEW STUDY

November.

ALMIGHTY God, in whose hands are all the powers of man, who givest understanding, and takest it away; who, as it seemeth good unto Thee, enlightenest the thoughts of the simple, and darkenest the meditations of the wise, be present with me in my studies and enquiries.

Grant, O Lord, that I may not lavish away the life which Thou hast given me on useless trifles, nor waste it in vain searches after things which Thou hast hidden from me.

Enable me, by thy Holy Spirit so to shun sloth and negligence, that every day may discharge part of the task which Thou hast allotted me; and so further with thy help that labour which, without thy help, must be ineffectual, that I may obtain, in all my undertakings, such success as will most promote thy glory, and the salvation of my own soul, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

AFTER TIME NEGLIGENTLY AND UNPROFIT-
ABLY SPENT

November 19.

O LORD, in whose hands are life and death, by whose power I am sustained, and by whose mercy I am spared, look down upon me with pity. Forgive me, that I have this day neglected the duty which Thou hast assigned to it, and suffered the hours, of which I must give account, to pass away without any endeavour to accomplish thy will, or to promote my own salvation. Make me to remember, O God, that every day is thy gift, and ought to be used according to thy command. Grant me, therefore, so to repent of my negligence, that I may obtain mercy from Thee, and pass the time which thou shalt yet allow me, in diligent performance of thy commands, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Year 1753 ♀ ♀

NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

The following prayer is not in Strahan's book, but is given by *Æt*at 44 Boswell in the 'Life.' 'He entered upon this year 1753 with his usual piety, as appears from the following prayer, which I transcribed from that part of his diary which he burnt a few days before his death.'

January 1, 1753, N.S., which I shall use for the future.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast continued my life to this day, grant that, by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, I may improve the time which Thou shalt grant me to my eternal salvation. Make me to remember to thy glory, thy judgments and thy mercies. Make me to consider the loss of my wife, whom Thou hast taken from me, that it may dispose me, by thy grace, to lead the residue of my life in thy fear. Grant this, O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE DICTIONARY

Another prayer which is not in Strahan, but is given by Boswell: 'In one of the books of his diary, I find the following entry:—" April 3, 1753.—I began the second volume of my Dictionary, room being left in the first for Preface, Grammar, and History, none of them yet begun.'"

O GOD, who hast hitherto supported me, enable me to proceed in this labour, and in the whole task of my present state: that when I shall render up, at the last day, an account of the talent committed to me, I may receive pardon for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ON EASTER DAY

In this Easter prayer, it is very beautiful to notice how thoughts of the crucified and risen Lord are blended with the humble and earnest desire that God, for Christ's sake, will minister 'whatever is best in her present state' to the petitioner's departed wife, and receive her at last to eternal happiness. The note, 'this I repeated sometimes at church,' was evidently added later.

April 22.

O LORD, who givest the grace of repentance, and hearest the prayers of the penitent, grant, that by true contrition, I may obtain forgiveness of all the sins committed, and of all duties neglected, in my union with the wife whom Thou hast taken from me; for the neglect of joint devotion, patient exhortation, and mild instruction. And, O Lord, who canst change evil to good, grant that the loss of my wife may so mortify all inordinate affections in me, that I may henceforth please Thee by holiness of life.

And, O Lord, so far as it may be lawful for me, I commend to thy fatherly goodness the soul of my departed wife; beseeching Thee to grant her whatever is best in her present state, and finally to receive her to eternal happiness. All this I beg

for Jesus Christ's sake, whose death I am now about to commemorate. To whom, etc. Amen.

This I repeated sometimes at church.

The year 1754 ♪ ♪

IN MEMORY OF HIS WIFE

These two prayers, one composed in the morning and the other at *Ætat 45* night of the same day, commemorate the second anniversary of Mrs. Johnson's death. The brief reflections on the melancholy of the day, and the good resolutions formed when his wife died, were probably added later.

Fl. Lacr.—with flowing tears.

Fl. Lacr.

March 28, in the morning.

O GOD, who on this day wert pleased to take from me my dear wife, sanctify to me my sorrows and reflections. Grant, that I may renew and practise the resolutions which I made when thy afflicting hand was upon me. Let the remembrance of thy judgments, by which my wife is taken away, awaken me to repentance; and the sense of thy mercy, by which I am spared, strengthen my hope and confidence in Thee, that by the assistance and comfort of thy Holy Spirit, I may so pass through things temporal, as finally to gain everlasting happiness, and to pass, by a holy and happy death, into the joy which Thou hast prepared for those that love Thee. Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

March 28, 1754, at night.

ALmighty God, vouchsafe to sanctify unto me the reflections and resolutions of this day; let not my sorrow be unprofitable; let not my resolutions be vain. Grant that my grief may produce true repentance, so that I may

live to please Thee ; and when the time shall come that I must die like her whom Thou hast taken from me, grant me eternal happiness in thy presence, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The melancholy of this day hung long upon me.

Of the resolutions made this day, I in some measure kept that of breaking from indolence.

The Year 1755 ● ●

ON THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF LIVING

Ætat 46

'In July this year he had formed some scheme of mental improvement, the particular purpose of which does not appear. But we find in his "Prayers and Meditations" a prayer entitled "On the Study of Philosophy, as an instrument of living"; and after it follows a note, "This study was not pursued."—Boswell.

Johnson had just completed his Dictionary and, possibly in a glow of enthusiasm on completing that great work, resolved to apply himself more diligently and regularly to useful study. On the 13th of the same month, Boswell tells us 'he wrote in his Journal the following scheme of life for Sunday: 'Having lived' (as he, with tenderness of conscience expresses himself) 'not without an habitual reverence for the Sabbath, yet without that attention to its religious duties which Christianity requires:—

"i. To rise early, and in order to it, to go to sleep early on Saturday.

"ii. To use some extraordinary devotion in the morning.

"iii. To examine the tenor of my life, and particularly the last week; and to mark my advances in religion, or recession from it.

"iv. To read the Scriptures methodically with such helps as are at hand.

"v. To go to church twice.

"vi. To read books of divinity, either speculative or practical.

"vii. To instruct my family.

"viii. To wear off by meditation any worldly soil contracted in the week."

July.

O LORD, who hast ordained labour to be the lot of man, and seest the necessities of all thy creatures, bless my studies and endeavours; feed me with food convenient for me; and if it shall be thy good pleasure to intrust me with plenty, give me a compassionate heart, that I may be ready to relieve the wants of others; let neither poverty nor riches estrange my heart from Thee, but assist me with thy grace so to live as that I may die in thy favour, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

This study was not pursued.
Transcribed June 26, 1768.

The Year 1756 ♣ ♣

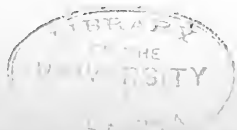
NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

Malone, in a footnote to the 'Life,' explains the reference in this *Etat 47* prayer by quoting from a letter of Johnson to Dr. Joseph Wharton, as follows:—'For my part, I have not lately done much. I have been ill in the winter, and my eye has been inflamed.' Johnson's scrofula caused him continuous trouble with his eyes, and so affected one eye that he practically lost the sight of it. See the prayer on 'When my Eye was Restored to its Use.'

January 1, afternoon.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being; glory be to Thee for my recovery from sickness, and the continuance of my life. Grant, O my God, that I may improve the year which I am now beginning, and all the days which Thou shalt add to my life, by serious repentance and diligent obedience; that, by the help of thy Holy Spirit, I may use the means of grace to my own salvation, and at last enjoy thy presence in eternal happiness, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

C



HILL BOOTHBY'S DEATH

Mrs. Hill Boothby was the sister of Sir Brook Boothby. Johnson formed her acquaintance at Mr. Meynell's, at Bradley, near Ashbourne, in the thirties, and the friendship continued until her death at the age of forty-seven.

January, 1756.

O LORD God, almighty disposer of all things, in whose hands are life and death, who givest comforts and takest them away, I return Thee thanks for the good example of Hill Boothby, whom Thou hast now taken away, and implore thy grace, that I may improve the opportunity of instruction which Thou hast afforded me, by the knowledge of her life, and by the sense of her death; that I may consider the uncertainty of my present state, and apply myself earnestly to the duties which Thou hast set before me, that living in thy fear, I may die in thy favour, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I commend, etc., W. and H. B.
Transcribed June 26, 1768.

WHEN MY EYE WAS RESTORED TO ITS USE

'The pious gratitude with which he acknowledges mercies upon every occasion is very edifying: as is the humble submission which he breathes, when it is the will of the heavenly Father to try him with afflictions.'—Boswell.

February 15, 1756.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast restored light to my eye, and enabled me to pursue again the studies which Thou hast set before me; teach me, by the diminution of my sight, to remember that whatever I possess is thy gift, and by its recovery, to hope for thy mercy: and, O Lord, take not thy Holy Spirit from me; but grant that I may use thy bounties according to thy will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

INTRODUCTORY PRAYER :

Evidently intended as a preface to any other prayer, or prayers, he might desire to offer.

March 25, 1756.

O GOD, who desirest not the death of a sinner, look down with mercy upon me, now daring to call upon Thee. Let thy Holy Spirit so purify my affections, and exalt my desires, that my prayer may be acceptable in thy sight, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

IN MEMORY OF HIS WIFE

There is a suggestive attraction in this prayer. At first Johnson wrote 'that however solitary,' where we now read 'however bereft of worldly comforts.' Did the alteration point to his unswerving conviction of the Divine presence?

March 28, about 2 in the morning.

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, whose judgments terminate in mercy, grant, I beseech Thee, that the remembrance of my wife, whom Thou hast taken from me, may not load my soul with unprofitable sorrow, but may excite in me true repentance of my sins and negligences; and, by the co-operation of thy grace, may produce in me a new life, pleasing to Thee. Grant, that the loss of my wife may teach me the true use of the blessings which are yet left me; and that, however bereft of worldly comforts, I may find peace and refuge in thy service, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Year 1757 ♀ ♀

NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

Ætat 48

According to Boswell 1757 was a quiet, and, so far as literary work was concerned, an almost fruitless year.

Jan. 1, at 2 in the morning.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast brought me to the beginning of another year, and by prolonging my life invitest to repentance, forgive me that I have misspent the time past; enable me, from this instant, to amend my life according to thy holy word; grant me thy Holy Spirit, that I may so pass through things temporal, as not finally to lose the things eternal. O God, hear my prayer for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

EASTER EVE

ALMIGHTY God, heavenly Father, who desirest not the death of a sinner, look down with mercy upon me, depraved with vain imaginations, and entangled in long habits of sin. Grant me that grace, without which I can neither will nor do what is acceptable to Thee. Pardon my sins; remove the impediments that hinder my obedience; enable me to shake off sloth, and to redeem the time misspent in idleness and sin, by a diligent application of the days yet remaining, to the duties which thy providence shall allot me. O God, grant me thy Holy Spirit, that I may repent and amend my life; grant me contrition, grant me resolution, for the sake of Jesus Christ, to whose covenant I now implore admission, of the benefits of whose death I implore participation. For his sake have mercy on me, O God; for his sake, O God, pardon and receive me. Amen.

JOHNSON'S BIRTHDAY

Sept. 18, 1757.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, by whose providence my life has been prolonged, and who hast granted me now to begin another year of probation, vouchsafe me such assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that the continuance of my life may not add to the measure of my guilt; but that I may so repent of the days and years passed in neglect of the duties which Thou hast set before me, in vain thoughts, in sloth, and in folly, that I may apply my heart to true wisdom, by diligence redeem the time lost, and by repentance obtain pardon, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Year 1758 ♀ ♀

EASTER DAY

'In 1758 we find him, it should seem, in as easy and pleasant a state of existence as constitutional unhappiness ever permitted him to enjoy.'—Boswell. Ætat 49

March 26.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who hast created me to love and to serve Thee, enable me so to partake of the sacrament in which the death of Jesus Christ is commemorated, that I may henceforward lead a new life in thy faith and fear. Thou, who knowest my frailties and infirmities, strengthen and support me; grant me thy Holy Spirit, that, after all my lapses, I may now continue steadfast in obedience, that, after long habits of negligence and sin, I may, at last, work out my salvation with diligence and constancy; purify my thoughts from pollutions, and fix my affections on things eternal. Much of my time past has been lost in sloth; let

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not what remains, O Lord, be given me in vain ;
but let me, from this time, lead a better life, and
serve Thee with a quiet mind, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.

IN MEMORY OF HIS WIFE

This is the last recorded prayer of Johnson's in memory of his wife. She had now been dead six years. Though he henceforth ceases, so far as we know, to compose new prayers to her memory, he never ceased to remember and mourn her to the last day of his life.

March 28, 1758.

ALMIGHTY and eternal God, who givest life
and takest it away, grant that while Thou
shalt prolong my continuance on earth, I
may live with a due sense of thy mercy and for-
bearance, and let the remembrance of her whom
thy hand has separated from me, teach me to con-
sider the shortness and uncertainty of life, and to
use all diligence to obtain eternal happiness in
thy presence. O God, enable me to avoid sloth,
and to attend heedfully and constantly to thy
word and worship. Whatever was good in the
example of my departed wife, teach me to follow ;
and whatever was amiss, give me grace to shun,
that my affliction may be sanctified, and that
remembering how much every day brings me
nearer to the grave, I may every day purify my
mind, and amend my life, by the assistance of thy
Holy Spirit, till at last I shall be accepted by Thee,
for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

JOHNSON'S BIRTHDAY

'Whether to see life as it is will give us much consolation, I know not ; but the consolation to be drawn from truth, if any there be, is solid and durable ; that which may be derived from error, must be,

like its original, fallacious and fugitive.'—Letter to Bennet Langton, Sept. 21, 1758. Horá primá matutiná=at one o'clock in the morning.

Sept. 18, horá primá matutiná.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who yet sparest and yet supportest me, who supportest me in my weakness, and sparest me in my sins, and hast now granted to me to begin another year, enable me to improve the time which is yet before me, to thy glory and my own salvation. Impress upon my soul such repentance of the days misspent in idleness and folly, that I may henceforward diligently attend to the business of my station in this world, and to all the duties which Thou hast commanded. Let thy Holy Spirit comfort and guide me, that in my passage through the pains or pleasures of the present state, I may never be tempted to forgetfulness of Thee. Let my life be useful, and my death be happy; let me live according to thy laws, and die with just confidence in thy mercy, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This year I hope to learn diligence.

The Year 1759 ♪ ♪

PRAYER ON HIS MOTHER'S DEATH

'In 1759, in the month of January, his mother died (at Lichfield), at *Ætat* 50 the great age of ninety, an event which deeply affected him. His reverential affection for her was not abated by years, as indeed he retained all his tender feelings even to the latest period of his life.'—Boswell.

'Repeated on my fast, with the addition.' The addition, really a separate prayer, comes after the 'Amen' of the first prayer. The 'fast' is evidently on the day commemorated in the next prayer.

Jan. 23.

The day on which my dear mother was buried.

Repeated on my fast, with the addition.

ALMIGHTY Gōd, merciful Father, in whose hands are life and death, sanctify unto me the sorrow which I now feel. Forgive me whatever I have done unkindly to my mother, and whatever I have omitted to do kindly. Make me to remember her good precepts and good example, and to reform my life according to thy holy word, that I may lose no more opportunities of good. I am sorrowful, O Lord; let not my sorrow be without fruit. Let it be followed by holy resolutions, and lasting amendment, that when I shall die like my mother, I may be received to everlasting life.

I commend, O Lord, so far as it may be lawful, into thy hands, the soul of my departed mother, beseeching Thee to grant her whatever is most beneficial to her in her present state.

O Lord, grant me thy Holy Spirit, and have mercy upon me for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

And, O Lord, grant unto me that am now about to return to the common comforts and business of the world, such moderation in all enjoyments, such diligence in honest labour, and such purity of mind, that, amidst the changes, miseries, or pleasures of life, I may keep my mind fixed upon Thee, and improve every day in grace, till I shall be received into thy kingdom of eternal happiness.

I returned thanks for my mother's good example, and implored pardon for neglecting it.

I returned thanks for the alleviation of my sorrow. The dream of my brother I shall remember.

CHANGE OF RESIDENCE

Referring to this prayer, Boswell says: 'What particular new scheme of life Johnson had in view this year I have not discovered, but that he meditated one of some sort is clear from his private

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devotions.' It is possible, however, that Johnson referred to his change of lodgings at that time from Gough Square to Staple Inn.

Iej. = *Iejunus*, fasting.

Iej.

March 24, 1759,

rather 25, after 12 at night.

ALMIGHTY God, heavenly Father, who hast graciously prolonged my life to this time, and by the change of outward things which I am now to make, callest me to a change of inward affections, and to a reformation of my thoughts, words, and practices; vouchsafe, merciful Lord, that this call may not be in vain. Forgive me whatever has been amiss in the state which I am now leaving, idleness, and neglect of thy word and worship. Grant me the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that the course which I am now beginning may proceed according to thy laws, and end in the enjoyment of thy favour. Give me, O Lord, pardon and peace, that I may serve Thee with humble confidence, and after this life, enjoy thy presence in eternal happiness.

And, O Lord, so far as it may be lawful for me, I commend to thy Fatherly goodness, my father, my brother, my wife, my mother. I beseech Thee to look mercifully upon them, and grant them whatever may most promote their present and eternal joy.

O Lord, hear my prayers for Jesus Christ's sake, to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

O Lord, let the change which I am now making in outward things, produce in me such a change of manners, as may fit me for the great change through which my wife has passed.

The Year 1760 ♪ ♪

JOHNSON'S BIRTHDAY

Ætat 51

'Johnson was now either very idle, or very busy with his Shakespeare. . . . In this year I have not discovered a single private letter written by him to any of his friends. It should seem, however, that he had at this period a floating intention of writing a history of the recent and wonderful successes of the British arms in all quarters of the globe; for among his resolutions or memorandums, September 18, there is, "Send for books for Hist. of War."—Boswell.

September 18.

RESOLVED, D[*eo*]j[*uvante*],

To combat notions of obligation.

To apply to study.

To reclaim imaginations.

To consult the resolves on Tetty's coffin.

To rise early.

To study religion.

To go to church.

To drink less strong liquors.

To keep a journal.

To oppose laziness by doing what is to be done to-morrow.

Rise as early as I can.

Send for books for History of War.

Put books in order.

Scheme of life.

O ALMIGHTY God, merciful Father, who hast continued my life to another year, grant that I may spend the time which Thou shalt yet give me in such obedience to thy word and will, that finally I may obtain everlasting life. Grant that I may repent and forsake my sins before the miseries of age fall upon me; and that while my strength yet remains, I may use it to thy glory and my own salvation, by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

The Year 1761 ☞ ☞

EASTER EVE

'In 1761 Johnson appears to have done little. He was still, no Ætat 52
doubt, proceeding in his edition of Shakespeare. He certainly was
at this time not active: for in his scrupulous examination of himself
on Easter Eve, he laments, in his too vigorous mode of censuring his
own conduct, that his life since the communion of the preceding
Easter had been "dissipated and useless."—Boswell.

SINCE the communion of last Easter I have led
a life so dissipated and useless, and my terrors
and perplexities have so much increased, that
I am under great depression and discouragement;
yet I purpose to present myself before
God to-morrow, with humble hope that he will
not break the bruised reed.

Come unto me all ye that travail.

I have resolved, I hope not presumptuously, till
I am afraid to resolve again. Yet, hoping in
God, I steadfastly purpose to lead a new life. O
God enable me for Jesus Christ's sake.

My purpose is,

To avoid idleness.

To regulate my sleep as to length and choice
of hours.

To set down every day what shall be done the
day following.

To keep a journal.

To worship God more diligently.

To go to church every Sunday.

To study the Scriptures.

To read a certain portion every week.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, look
down upon my misery with pity; strengthen
me that I may overcome all sinful habits;
grant that I may, with effectual faith, com-
memorate the death of thy son Jesus Christ, so
that all corrupt desires may be extinguished, and

all vain thoughts may be dispelled. Enlighten me with true knowledge, animate me with reasonable hope, comfort me with a just sense of thy love, and assist me to the performance of all holy purposes, that after the sins, errours, and miseries of this world, I may obtain everlasting happiness for Jesus Christ's sake. To whom, etc. Amen.

I hope to attend on God in his ordinances tomorrow.
Trust in God, O my soul. O God, let me trust in Thee.

The Year 1762 ♪ ♪

IN MEMORY OF HIS WIFE

March 28.

Ætat 53

GOD grant that I may from this day,
Return to my studies.
Labour diligently.
Rise early.
Live temperately.
Read the Bible.
Go to church.

O GOD, giver and preserver of all life, by whose power I was created, and by whose providence I am sustained, look down upon me with tenderness and mercy, grant that I may not have been created to be finally destroyed, that I may not be preserved to add wickedness to wickedness; but may so repent me of my sins, and so order my life to come, that when I shall be called hence, like the wife whom Thou hast taken from me, I may die in peace and in thy favour, and be received into thine everlasting kingdom, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thine only Son our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

The Year 1764 ❦ ❦

PREPARATION FOR EASTER

The prayers and meditations which gather round Easter of this Ætat 54 year are unusually full, and are marked by a deep and pathetic note of penitence and sorrow. From the 20th to the 22nd it will be noticed Johnson scarcely seems to have been in bed, but to have spent the night in prayer, self-examination, and vows of amendment. In his account of this year, Boswell quotes some of the passages here recorded with the remark, 'such a tenderness of conscience, and a fervent desire of improvement will rarely be found.' It should not be forgotten that Johnson about this time suffered severely from hypochondria. His old friend, Dr. Adams, told Boswell that he found him in a deplorable state, 'sighing, groaning, and talking to himself, and restlessly walking from room to room.' Speaking of the comparative barrenness of this year's work, he thinks the ease and independence Johnson derived from his recently granted pension increased his natural indolence.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who by thy son Jesus Christ hast redeemed us from sin and death, grant that the commemoration of his passion may quicken my repentance, increase my hope, and strengthen my faith; that I may lament and forsake my sins; and, for the time which Thou shalt yet grant me, may avoid idleness, and neglect of thy word and worship. Grant me strength to be diligent in the lawful employments which shall be set before me; grant me purity of thoughts, words, and actions. Grant me to love and study thy word, and to frequent thy worship with pure affection. Deliver and preserve me from vain terrours, and grant that by the grace of thy Holy Spirit I may so live, that after this life ended, I may be received to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY

April 20, 1764.

I have made no reformation; I have lived totally useless, more sensual in thought, and more addicted to wine and meat. Grant me, O God, to amend my life, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

I hope
To put my rooms in order.¹
I fasted all day.

April 21, 1764, 3 in the morning.

MY indolence, since my last reception of the Sacrament, has sunk into grosser sluggishness, and my dissipation spread into wilder negligence. My thoughts have been clouded with sensuality; and, except that from the beginning of this year I have in some measure forborn excess of strong drink, my appetites have predominated over my reason. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread me, so that I know not what has become of the last year; and perceive that incidents and intelligence pass over me without leaving any impression.

This is not the life to which heaven is promised. I propose to approach the altar again to-morrow; Grant, O Lord, that I may receive the Sacrament with such resolutions of a better life as may by thy grace be effectual, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

April 21.—I read the whole Gospel of St. John.
Then sat up till the 22d.

My purpose is from this time,

¹ Disorder I have found one great cause of idleness.

To reject or expel sensual images, and idle thoughts.

To provide some useful amusement for leisure time.

To avoid idleness.

To rise early.

To study a proper portion of every day.

To worship God diligently.

To read the Scriptures.

To let no week pass without reading some part.

To write down my observations.

I will renew my resolutions made at Tetty's death.

I perceive an insensibility and heaviness upon me. I am less than commonly oppressed with the sense of sin, and less affected with the shame of idleness. Yet I will not despair. I will pray to God for resolution, and will endeavour to strengthen my faith in Christ, by commemorating his death.

I prayed for Tett.

EASTER DAY

April 22, 1764.

HAVING, before I went to bed, composed the foregoing meditation, and the following prayer; I tried to compose myself, but slept unquietly. I rose, took tea, and prayed for resolution and perseverance. Thought on Tetty, dear poor Tetty, with my eyes full.

I went to church; came in at the first of the Psalms, and endeavoured to attend the service, which I went through without perturbation. After sermon, I recommended Tetty in a prayer by herself; and my father, mother, brother, and Bathurst, in another. I did it only once, so far as it might be lawful for me.

I then prayed for resolution and perseverance to

amend my life. I received soon, the communicants were many. At the altar, it occurred to me that I ought to form some resolutions. I resolved in the presence of God, but without a vow, to repel sinful thoughts, to study eight hours daily, and, I think, to go to church every Sunday, and read the Scriptures. I gave a shilling; and seeing a poor girl at the Sacrament in a bedgown, gave her privately a crown, though I saw Hart's Hymns in her hand. I prayed earnestly for amendment, and repeated my prayer at home. Dined with Miss W., went to prayers at church; went to —, spent the evening not pleasantly. Avoided wine, and tempered a very few glasses with sherbet. Came home and prayed.

I saw at the Sacrament a man meanly dressed, whom I have always seen there at Easter.

EASTER DAY

Against loose Thoughts and Idleness

April 22, 1764, at 3 morning.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who hast created and preserved me, have pity on my weakness and corruption. Deliver me from habitual wickedness and idleness; enable me to purify my thoughts, to use the faculties which Thou hast given me with honest diligence, and to regulate my life by thy holy word.

Grant me, O Lord, good purposes and steady resolution, that I may repent my sins, and amend my life. Deliver me from the distresses of vain terrour, and enable me, by thy grace, to will and to do what may please Thee; that when I shall be called away from this present state, I may obtain everlasting happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

After repeating some of the good resolutions of the preceding Easter, Johnson adds a quaint note at the end of his prayer which must cause a sympathetic smile of amusement in every one who has read the story of his disorderly habits: 'To-morrow I purpose to regulate my room.' On Good Friday of this year he had made the same pious resolution, and to emphasise its importance, had added a footnote: 'Disorder I have found one great cause of idleness.'

Sept. 18, 1764, about 6 evening.

THIS is my fifty-sixth birthday, the day on which I have concluded fifty-five years.

I have outlived many friends. I have felt many sorrows. I have made few improvements. Since my resolution formed last Easter, I have made no advancement in knowledge or in goodness; nor do I recollect that I have endeavoured it. I am dejected, but not hopeless.

O God, for Jesus Christ's sake, have mercy upon me.

7 in the evening.

I went to church, prayed *to be loosed from the chain of my sins*.

I have now spent fifty-five years in resolving; having from the earliest time almost that I can remember, been forming schemes of a better life. I have done nothing; the need of doing therefore is pressing, since the time of doing is short. O God, grant me to resolve aright, and to keep my resolutions, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Hæc limina vitæ.

Stat.

I resolve,

To study the Scriptures; I hope, in the original languages. Six hundred and forty verses every Sunday, will nearly comprise the Scriptures in a year.

To read good books; to study theology.

- To treasure in my mind passages for recollection.
 To rise early; not later than six, if I can; I hope sooner, but as soon as I can.
 To keep a journal, both of employment and of expenses. To keep accounts.
 To take care of my health, by such means as I have designed.
 To set down at night some plan for the morrow.
 Last year I prayed on my birthday, by accommodating the Morning Collect for grace, putting *year for day*. This I did this day.

Sept. 18, 1764.

O GOD, heavenly Father, who desirest not the death of a sinner, grant that I may turn from my wickedness and live. Enable me to shake off all impediments of lawful action, and so to order my life, that increase of days may produce increase of grace, of tranquillity of thought, and vigour in duty. Grant that my resolves may be effectual to a holy life, and a happy death, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

To-morrow I purpose to regulate my room.

The Year 1765 ♪ ♪

EASTER DAY

Etat 56

'The strictness of his self-examination, and scrupulous Christian humility, appear in his pious meditations on Easter Day this year. The concluding words—"I am almost afraid to renew my resolutions"—are very remarkable, and show that he laboured under a severe depression of spirits.'—Boswell.

April 7, about 3 in the morning.

I PURPOSE again to partake of the blessed Sacrament; yet when I consider how vainly I have hitherto resolved, at this annual commemoration of my Saviour's death, to regulate my life by his laws, I am almost afraid to renew

my resolutions. Since the last Easter I have reformed no evil habit, my time has been unprofitably spent, and seems as a dream that has left nothing behind. My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me.

Good Lord, deliver me.

I will call upon God to-morrow for repentance and amendment. O heavenly Father, let not my call be vain, but grant me to desire what may please Thee; and fulfil those desires for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

My resolutions, which God perfect, are—

1. To avoid loose thoughts.
2. To rise at eight every morning.

I hope to extend these purposes to other duties; but it is necessary to combat evil habits singly. I purpose to rise at eight, because, though I shall not yet rise early, it will be much earlier than I now rise, for I often lie till two, and will gain me much time, and tend to a conquest over idleness, and give time for other duties. I hope to rise yet earlier.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor desireth the death of a sinner, look down with mercy upon me, and grant that I may turn from my wickedness and live. Forgive the days and years which I have passed in folly, idleness, and sin. Fill me with such sorrow for the time misspent, that I may amend my life according to thy holy word; strengthen me against habitual idleness, and enable me to direct my thoughts to the performance of every duty; that while I live I may serve Thee in the state to which Thou shalt call me, and at last by a holy and happy death be delivered from the struggles and sorrows of this

life, and obtain eternal happiness by thy mercy, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, have mercy on me.

At church I purpose,
Before I leave the pew, to pray the occasional
prayer, and read my resolutions.

To pray for Tetty and the rest.

The like after communion.

At intervals to use the Collects of Fourth after
Trinity, and First and Fourth after Epiphany,
and to meditate.

This was done, as I purposed, but with some
distraction. I came in at the Psalms, and could
not well hear. I renewed my resolutions at the
altar. God perfect them. Then I came home.
I prayed, and have hope; grant, O Lord, for
the sake of Jesus Christ, that my hope may
not be vain.

I invited home with me the man whose pious
behaviour I had for several years observed on
this day,¹ and found him a kind of Methodist,
full of texts, but ill-instructed. I talked to him
with temper, and offered him twice wine, which
he refused. I suffered him to go without the
dinner which I had purposed to give him. I
thought this day that there was something
irregular and particular in his look and gesture;
but having intended to invite him to acquaint-
ance, and having a fit opportunity by finding him
near my own seat after I had missed him, I did
what I at first designed, and am sorry to have
been so much disappointed. Let me not be pre-
judiced hereafter against the appearance of
piety in mean persons, who, with indeterminate
notions, and perverse or inelegant conversation,
perhaps are doing all they can.

At night I used the occasional prayer, with proper
Collects.

¹ See Easter Day, 1764, p. 48.

BEFORE THE STUDY OF LAW

'He appears this year to have been seized with a temporary fit of ambition, for he had thoughts both of studying law and of engaging in politics. His "Prayer before the study of Law" is truly admirable.' —Boswell.

Sept. 26, 1765.

ALMIGHTY God, the giver of wisdom, without whose help resolutions are vain, without whose blessing study is ineffectual, enable me, if it be thy will, to attain such knowledge as may qualify me to direct the doubtful, and instruct the ignorant, to prevent wrongs, and terminate contentions; and grant that I may use that knowledge which I shall attain, to thy glory and my own salvation, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

ENGAGING IN POLITICKS WITH H—N

H—n was the Right Hon. William Gerard Hamilton, for whom Johnson had a great esteem. It is doubtful whether Johnson himself at this time contemplated entering on a political career, or simply meant to qualify himself as political adviser and instructor of his friend.

Nov. 1765.

ALMIGHTY God, who art the giver of all wisdom, enlighten my understanding with knowledge of right, and govern my will by thy laws, that no deceit may mislead me, nor temptation corrupt me; that I may always endeavour to do good, and to hinder evil. Amidst all the hopes and fears of this world, take not thy Holy Spirit from me; but grant that my thoughts may be fixed on Thee, and that I may finally attain everlasting happiness, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

The Year 1766 ♣ ♣

NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

Jan. 1, after 2 in the morning.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, I again appear in thy presence the wretched mis-spender of another year, which thy mercy has allowed me. O Lord, let me not sink into total depravity, look down upon me, and rescue me at last from the captivity of sin. Impart to me good resolutions, and give me strength and perseverance to perform them. Take not from me thy Holy Spirit, but grant that I may redeem the time lost, and that by temperance and diligence, by sincere repentance and faithful obedience, I may finally obtain everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

STUDY

Entering Novum Museum

Ætat 57

Johnson had recently removed into a house in Johnson's Court, Fleet Street. Concerning his Novum Museum, or new study, he writes two days later to Bennet Langton: 'I wish you were in my new study. I am now writing my first letter in it. I think it looks very pretty about me.'

March 7.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who hast graciously supplied me with new conveniencies for study, grant that I may use thy gifts to thy glory. Forgive me the time misspent, relieve my perplexities, strengthen my resolution, and enable me to do my duty with vigour and constancy; and when the fears and hopes, the pains and pleasures of this life shall have an end, receive me to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Transcribed, June 26, —68.

JOHNSON'S BIRTHDAY

For three months this summer Johnson was living in the house of his friend Mr. Thrale, the rich Southwark brewer, at Streatham. He had a very great regard for the sterling character of Thrale, whose acquaintance he had made the previous year; and their friendship continued close and unbroken till the latter's death. For Mrs. Thrale also he had both affection and esteem, though he was by no means blind to the faults of her lively temperament and manners.

Sept. 18, 1766, at Streatham.

I have this day completed my fifty-seventh year.
O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake, have mercy upon me.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who hast granted me to prolong my life to another year, look down upon me with pity. Let not my manifold sins and negligences avert from me thy fatherly regard. Enlighten my mind that I may know my duty; that I may perform it, strengthen my resolution. Let not another year be lost in vain deliberations; let me remember that of the short life of man, a great part is already past in sinfulness and sloth. Deliver me, gracious Lord, from the bondage of evil customs, and take not from me thy Holy Spirit; but enable me so to spend my remaining days, that, by performing thy will, I may promote thy glory; and grant that after the troubles and disappointments of this mortal state, I may obtain everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Added,
The Fourteenth S. after Tr.
The Morning Collect.
The beginning of this (day) year.

Purposes,
To keep a journal. To begin this day.

To spend four hours every day in study, and as much more as I can.

To read a portion of the Scriptures in Greek, every Sunday.

To rise at eight.

Oct. 3, —66. Of all this I have done nothing.

I returned from Streatham, Oct. 1, —66, having lived there more than three months.

The Year 1767 ♀ ♀

NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

Ætat 58

It will be seen from the prayers and meditations of this year and the next that Johnson was again under the thralldom of his constitutional melancholy. His broken health, insomnia, and depressed spirits made the night fearful to him. Dreading to retire to bed, he kept late hours, and was glad when he could prevail upon any one to sit up with him. When alone, the silent hours were often spent in prayer and solitary meditation.

' Mane scripsi': I wrote this in the early morning.

Jan. *Imâ mane scripsi.*

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, in whose hand are life and death, as Thou hast suffered me to see the beginning of another year, grant, I beseech Thee, that another year may not be lost in idleness, or squandered in unprofitable employment. Let not sin prevail on the remaining part of life, and take not from me thy Holy Spirit; but as every day brings me nearer to my end, let every day contribute to make my end holy and happy. Enable me, O Lord, to use all enjoyments with due temperance, preserve me from unseasonable and immoderate sleep, and enable me to run with diligence the race that is set before me, that, after the troubles of this life, I may obtain everlasting happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

August 2, 1767.

I have been disturbed and unsettled for a long time, and have been without resolution to apply to study or to business, being hindered by sudden snatches.

I have for some days forborn wine and suppers. Abstinence is not easily practised in another's house ; but I think it fit to try.

I was extremely perturbed in the night, but have had this day more ease than I expected. D. gr. Perhaps this may be such a sudden relief as I once had by a good night's rest in Fetter Lane.

The shortness of the time which the common order of nature allows me to expect, is very frequently upon my mind. God grant that it may profit me.

Johnson spent the summer at Lichfield, and during that time Catherine Chambers, the friend and servant of his late mother, died. The 'Lucy' mentioned was Johnson's step-daughter, Lucy Porter. Of Johnson's attention to Kitty Chambers, and the tenderly beautiful last scene, Boswell writes:—'By those who have been taught to look upon Johnson as a man of a harsh and stern character, let this tender and affectionate scene be candidly heard; and let them then judge whether more warmth of heart, and grateful kindness, is often found in human nature.'

August 17, 1767.

From that time, by abstinence, I have had more ease. I have read five books of Homer, and hope to end the sixth to-night. I have given Mrs. — a guinea.

By abstinence from wine and suppers, I obtained sudden and great relief, and had freedom of mind restored to me; which I have wanted for all this year, without being able to find any means of obtaining it.

I am now about to receive, with my old friend Kitty Chambers, the sacrament, preparatory to her death. Grant, O God, that it may fit me. I

purpose temperance for my resolution. O God, enable me to keep my purpose to thy glory.

5.32 P.M.

I have communicated with Kitty, and kissed her. I was for some time distracted, but at last more composed. I commended my friends and Kitty. Lucy and I were much affected. Kitty is, I think, going to heaven.

Aug. 17, 1767.

O GOD, grant that I may practise such temperance in meat, drink, and sleep, and all bodily enjoyments, as may fit me for the duties to which Thou shalt call me, and by thy blessing procure me freedom of thought and quietness of mind, that I may so serve Thee in this short and frail life, that I may be received by Thee at my death to everlasting happiness. Take not, O Lord, thy Hoiy Spirit from me; deliver me not up to vain fears; but have mercy on me, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, who desirest not the death, etc.

O Lord, grant us increase—

O God,—pardon and peace—

O God, who knowest our necessities—

Our Father—

Sunday, Oct. 18, 1767.

YESTERDAY, Oct. 17, at about ten in the morning, I took my leave for ever of my dear old friend Catherine Chambers, who came to live with my mother about 1724, and has been but little parted from us since. She buried my father, my brother, and my mother. She is now fifty-eight years old.

I desired all to withdraw, then told her that we were to part for ever; that as Christians, we

should part with prayer; and that I would, if she was willing, say a short prayer beside her. She expressed great desire to hear me; and held up her poor hands, as she lay in bed, with great fervour, while I prayed kneeling by her, nearly in the following words:—

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, whose loving-kindness is over all thy works, behold, visit, and relieve this thy servant, who is grieved with sickness. Grant that the sense of her weakness may add strength to her faith, and seriousness to her repentance. And grant that by the help of thy Holy Spirit, after the pains and labours of this short life, we may all obtain everlasting happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord: for whose sake hear our prayers. Amen. Our Father, etc.

I then kissed her. She told me that to part was the greatest pain that she had ever felt, and that she hoped we should meet again in a better place. I expressed, with swelled eyes, and great emotion of tenderness, the same hopes. We kissed, and parted. I humbly hope to meet again, and to part no more.

The Year 1768 ♀ ♀

BED-TIME

An accommodation of the Collect for the Second Sunday in Lent. *Ætat* 59
The note about the parchment book is Strahan's.

Lent 2.

ALMIGHTY God, who seest that I have no power of myself to help myself; keep me both outwardly in my body, and inwardly in my soul, that I may be defended from all adversities that may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer may be said before or after the entrance into bed, as a preparative for sleep.

When I transcribed this Prayer, it was my purpose to have made this¹ book a Collection.

STUDY OF TONGUES

ALMIGHTY God, giver of all knowledge, enable me so to pursue the study of tongues, that I may promote thy glory and my own salvation.

Bless my endeavours, as shall seem best unto Thee; and if it shall please Thee to grant me the attainment of my purpose, preserve me from sinful pride; take not thy Holy Spirit from me, but give me a pure heart and humble mind, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Of this Prayer there is no date, nor can I tell when it was written; but I think it was in Gough Square, after the Dictionary was ended. I did not study what I then intended.

Transcribed June 26, 1768.

JOHNSON'S BIRTHDAY

Townmalling was the country residence of Francis Brooke. The continuance of Johnson's depression and ill-health is painfully manifest. 'Do not forget me in your prayers,' he this year wrote to Lucy Porter. 'I have for a long time back been very poorly; but of what use is it to complain?'

Townmalling in Kent,
Sept. 18, 1768, at night.

I HAVE now begun the sixtieth year of my life. How the last year has past, I am unwilling to terrify myself with thinking. This day has been past in great perturbation; I was distracted at

¹ [A parchment book containing such of these Prayers as are marked 'transcribed.']

church in an uncommon degree, and my distress has had very little intermission. I have found myself somewhat relieved by reading, which I therefore intend to practise when I am able.

This day it came into my mind to write the history of my melancholy. On this I purpose to deliberate; I know not whether it may not too much disturb me.

I this day read a great part of Pascal's life.

O Lord who hast safely brought me, etc.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, Creator and Preserver of mankind, look down with pity upon my troubles and maladies. Heal my body, strengthen my mind, compose my distraction, calm my inquietude, and relieve my terrors; that if it please Thee, I may run the race that is set before me with peace, patience, constancy, and confidence. Grant this, O Lord, and take not from me thy Holy Spirit, but pardon and bless me, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Year 1769 ♪ ♪

NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

'In 1769 the public was favoured with nothing of Johnson's *Ætat* 60 compositions. His 'Meditations' too strongly prove that he suffered much both in body and mind; yet was he perpetually striving against "evil," and nobly endeavouring to advance his intellectual and devotional improvement.'—Boswell. Safely brought me, etc., refers to the third collect of Morning Prayer in the Prayer Book.

January 1.

I AM now about to begin another year; how the last has past it would be in my state of weakness perhaps not prudent too solicitously to recollect. God will, I hope, turn my sufferings to my benefit: forgive me whatever I have done

amiss, and having vouchsafed me great relief, will by degrees heal and restore both my mind and body; and permit me, when the last year of my life shall come, to leave the world in holiness and tranquillity.

I am not yet in a state to form many resolutions; I purpose and hope to rise early in the morning, at eight, and by degrees at six; eight being the latest hour to which bed-time can be properly extended; and six the earliest that the present system of life requires.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who hast continued my life from year to year, grant that by longer life I may become less desirous of sinful pleasures, and more careful of eternal happiness. As age comes upon me, let my mind be more withdrawn from vanity and folly, more enlightened with the knowledge of thy will, and more invigorated with resolution to obey it. O Lord, calm my thoughts, direct my desires, and fortify my purposes. If it shall please Thee, give quiet to my latter days, and so support me with thy grace, that I may die in thy favour, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Safely brought us to the beginning of this year, etc.

JOHNSON'S BIRTHDAY

At this time Johnson was at Brighthelmstone as the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. The signs of returning health and spirits are evident, and appear also in a letter he wrote to Boswell this month.

September 18, 1769.

THIS day completes the sixtieth year of my age. What I have done, and what I have left undone, the unsettled state of my mind makes all endeavours to think improper. I hope to survey

my life with more tranquillity, in some part of the time which God shall grant me.

The last year has been wholly spent in a slow progress of recovery. My days are easier, but the perturbation of my nights is very distressful. I think to try a lower diet. I have grown fat too fast. My lungs seem incumbered, and my breath fails me, if my strength is in any unusual degree exerted, or my motion accelerated. I seem to myself to bear exercise with more difficulty than in the last winter. But though I feel all those decays of body, I have made no preparation for the grave. What shall I do to be saved?

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, I now appear in thy presence, laden with the sins, and accountable for the mercies of another year. Glory be to Thee, O God, for the mitigation of my troubles, and for the hope of health both of mind and body which Thou hast vouchsafed me. Most merciful Lord, if it seem good unto Thee, compose my mind, and relieve my diseases: enable me to perform the duties of my station, and so to serve Thee, as that, when my hour of departure from this painful life shall be delayed no longer, I may be received to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O LORD, without whose help all the purposes of man are vain, enable me to use such temperance as may heal my body, and strengthen my mind, and enable me to serve Thee. Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Who hast safely brought me, etc.

September 19, 1769.

YESTERDAY, having risen from a disturbed and wearisome night, I was not much at rest the whole day. I prayed with the collect, *to the beginning*, in the night and in the morning. At night I composed my prayer, and wrote my reflection. Reviewing them, I found them both weakly conceived and imperfectly expressed, and corrected the prayer this morning. I am glad that I have not omitted my annual practice. I hope that by rigid temperance, and moderate exercise, I may yet recover. I used the prayer again at night, and am now to begin, by the permission of God, my sixty-first year.

WHEN HE LIVED ON MILK

November 5, 1769.

ALMIGHTY God, merciful Father, whose providence is over all thy works, look down with pity upon the diseases of my body, and the perturbations of my mind. Give thy blessing, O Lord, to the means which I shall use for my relief, and restore ease to my body, and quiet to my thoughts. Let not my remaining life be made useless by infirmities; neither let health, if Thou shalt grant it, be employed by me in disobedience to thy laws; but give me such a sense of my pains as may humble me before Thee; and such remembrance of thy mercy as may produce honest industry, and holy confidence. And, O Lord, whether Thou ordainest my days to be past in ease or anguish, take not from me thy Holy Spirit; but grant that I may attain everlasting life, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This I found January 11, 1772; and believe it written when I began to live on milk. I grew worse with forbearance of solid food.

The Year 1770 ♀ ♀

NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

Primâ mane—early in the morning.

Ætat 61

Jan. 1, primâ mane.

ALMIGHTY God, by whose mercy I am permitted to behold the beginning of another year, succour with thy help, and bless with thy favour, the creature whom Thou vouchsafest to preserve. Mitigate, if it shall seem best unto Thee, the diseases of my body, and compose the disorders of my mind. Dispel my terrors; and grant, that the time which Thou shalt yet allow me, may not pass unprofitably away. Let not pleasure seduce me, idleness lull me, or misery depress me. Let me perform to thy glory, and the good of my fellow-creatures, the work which Thou shalt yet appoint me; and grant, that as I draw nearer to my dissolution, I may, by the help of thy Holy Spirit, feel my knowledge of Thee encreased, my hope exalted, and my faith strengthened; that, when the hour which is coming shall come, I may pass by a holy death to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HIS WIFE'S MEMORY

Though eight years had passed since the last prayer in memory of his wife was composed, the following tender meditation abundantly shows Johnson's constant and loving remembrance of her.

Wednesday, March 28, 1770.

THIS is the day on which, in 1752, I was deprived of poor dear Tetty. Having left off the practice of thinking on her with some particular combinations, I have recalled her to my mind of late

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less frequently; but when I recollect the time in which we lived together, my grief for her departure is not abated; and I have less pleasure in any good that befalls me, because she does not partake it. On many occasions, I think what she would have said or done. When I saw the sea at Brighthelmstone, I wished for her to have seen it with me. But with respect to her, no rational wish is now left, but that we may meet at last where the mercy of God shall make us happy, and perhaps make us instrumental to the happiness of each other. It is now eighteen years.

PASSION WEEK

How scrupulously Johnson kept Good Friday, notwithstanding his broken health, is apparent in his notes of this week: 'I had nothing but water, once in the morning and once at bed-time. I refused tea, after some deliberation, in the afternoon.'

April 14, 1770.

THIS week is Passion Week.

I have for some weeks past been much afflicted with the lumbago, or rheumatism in the loins, which often passes to the muscles of the belly, where it causes equal if not greater pain. In the day the sunshine mitigates it; and in cold or cloudy weather, such as has for some time past remarkably prevailed, the heat of a strong fire suspends it. In the night it is so troublesome, as not very easily to be borne. I lie wrapped in flannel, with a very great fire near my bed; but whether it be that a recumbent posture increases the pain, or that expansion by moderate warmth, excites what a great heat dissipates, I can seldom remain in bed two hours at a time without the necessity of rising to heat the parts affected at the fire.

One night, between the pain and the spasms in my stomach, I was insupportably distressed. On the next night, I think, I laid a blister to my back, and took opium; my night was tolerable, and, from that time, the spasms in my stomach, which disturbed me for many years, and for two past harassed me almost to distraction, have nearly ceased; I suppose the breast is relaxed by the opium.

Having passed Thursday in Passion Week at Mr. Thrale's, I came home on Friday morning, that I might pass the day unobserved; I had nothing but water, once in the morning, and once at bed-time. I refused tea, after some deliberation, in the afternoon. They did not press it. I came home late, and was unwilling to carry my rheumatism to the cold church in the morning, unless that were rather an excuse made to myself. In the afternoon I went to church, but came late, I think at the Creed. I read Clarke's Sermon on the death of Christ, and the Second Epistle to Timothy in Greek, but rather hastily. I then went to Thrale's, and had a very tedious and painful night. But the spasms in my throat are gone; and, if either the pain, or the opiate which the pain enforced, has stopped them, the relief is very cheaply purchased. The pain harasses me much; yet many have the disease perhaps in a much higher degree, with want of food, fire, and covering, which I find thus grievous, with all the succours that riches and kindness can buy and give.

On Saturday I was not hungry, and did not eat much breakfast. There was a dinner and company, at which I was persuaded or tempted to stay. At night I came home, sat up, and composed the Prayer; and having ordered the maid to make the fire in my chamber, at eight went to rest, and had a tolerable night.

EASTER DAY

April 15, 1770, in the morning.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast preserved me, by thy fatherly care, through all the years of my past life, and now permittest me again to commemorate the sufferings and merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; grant me so to partake of this Holy Rite, that the disquiet of my mind may be appeased, that my faith may be increased, my hope strengthened, and my life regulated by thy will. Make me truly thankful for that portion of health which thy mercy has restored, and enable me to use the remains of life to thy glory and my own salvation. Take not from me, O Lord, thy Holy Spirit; extinguish in my mind all sinful and inordinate desires; let me resolve to do that which is right; and let me by thy help, keep my resolutions. Let me, if it be best for me, at last know peace and comfort; but whatever state of life Thou shalt appoint me, let me end it by a happy death, and enjoy eternal happiness in thy presence, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EASTER DAY

I in the afternoon.

I AM just returned from the communion, having been very little interrupted in my duty by bodily pain.

I was very early at church, and used this Prayer, I think, before service, with proper collects. I was composed during the service. I went to the table to hear the prefatory part of the office, then returned to my pew, and tried to settle some resolutions.

I resolved to form, this day, some plan for reading the Scriptures.

To rise by eight, or earlier.

To form a plan for the regulation of my daily life.

To excite in myself such a fervent desire of pleasing God, as should suppress all other passions.

I prayed through all the collects of meditation, with some extemporary prayers; recommended my friends, living and dead. When I returned to the table, I staid till most had communicated, and in the mean time tried to settle my mind; prayed against bad and troublesome thoughts; resolved to oppose sudden incursions of them; and, I think, had — thrown into my mind at the general confession. When I went first to the table, the particular series of my thoughts I cannot recollect.

When I came home I returned thanks, by accommodating the General Thanksgiving; and used this prayer again, with the collects, after receiving. I hope God has heard me.

Shall I ever receive the Sacrament with tranquillity? Surely the time will come.

Some vain thoughts stole upon me while I stood near the table; I hope I ejected them effectually, so as not to be hurt by them.

I went to prayers at seven, having fasted; read the two Morning Lessons in Greek. At night I read Clarke's Sermon of the Humiliation of our Saviour.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

I HAVE been recovering from my rheumatism slowly yet sensibly; but the last week has produced little good. Uneasy nights have tempted me to lie long in the morning. But when I wake in the night, the release which still continues from the spasms in my throat, gives me great comfort.

The plan which I formed for reading the Scriptures, was to read 600 verses in the Old Testament, and 200 in the New, every week.

The Old Testament in any language, the New in Greek.

This day I began to read the Septuagint, but read only 230 verses, the nine first chapters of Genesis.

On this evening I repeated the Prayer for Easter Day, changing the future tense to the past.

ON RESOLUTIONS.

June 1, 1770.

EVERY man naturally persuades himself that he can keep his resolutions, nor is he convinced of his imbecility but by length of time and frequency of experiment. This opinion of our own constancy is so prevalent, that we always despise him who suffers his general and settled purpose to be overpowered by an occasional desire. They, therefore, whom frequent failures have made desperate, cease to form resolutions: and they who are become cunning, do not tell them. Those who do not make them are very few, but of their effect little is perceived; for scarcely any man persists in a course of life planned by choice, but as he is restrained from deviation by some external power. He who may live as he will, seldom lives long in the observation of his own rules. I never yet saw a regular family, unless it were that of Mrs. Harriot's, nor a regular man, except Mr. —, whose exactness I know only by his own report, and Psalmanazar, whose life was, I think, uniform.

The Year 1771 ♀ ♀

EASTER DAY

March 31.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, I am now about to commemorate once more, in thy presence, the redemption of the world by our Lord and Saviour thy Son Jesus Christ. Grant, O most merciful God, that the benefit of his sufferings may be extended to me. Grant me faith, grant me repentance. Illuminate me with thy Holy Spirit, enable me to form good purposes, and to bring these purposes to good effect. Let me so dispose my time, that I may discharge the duties to which Thou shalt vouchsafe to call me; and let that degree of health, to which thy mercy has restored me, be employed to thy glory. O God, invigorate my understanding, compose my perturbations, recall my wanderings, and calm my thoughts; that having lived while Thou shalt grant me life, to do good and to praise Thee, I may, when thy call shall summon me to another state, receive mercy from Thee, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

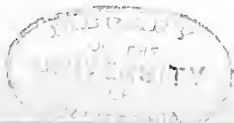
JOHNSON'S BIRTHDAY

'In his religious record of this year we observe that he was better *Etat* 62 than usual, both in body and mind, and better satisfied with the regularity of his conduct. But he is still "trying his ways" too rigorously. He charges himself with not rising early enough; yet he mentions what was surely a sufficient excuse for this, supposing it to be a duty seriously required, as he, all his life, appears to have thought it.'—Boswell.

It is possible that his excursions into Staffordshire and Derbyshire during the summer, and also the work of revising his Dictionary, had helped to produce a healthier tone of body and mind.

Sept. 18, 1771, 9 at night.

I AM now come to my sixty-third year. For the last year I have been slowly recovering both



from the violence of my last illness, and, I think, from the general disease of my life. My breath is less obstructed, and I am more capable of motion and exercise. My mind is less encumbered, and I am less interrupted in mental employment. Some advances I hope have been made towards regularity. I have missed church since Easter only two Sundays, both which I hope I have endeavoured to supply by attendance on divine worship in the following week. Since Easter, my evening devotions have been lengthened. But indolence and indifference has been neither conquered nor opposed. No plan of study has been pursued or formed, except that I have commonly read every week, if not on Sunday, a stated portion of the New Testament in Greek. But what is most to be considered, I have neither attempted nor formed any scheme of life by which I may do good, and please God. One great hindrance is want of rest; my nocturnal complaints grow less troublesome towards morning; and I am tempted to repair the deficiencies of the night. I think, however, to try to rise every day by eight, and to combat indolence as I shall obtain strength. Perhaps Providence has yet some use for the remnant of my life.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, whose mercy is over all thy works, and who hast no pleasure in the death of a sinner, look with pity upon me, succour and preserve me; enable me to conquer evil habits, and surmount temptations. Give me grace so to use the degree of health which Thou hast restored to my mind and body, that I may perform the task Thou shalt yet appoint me. Look down, O gracious Lord, upon my remaining part of life; grant, if it please Thee, that the days, few or many, which Thou shalt

yet allow me, may pass in reasonable confidence, and holy tranquillity. Withhold not thy Holy Spirit from me, but strengthen all good purposes, till they shall produce a life pleasing to Thee. And when Thou shalt call me to another state, forgive me my sins, and receive me to happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Safely brought us, etc.

Sept. 23, 1771.

ON the 18th, in the morning, before I went to bed, I used the general prayer [beginning of this year]. When I rose I came home from Mr. Thrale's that I might be more master of my hours. I went to church in the morning, but came in to the Litany. I have gone voluntarily to church on the week day but few times in my life. I think to mend.

At night I composed and used the prayer, which I have used since in my devotions one morning. Having been somewhat disturbed, I have not yet settled in any plan, except that yesterday I began to learn some verses in the Greek Testament for a Sunday's recital. I hope, by trust in God, to amend my life.

The Year 1772 ♣ ♣

A stronger note and more buoyant tone show the result of improved health of body and mind. Once again we have the oft repeated resolution 'to rise in the morning,' an undying but ill-fulfilled aspiration of his whole life. How he struggles and fails, and struggles and fails again, in his efforts to combat the sluggishness of his disposition, and the result of late hours and wakeful nights! It would be almost ludicrous were it not altogether pathetic, and touched with the childlike sincerity of Johnson's spiritual nature. In other respects the prayer reveals increased composure of mind and

calmness of purpose. So of the year Boswell records that although Johnson wrote little, 'his mind was acute, lively, and vigorous.'

Jan. 1, 2 in the morning.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast permitted me to see the beginning of another year, enable me so to receive thy mercy, as that it may raise in me stronger desires of pleasing Thee by purity of mind and holiness of life. Strengthen me, O Lord, in good purposes, and reasonable meditations. Look with pity upon all my disorders of mind, and infirmities of body. Grant that the residue of my life may enjoy such degrees of health as may permit me to be useful, that I may live to thy glory; and, O merciful Lord, when it shall please Thee to call me from the present state, enable me to die in confidence of thy mercy, and receive me to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

To rise in the morning.

EASTER EVE

Though he had written to Boswell a month previously 'my health grows better, yet I am not fully recovered,' and indeed the traces of continued ill-health are manifest in these Easter meditations, yet on the whole the improvement was continued, and we find accordingly an increased devotion to religious duties. In the second prayer Johnson offers grateful thanks to God for his improved health.

April 18, 1772.

I AM now again preparing, by divine mercy, to commemorate the death of my gracious Redeemer, and to form, as God shall enable me, resolutions and purposes of a better life.

When I review the last year, I am able to recollect so little done, that shame and sorrow, though perhaps too weakly, come upon me; yet I have been generally free from local pain, and my strength has seemed gradually to increase.

But my sleep has generally been unquiet, and I have not been able to rise early. My mind is unsettled, and my memory confused. I have of late turned my thoughts, with a very useless earnestness, upon past incidents. I have yet got no command over my thoughts; an unpleasing incident is almost certain to hinder my rest; this is the remainder of my last illness. By sleepless or unquiet nights, and short days, made short by late rising, the time passes away uncounted and unheeded. Life so spent is useless.

I hope to cast my time into some stated method.

To let no hour pass unemployed.

To rise by degrees more early in the morning.

To keep a journal.

I have, I think, been less guilty of neglecting public worship than formerly. I have commonly on Sunday gone once to church, and if I have missed, have reproached myself.

I have exerted rather more activity of body. These dispositions I desire to improve.

I resolved, last Easter, to read within the year, the whole Bible, a very great part of which I had never looked upon. I read the Greek Testament without construing, and this day concluded the Apocalypse. I think that no part was missed.

My purpose of reading the rest of the Bible was forgotten, till I took by chance the resolutions of last Easter in my hand.

I began it the first day of Lent; and, for a time, read with some regularity. I was then disturbed or seduced, but finished the Old Testament last Thursday.

I hope to read the whole Bible once a year, as long as I live.

Yesterday I fasted, as I have always, or commonly done, since the death of Tetty. The fast was more painful than it has formerly been, which

I imputed to some medicinal evacuations in the beginning of the week, and to a meal of cakes on the foregoing day. I cannot now fast as formerly.

I devoted this week to the perusal of the Bible, and have done little secular business. I am this night easier than is customary on this anniversary, but am not sensibly enlightened.

EASTER DAY

After 12 at night.

THE day is now begun, on which I hope to begin a new course ὡσπερ ἀφ' ἑσπέρης ἀρχή.

My hopes are from this time,
To rise early.
To waste less time.
To appropriate something to charity.

EASTER

ALMIGHTY God, merciful Father, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, look down with pity upon my sinfulness and weakness. Strengthen, O Lord, my mind; deliver me from needless terrours; enable me to correct all inordinate desires, to eject all evil thoughts, to reform all sinful habits, and so to amend my life, that when at the end of my days Thou shalt call me hence, I may depart in peace, and be received into everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

9 in the morning.

GLORY be to Thee, O Lord God, for the deliverance which Thou hast granted me from diseases of mind and body. Grant, O gracious God, that I may employ the powers which Thou vouchsafest me to thy glory, and the salvation of my soul, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The continuation of his meditations, a week after Easter, and the fulness with which he writes, are additional evidences of increased vigour. The comfort he has derived, also, from a closer study of the Bible, points to a more careful and continuous devotion to spiritual things.

April 26, 1772.

I WAS some way hindered from continuing this contemplation in the usual manner, and therefore try, at the distance of a week, to review the last Sunday.

I went to church early, having first, I think, used my prayer. When I was there, I had very little perturbation of mind. During the usual time of meditation, I considered the Christian duties under the three principles of soberness, righteousness, and godliness; and purposed to forward godliness by the *annual perusal of the Bible*; righteousness by *settling something for charity*, and soberness by *early hours*. I commended as usual, with preface of permission, and, I think, mentioned Bathurst. I came home, and found Paoli and Boswell waiting for me. What devotions I used after my return home, I do not distinctly remember. I went to prayers in the evening; and, I think, entered late.

I have this week endeavoured every day but one, to rise early, and have tried to be diligent; but have not performed what I required from myself. On Good Friday, I paid Peyton without requiring work.

Since Easter 1771, I have added a collect to my evening devotion.

I have been less indulgent to corporeal inactivity. But I have done little with my mind.

It is a comfort to me, that at last, in my sixty-third year, I have attained to know, even thus hastily, confusedly, and imperfectly, what my Bible contains.

May the good God increase and sanctify my knowledge.

I have never yet read the Apocrypha. When I was a boy, I have read or heard Bel and the Dragon, Susanna, some of Tobit, perhaps all; some at least of Judith, and some of Ecclesiasticus; and I suppose, the Benedicite. I have some time looked into the Maccabees, and read a chapter containing the question, *Which is the strongest*¹? I think in Esdras.

In the afternoon of Easter Day, I read Pococke's Commentary.

I have this last week scarcely tried to read, nor have I read anything this day.

I have had my mind weak and disturbed for some weeks past.

Having missed church in the morning, I went this evening, and afterwards sat with Southwell.

Having not used the prayer, except on the day of communion; I will offer it this night, and hope to find mercy. On this day little has been done, and this is now the last hour. In life little has been done, and life is very far advanced. Lord, have mercy upon me.

¹ [1 Esdras, chap. iii. ver. 10, etc.]

The Year 1773 ☞ ☞

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Jan. 1, mane 1^h.33^m (i.e. 33 minutes past 1 in the morning). Ætat 64

Jan. 1, mane 1^h.33^m.

ALMIGHTY God, by whose mercy my life has been yet prolonged to another year, grant that thy mercy may not be vain. Let not my years be multiplied to increase my guilt; but as age advances, let me become more pure in my thoughts, more regular in my desires, and more obedient to thy laws. Let not the cares of the world distract me, nor the evils of age overwhelm me. But continue and increase thy loving-kindness towards me; and when Thou shalt call me hence, receive me to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY

Writing of this day, Boswell says:—'On the 9th of April, being Good Friday, I breakfasted with him on tea and cross-buns. He carried me with him to the church of St. Clement Danes, where he had his seat: and his behaviour was solemnly devout. I never shall forget the tremulous earnestness with which he pronounced the awful petition in the Litany: "In the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, good Lord deliver us." . . . He told me that he had twelve or fourteen times attempted to keep a journal of his life, but never could persevere. He advised me to do it.'

April 9.

ON this day I went twice to church, and Boswell was with me. I had forborn to attend divine service for some time in the winter, having a cough which would have interrupted both my own attention and that of others; and when the cough grew less troublesome I did not regain the habit of going to church, though I did not wholly omit it.

I found the service not burdensome nor tedious, though I could not hear the lessons. I hope in time to take pleasure in public worship.

On this whole day I took nothing of nourishment but one cup of tea without milk; but the fast was very inconvenient. Towards night I grew fretful and impatient, unable to fix my mind, or govern my thoughts; and felt a very uneasy sensation both in my stomach and head, compounded, as it seemed, of laxity and pains.

From this uneasiness, of which when I was not asleep I was sensible all night, I was relieved in the morning by drinking tea, and eating the soft part of a penny loaf.

This I have set down for future observation.

Saturday, April 10, I dined on cakes, and found myself filled and satisfied.

Saturday, 10. Having offered my prayers to God, I will now review the last year.

Of the spring and summer, I remember that I was able in those seasons to examine and improve my Dictionary, and was seldom withheld from the work but by my own unwillingness. Of my nights I have no distinct remembrance, but believe that, as in many foregoing years, they were painful and restless.

O God, grant that I may not misspend or lose the time which Thou shalt yet allow me. For Jesus Christ's sake, have mercy upon me.

My purpose is to attain, in the remaining part of the year, as much knowledge as can easily be had of the Gospels and Pentateuch. Concerning the Hebrew I am in doubt. I hope likewise to enlarge my knowledge of divinity, by reading, at least once a week, some sermon, or small theological tract, or some portion of a larger work.

To this important and extensive study, my purpose is to appropriate (libere) part of every Sunday, holyday, Wednesday, and Friday, and to

begin with the Gospels. Perhaps I may not be able to study the Pentateuch before next year. My general resolution, to which I humbly implore the help of God, is to methodise my life, to resist sloth. I hope from this time to keep a journal. N.B. On Friday I read the first of Mark, and Clarke's Sermon on Faith. On Saturday I read little, but wrote the foregoing account, and the following Prayer.

April 10, near midnight.

ALMMIGHTY God, by whose mercy I am now about to commemorate the death of my Redeemer, grant that from this time I may so live, as that his death may be efficacious to my eternal happiness; enable me to conquer all evil customs; deliver me from evil and vexatious thoughts; grant me light to discover my duty, and grace to perform it. As my life advances, let me become more pure, and more holy. Take not from me Thy Holy Spirit, but grant that I may serve Thee with diligence and confidence; and when Thou shalt call me hence, receive me to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY

April 11, 1773.

I HAD more disturbance in the night than has been customary for some weeks past. I rose before nine in the morning, and prayed and drank tea. I came, I think, to church in the beginning of the prayers. I did not distinctly hear the Psalms, and found that I had been reading the Psalms for Good Friday. I went through the Litany, after a short disturbance, with tolerable attention.

After sermon, I perused my prayer in the pew, then went nearer the altar, and being introduced into another pew, used my Prayer again, and recommended my relations, with Bathurst and Boothby, then my wife again by herself. Then I went nearer the altar, and read the collects chosen for meditation. I prayed for Salusbury, and, I think, the Thrales. I then communicated with calmness, used the collect for Easter Day, and returning to the first pew, prayed my Prayer the third time. I came home; again used my Prayer and the Easter collect. Then went into the study to Boswell, and read the Greek Testament. Then dined, and when Boswell went away, ended the four first chapters of St. Matthew, and the Beatitudes of the fifth.

I then went to Evening Prayers, and was composed.

I gave the pew-keepers each five shillings and three-pence.

April 12, near one in the morning. I used my Prayer, with my ordinary devotions, and hope to lead henceforward a better life.

Mrs. Salusbury was Mrs. Thrale's mother, and was much esteemed by Johnson.

Friday, June 18, 1773.

THIS day, after dinner, died Mrs. Salusbury; she had for some days almost lost the power of speaking. Yesterday, as I touched her hand, and kissed it, she pressed my hand between her two hands, which she probably intended as the parting caress. At night her speech returned a little, and she said, among other things, to her daughter, I have had much time, and I hope I have used it. This morning being called about nine to feel her pulse, I said at parting, God bless you, for Jesus Christ's sake. She smiled,

as pleased. She had her senses perhaps to the dying moment.

July 22, —73.

THIS day I found this¹ book, with the resolutions; some of which I had forgotten, but remembered my design of reading the Pentateuch and Gospels, though I have not pursued it.

Of the time past since these resolutions were made, I can give no very laudable account. Between Easter and Whitsuntide, having always considered that time as propitious to study, I attempted to learn the Low Dutch language; my application was very slight, and my memory very fallacious, though whether more than in my earlier years, I am not very certain. My progress was interrupted by a fever, which, by the imprudent use of a small print, left an inflammation in my useful eye, which was not removed but by two copious bleedings, and the daily use of catharticks for a long time. The effect yet remains.

My memory has been for a long time very much confused. Names, and persons, and events, slide away strangely from me. But I grow easier.

The other day, looking over old papers, I perceived a resolution to rise early always occurring. I think I was ashamed, or grieved, to find how long and how often I had resolved, what yet, except for about one half year, I have never done. My nights are now such as give me no quiet rest; whether I have not lived resolving till the possibility of performance is past, I know not. God help me, I will yet try.

¹ [A book, in which this, and the preceding Meditations on Good Friday and Easter Sunday are written.]

In the summer and autumn of this year Johnson made his famous tour in the Hebrides. His stay in Scotland was from the 18th of August till the 22nd of November. 'I believe,' writes Boswell, 'ninety-four days were never passed by any man in a more vigorous exertion.' As he grew older, the recurrence of his birthday was a painful anniversary to Johnson. 'I might possibly have forgotten it had not Boswell told me of it,' he remarks here. And at this time, also, he wrote to Mrs. Thrale: 'The return of my birthday, if I remember it, fills me with thoughts which it seems to be the general care of humanity to escape.'

Talisker, in Skie,
September 24, 1773.

On last Saturday was my sixty-fourth birthday.

I might perhaps have forgotten it, had not Boswell told me of it; and, what pleased me less, told the family at Dunvegan.

The last year is added to those of which little use has been made. I tried in the summer to learn Dutch, and was interrupted by an inflammation in my eye. I set out in August on this journey to Skie. I find my memory uncertain, but hope it is only by a life immethodical and scattered. Of my body, I do not perceive that exercise, or change of air, has yet either increased the strength or activity. My nights are still disturbed by flatulencies.

My hope is, for resolution I dare no longer call it, to divide my time regularly, and to keep such a journal of my time, as may give me comfort in reviewing it. But when I consider my age, and the broken state of my body, I have great reason to fear lest death should lay hold upon me, while I am yet only designing to live. But I have yet hope.

ALMIGHTY God, most merciful Father, look down upon me with pity. Thou hast protected me in childhood and youth; support me, Lord, in my declining years. Preserve me from the dangers of sinful presumption.

Give me, if it be best for me, stability of purposes, and tranquillity of mind. Let the year which I have now begun be spent to thy glory, and to the furtherance of my salvation. Take not from me thy Holy Spirit, but as death approaches, prepare me to appear joyfully in thy presence, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Year 1774 ♣ ♣

NEW YEAR'S DAY

'In the course of his self-examination with retrospect to this year *Ætat 65* (1773), he seems to have been much dejected; for he says (January 1, 1774), "This year has passed with so little improvement that I doubt whether I have not rather impaired than increased my learning." And yet we have seen how he read, and we know how he talked, during that period.'—Boswell.

In estimating the justice of Johnson's self-reproaches, we must never lose sight of the ideal he held before himself, and the great, perhaps exaggerated, value he placed on methodical working.

January 1, near 2 in the morning.

ALMIGHTY God, merciful Father, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, but wouldst that all should be saved, have mercy upon me. As Thou hast extended my life, increase my strength, direct my purposes, and confirm my resolution, that I may truly serve Thee, and perform the duties which Thou shalt allot me.

Relieve, O gracious Lord, according to thy mercy, the pains and distempers of my body, and appease the tumults of my mind. Let my faith and obedience increase as my life advances; and let the approach of death incite my desire to please Thee, and invigorate my diligence in good works, till at last, when Thou shalt call me to another state, I shall lie down in humble hope, supported by thy Holy Spirit, and be received to

everlasting happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The beginning, etc.

I hope,
To read the Gospels before Easter.
To rise at eight.
To be temperate in food.

THIS year has past with so little improvement, that I doubt whether I have not rather impaired than increased my learning. To this omission, some external causes have contributed. In the winter I was distressed by a cough; in the summer an inflammation fell upon my useful eye, from which it has not yet, I fear, recovered; in the autumn I took a journey to the Hebrides, but my mind was not free from perturbation: yet the chief cause of my deficiency has been a life immethodical and unsettled, which breaks all purposes, confounds and suppresses memory, and perhaps leaves too much leisure to imagination. O Lord, have mercy upon me.

January 9, 1774.

The Year 1775

Ætat 66

The meditations beginning with Maunday Thursday and extending to Easter Eve, reveal in simple and pathetic language the tender conscience and devout humility of Johnson. From Good Friday morning to Easter Eve he fasted, and is troubled because at sixty-five he cannot fast for two days with impunity! After evening service on Good Friday he writes, 'We then took tea, by Boswell's desire; and I eat one bun, I think, that I might not seem to fast ostentatiously.' The instinctive shrinking from anything like pharisaism, even in his fasting, is worthy of note.

Maunday Thursday, April 13.

OF the use of time, or of my commendation of myself, I thought no more; but lost life in rest-

less nights and broken days, till this week awakened my attention.

This year has passed with very little improvement, perhaps with diminution of knowledge. Much time I have not left; infirmities oppress me. But much remains to be done. I hope to rise at eight, or sooner, in the morning.

Good Friday, April 14, 1775.

BOSWELL came in before I was up. We breakfasted; I only drank tea, without milk or bread. We went to church, saw Dr. Wetherel in the pew, and, by his desire, took him home with us. He did not go very soon, and Boswell staid. Boswell and I went to church, but came very late. We then took tea, by Boswell's desire; and I eat one bun, I think, that I might not seem to fast ostentatiously. Boswell sat with me till night; we had some serious talk. When he went, I gave Francis some directions for preparation to communicate. Thus has passed, hitherto, this awful day.

10° 30'. P.M.

WHEN I look back upon resolutions of improvement and amendment, which have year after year been made and broken, either by negligence, forgetfulness, vicious idleness, casual interruption, or morbid infirmity; when I find that so much of my life has stolen unprofitably away, and that I can descry by retrospection scarcely a few single days properly and vigorously employed; why do I yet try to resolve again? I try, because reformation is necessary, and despair is criminal. I try, in humble hope of the help of God.

As my life has, from my earliest years, been wasted in a morning bed, my purpose is from Easter-day to rise early, not later than eight.

11° 15' P. M. D. j.

Easter Eve, April 15, 1774.

I ROSE more early than is common, after a night disturbed by flatulencies, though I had taken so little. I prayed, but my mind was unsettled, and I did not fix upon the book. After the bread and tea I trifled, and about three ordered coffee and buns for my dinner. I find more faintness and uneasiness in fasting than I did formerly.

While coffee was preparing, Collier came in, a man whom I had not seen for more than twenty years, but whom I consulted about Macky's books. We talked of old friends and past occurrences, and eat and drank together.

I then read a little in the Testament, and tried Fiddes's 'Body of Divinity,' but did not settle.

I then went to Evening Prayer, and was tolerably composed. At my return I sat a while, then retired, but found reading uneasy.

11 P.M.

These two days in which I fasted, I have not been sleepy, though I rested ill.

EASTER DAY

April 16, 1775.

ALMIGHTY God, heavenly Father, whose mercy is over all thy works, look with pity on my miseries and sins. Suffer me to commemorate, in thy presence, my redemption by thy Son Jesus Christ. Enable me so to repent of my misspent time, that I may pass the residue of my life in thy fear, and to thy glory. Relieve, O Lord, as seemeth best unto Thee, the infirmities of my body, and the perturbation of my mind. Fill my thoughts with awful love of thy goodness, with just fear of thine anger, and with humble

confidence in thy mercy. Let me study thy laws, and labour in the duties which Thou shalt set before me. Take not from me thy Holy Spirit, but incite in me such good desires, as may produce diligent endeavours after thy glory, and my own salvation; and when, after hopes and fears, and joys and sorrows, Thou shalt call me hence, receive me to eternal happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collier is dead. April 7, 1776.

Transcribed from a former book, with a slight emendation or two. With that book I parted, perhaps unnecessarily, by a catch.

JOHNSON'S BIRTHDAY

For about two months in this year Johnson was with the Thrales in France.

September 18, 1775.

O GOD, by whom all things were created and are sustained, who givest and takest away, in whose hands are life and death, accept my imperfect thanks for the length of days which Thou hast vouchsafed to grant me; impress upon my mind such repentance of the time misspent in sinfulness and negligence, that I may obtain forgiveness of all my offences; and so calm my mind, and strengthen my resolutions, that I may live the remaining part of my life in thy fear, and with thy favour. Take not thy Holy Spirit from me; but let me so love thy laws, and so obey them, that I may finally be received to eternal happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Composed at Calais, in a sleepless night, and used before the morn at Nôtre Dame. Written at St. Omers.

The Year 1776

January 1.

ALMIGHTY God, merciful Father, who hast permitted me to see the beginning of another year, grant that the time which Thou shalt yet afford me, may be spent to thy glory, and the salvation of my own soul. Strengthen all good resolutions, and take not from me thy Holy Spirit, but have mercy upon me, and shed thy blessing both on my soul and body, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EASTER DAY

Ætat 67

The mention of Mr. Thrale coming to Johnson on Good Friday 'for comfort' is explained by the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Thrale had recently been bereaved of their only son.

April 7.

THE time is again at which, since the death of my poor dear Tetty, on whom God have mercy, I have annually commemorated the mystery of Redemption, and annually purposed to amend my life. My reigning sin, to which perhaps many others are appendant, is waste of time, and general sluggishness, to which I was always inclined, and in part of my life, have been almost compelled by morbid melancholy and disturbance of mind. Melancholy has had in me its paroxysms and remissions, but I have not improved the intervals, nor sufficiently resisted my natural inclination or sickly habits. I will resolve, henceforth, to rise at eight in the morning, so far as resolution is proper, and will pray that God will strengthen me. I have begun this morning.

Though for the past week I have had an anxious design of communicating to-day, I performed no particular act of devotion, till on Friday I went to church. My design was to pass part of the day in exercises of piety, but Mr. Boswell interrupted me; of him, however, I could have rid myself, but poor Thrale, orbis et exspes, came for comfort, and sat till seven, when we all went to church.

*Ch. Boswell and
dequaring*

In the morning I had at church some radiations of comfort.

I fasted, though less rigorously than at other times. I, by negligence, poured milk into the tea, and, in the afternoon, drank one dish of coffee with Thrale; yet at night, after a fit of drowsiness, I felt myself very much disordered by emptiness, and called for tea, with peevish and impatient eagerness. My distress was very great.

Yesterday, I do not recollect that to go to church came into my thoughts; but I sat in my chamber, preparing for preparation; interrupted, I know not how. I was near two hours at dinner.

I go now with hope,

To rise in the morning at eight.

To use my remaining time with diligence.

To study more accurately the Christian Religion.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who hast preserved me, by thy tender forbearance, once more to commemorate thy love in the redemption of the world; grant that I may so live the residue of my days, as to obtain thy mercy when Thou shalt call me from the present state. Illuminate my thoughts with knowledge, and inflame my heart with holy desires. Grant me to resolve well, and keep my resolutions; take not from me thy Holy Spirit, but in life and in

death have mercy on me, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Acts of Forgiveness.

P.M.—In the pew I read my Prayer, and commended my friends, and those that died this year. At the altar I was generally attentive; some thoughts of vanity came into my mind while others were communicating; but I found, when I considered them, that they did not tend to irreverence of God. At the altar I renewed my resolutions. When I received, some tender images struck me. I was so mollified by the concluding address to our Saviour, that I could not utter it. The communicants were mostly women. At intervals I read collects, and recollected, as I could, my Prayer. Since my return, I have said it. 2 P.M.

May 21, 1776.

THESE resolutions I have not practised nor recollected. O God, grant me to begin now, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

July 25, 1776.

O GOD, who hast ordained that whatever is to be desired, should be sought by labour, and who, by thy blessing, bringest honest labour to good effect; look with mercy upon my studies and endeavours. Grant me, O Lord, to design only what is lawful and right; and afford me calmness of mind, and steadiness of purpose, that I may so do thy will in this short life, as to obtain happiness in the world to come, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

When I purposed to apply vigorously to study, particularly of the Greek and Italian tongues.

The Year 1777 ● ●

January 1, 2 P.M.

ALMIGHTY Lord, merciful Father, vouchsafe to accept the thanks which I now presume to offer Thee, for the prolongation of my life. Grant, O Lord, that as my days are multiplied, my good resolutions may be strengthened, my power of resisting temptations increased, and my struggles with snares and obstructions invigorated. Relieve the infirmities both of my mind and body. Grant me such strength as my duties may require, and such diligence as may improve those opportunities of good that shall be offered me. Deliver me from the intrusion of evil thoughts. Grant me true repentance of my past life; and as I draw nearer and nearer to the grave, strengthen my faith, enliven my hope, extend my charity, and purify my desires; and so help me, by thy Holy Spirit, that when it shall be thy pleasure to call me hence, I may be received to everlasting happiness, for the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father—

March 28.

THIS day is Good Friday. It is likewise the day on which my poor Tetty was taken from me. My thoughts were disturbed in bed. I remembered that it was my wife's dying day, and begged pardon for all our sins, and commended her; but resolved to mix little of my own sorrows or cares with the great solemnity. Having taken only tea without milk, I went to church; had time, before service, to commend my wife, and wished to join quietly in the service, but I did not hear well, and my mind

grew unsettled and perplexed. Having rested ill in the night, I slumbered at the sermon, which, I think, I could not, as I sat, perfectly hear.

I returned home, but could not settle my mind. At last I read a chapter. Then went down, about six or seven, and eat two cross-buns, and drank tea. Fasting for some time has been uneasy, and I have taken but little.

At night I had some ease. L.D. I had prayed for pardon and peace.

I slept in the afternoon.

29, Easter Eve.

I ROSE, and again prayed, with reference to my departed wife. I neither read nor went to church, yet can scarcely tell how I have been hindered. I treated with booksellers on a bargain, but the time was not long.

BEFORE EASTER DAY

Ætat 68

Of this period, Boswell writes: 'It appears from his "Prayers and Meditations" that Johnson suffered much from a state of mind "unsettled and perplexed," and from that constitutional gloom which, together with his extreme humility and anxiety with regard to his religious state, made him contemplate himself through too dark and unpardonable a medium. It may be said of him that he "saw God in clouds."'

30, Easter Day, *in a mane*.

THE day is now come again, in which, by a custom which since the death of my wife I have by the divine assistance always observed, I am to renew the great covenant with my Maker and my Judge. I humbly hope to perform it better. I hope for more efficacy of resolution, and more diligence of endeavour. When I survey my past life, I discover nothing but a barren waste of time, with some disorders of body, and disturbances of the mind very near to madness, which I hope He that made me, will suffer to ex-

tenuate many faults, and excuse many deficiencies. Yet much remains to be repented and reformed. I hope that I refer more to God than in former times, and consider more what submission is due to his dispensations. But I have very little reformed my practical life; and the time in which I can struggle with habits cannot be now expected to be long. Grant, O God, that I may no longer resolve in vain, or dream away the life which thy indulgence gives me, in vacancy and uselessness.

gnâ mane.

I WENT to bed about two, had a disturbed night, though not so distressful as at some other times.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who seest all our miseries, and knowest all our necessities, look down upon me, and pity me. Defend me from the violent incursions of evil thoughts, and enable me to form and keep such resolutions as may conduce to the discharge of the duties which thy providence shall appoint me; and so help me, by thy Holy Spirit, that my heart may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, and that I may serve Thee with pure affection and a cheerful mind. Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me; years and infirmities oppress me, terrour and anxiety beset me. Have mercy upon me, my Creator and my Judge. In all dangers protect me, in all perplexities relieve and free me, and so help me by thy Holy Spirit, that I may now so commemorate the death of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, as that when this short and painful life shall have an end, I may, for his sake, be received to everlasting happiness. Amen.

Mrs. Gardiner, of Snow Hill, who, according to Boswell, 'though in the humble station of a tallow-chandler, was a woman of excellent good sense, pious, and charitable,' was much esteemed by Johnson. In his will he left her a book, 'at her election, to keep as a token of remembrance.'

John Paradise, LL.D., was distinguished for his learning and talents. He was the son of Peter Paradise, the English Consul at Salonica.

April 6, 1777.

BY one strange hindrance or another, I have been withheld from the continuation of my thoughts to this day, the Sunday following Easter-day.

On Easter-day I was at church early, and there prayed over my Prayer, and commended Tetty and my other friends. I was for some time much distressed, but at last obtained, I hope from the God of Peace, more quiet than I have enjoyed for a long time. I had made no resolution, but as my heart grew lighter, my hopes revived, and my courage increased; and I wrote with my pencil in my Common Prayer Book,

Vita ordinanda.
Biblia legenda.
Theologiæ opera danda.
Serviendum et lætandum.

I then went to the altar, having, I believe, again read my Prayer. I then went to the table and communicated, praying for some time afterwards, but the particular matter of my Prayer I do not remember.

I dined, by an appointment, with Mrs. Gardiner, and passed the afternoon with such calm gladness of mind as it is very long since I felt before. I came home, and began to read the Bible. I passed the night in such sweet uninterrupted sleep, as I have not known since I slept at Fort Augustus.

On Monday I dined with Sheward, on Tuesday

with Paradise. The mornings have been devoured by company, and one intrusion has, through the whole week, succeeded to another.

At the beginning of the year I proposed to myself a scheme of life, and a plan of study; but neither life has been rectified, nor study followed. Days and months pass in a dream; and I am afraid that my memory grows less tenacious, and my observation less attentive. If I am decaying, it is time to make haste. My nights are restless and tedious, and my days drowsy. The flatulence which torments me, has sometimes so obstructed my breath, that the act of respiration became not only voluntary but laborious in a decumbent posture. By copious bleeding I was relieved, but not cured.

I have this year omitted church on most Sundays, intending to supply the deficiency in the week. So that I owe twelve attendances on worship. I will make no more such superstitious stipulations, which entangle the mind with unbidden obligations.

My purpose once more, O Thou merciful Creator that governest all our hearts and actions, *βίωτης οἴηκα Κυβερνῶν*, let not my purpose be vain:—My purpose once more is,

To rise at eight.

To keep a journal.

To read the whole Bible, in some language, before Easter.

To gather the arguments for Christianity.

To worship God more frequently in public.

JOHNSON'S BIRTHDAY

At this time Johnson and Boswell were the guests of the Rev. Dr. Taylor at Ashbourn, near Oxford. In Boswell's 'Life,' we read:—'Thursday, Sept. 18.—Last night Dr. Johnson had proposed that the crystal lustre, or chandelier, in Dr. Taylor's large room should be lighted up some time or other. Taylor said it should be lighted up next night. "That will do very well," said I, "for it is Dr.

Johnson's birthday." When we were in the Isle of Sky, Johnson had desired me not to mention his birthday. He did not seem pleased at this time that I mentioned it, and said (somewhat sternly) he "Would not have the lustre lighted next day."

Ashbourn, Sept. 18, 1777.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who hast brought me to the beginning of another year, grant me so to remember thy gifts, and so to acknowledge thy goodness, as that every year and day which Thou shalt yet grant me, may be employed in the amendment of my life, and in the diligent discharge of such duties as thy providence shall allot me. Grant me, by thy grace, to know and to do what Thou requirest. Give me good desires, and remove those impediments which may hinder them from effect. Forgive me my sins, negligences, and ignorances; and when at the last Thou shalt call me to another life, receive me to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Year 1778 ♪ ♪

GOOD FRIDAY

Ætat 69

It was Boswell's habit, when in London, to spend Good Friday with Johnson. Of this date he writes: 'April 17th being Good Friday, waited on Johnson as usual. I observed at breakfast that although it was a part of his abstemious discipline, on this most solemn fast, to take no milk in his tea, yet when Mrs. Desmoulin inadvertently poured it in, he did not reject it.'

Of the meeting with Mr. Edwards, a rather shallow individual, Boswell says: 'It was in Butcher Row that this meeting happened. Mr. Edwards, who was a decent-looking, elderly man in grey clothes and a wig of many curls, accosted Johnson with familiar confidence, knowing who he was, while Johnson returned his salutation with a courteous formality, as to a stranger.' Johnson took Edwards

home with him, and Boswell gives an extensive account of their talk.

April 17.

IT has happened this week, as it never happened in Passion Week before, that I have never dined at home, and I have therefore neither practised abstinence nor peculiar devotion.

This morning before I went to bed I enlarged my prayers, by adding some collects with reference to the day. I rested moderately, and rose about nine, which is more early than is usual. I think I added something to my morning prayers. Boswell came in to go to church; we had tea, but I did not eat. Talk lost our time, and we came to church late, at the Second Lesson. My mind has been for some time feeble and impressible, and some trouble it gave me in the morning; but I went with some confidence and calmness through the prayers.

In my return from church, I was accosted by Edwards, an old fellow collegian, who had not seen me since 1729. He knew me, and asked if I remembered one Edwards; I did not at first recollect the name, but gradually, as we walked along, recovered it, and told him a conversation that had passed at an alehouse between us. My purpose is to continue our acquaintance.

We sat till the time of worship in the afternoon, and then came again late, at the Psalms. Not easily, I think, hearing the sermon, or not being attentive, I fell asleep. When we came home we had tea, and I eat two buns, being somewhat uneasy with fasting, and not being alone. If I had not been observed I should probably have fasted.

EASTER DAY

The 'Langton' mentioned here was Bennet Langton, Esq. of Langton, in Lincolnshire, a great friend of Johnson, and one who is frequently mentioned in Boswell's 'Life.' He was one of the original members of the famous Literary Club Johnson founded.

April 19, after 12 at night.

O LORD have mercy upon me.

Yesterday (18) I rose late, having not slept ill.

Having promised a dedication, I thought it necessary to write; but for some time neither wrote nor read. Langton came in and talked.

After dinner I wrote. At tea Boswell came in. He staid till near twelve.

I purposed to have gone in the evening to church, but missed the hour.

Edwards observed how many we have outlived. I hope, yet hope, that my future life shall be better than my past.

From the year 1752, the year in which my poor dear Tetty died, upon whose soul may God have had mercy for the sake of Jesus Christ, I have received the sacrament every year at Easter. My purpose is to receive it now. O Lord God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, make it effectual to my salvation.

My purposes are,

To study divinity, particularly the evidences of Christianity.

To read the New Testament over in the year, with more use than hitherto of commentators.

To be diligent in my undertakings.

To serve and trust God, and be cheerful.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, suffer me once more to commemorate the death of thy Son Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Redeemer, and make the memorial of his death profitable to my salvation, by strengthening my

faith in his merits, and quickening my obedience to his laws. Remove from me, O God, all inordinate desires, all corrupt passions, and all vain terrours, and fill me with zeal for thy glory, and with confidence in thy mercy. Make me to love all men, and enable me to use thy gifts, whatever Thou shalt bestow, to the benefit of my fellow-creatures. So lighten the weight of years, and so mitigate the afflictions of disease, that I may continue fit for thy service, and useful in my station. And so let me pass through this life, by the guidance of thy Holy Spirit, that at last I may enter into eternal joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HAVING gone to bed about two, I rose about nine, and having prayed, went to church. I came early, and used this prayer. After sermon I again used my prayer; the collect for the day I repeated several times, at least the petitions. I recommended my friends. At the altar I prayed earnestly, and when I came home prayed for pardon and peace; repeated my own prayer, and added the petitions of the collect.

O God have mercy upon me, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

At my return home, I returned thanks for the opportunity of communion.

I was called down to Mrs. Nollikens. Boswell came in; then dinner. After dinner, which I believe was late, I read the First Epistle to Thess.: then went to Evening Prayers; then came to tea, and afterwards tried Vossius de Baptismo. I was sleepy.

Monday, April 20, 1778.

AFTER a good night, as I am forced to reckon, I rose seasonably, and prayed, using the collect for yesterday.

In reviewing my time from Easter 1777, I found a very melancholy and shameful blank. So little has been done, that days and months are without any trace. My health has, indeed, been very much interrupted. My nights have been commonly, not only restless, but painful and fatiguing. My respiration was once so difficult, that an asthma was suspected. I could not walk, but with great difficulty, from Stowhill to Greenhill. Some relaxation of my breast has been procured, I think, by opium, which, though it never gives me sleep, frees my breast from spasms.

I have written a little of the Lives of the Poets, I think with all my usual vigour. I have made sermons, perhaps as readily as formerly. My memory is less faithful in retaining names, and, I am afraid, in retaining occurrences. Of this vacillation and vagrancy of mind, I impute a great part to a fortuitous and unsettled life, and therefore purpose to spend my time with more method.

This year, the 28th of March passed away without memorial. Poor Tetty, whatever were our faults and failings, we loved each other. I did not forget thee yesterday. Couldst thou have lived!—

I am now, with the help of God, to begin a new life.

The Year 1779 ♪ ♪

Jan. 1, before 1 in the morning.

ALMIGHTY God, merciful Father, who hast granted to me the beginning of another year, grant that I may employ thy gifts to thy glory, and my own salvation. Excite me to amend my life; give me good resolutions, and enable me to perform them. As I approach the

grave, let my faith be invigorated, my hope exalted, and my charity enlarged. Take not from me thy Holy Spirit; but in the course of my life protect me, in the hour of death sustain me, and finally receive me to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY

'In the interval between morning and evening service, he endeavoured to employ himself earnestly in devotional exercise: and, as he has mentioned in his "Prayers and Meditations," gave me "Les Pensées de Paschal," that I might not interrupt him. I preserve the book with reverence.'—Boswell. Etat 70

April 2.

AFTER a night restless and oppressive, I rose this morning somewhat earlier than is usual; and having taken tea, which was very necessary to compose the disorder in my breast, having eaten nothing, I went to church with Boswell. We came late; I was able to attend the Litany with little perturbation. When we came home I began the First to the Thess. having prayed by the Collect for the right use of the Scriptures. I gave Boswell *Les Pensées de Pascal*, that he might not interrupt me. I did not, I believe, read very diligently; and before I had read far, we went to church again; I was again attentive. At home I read again, then drank tea, with a bun and a half, thinking myself less able to fast than at former times; and then concluded the Epistle. Being much oppressed with drowsiness, I slept about an hour by the fire.

11 P.M.

I AM now to review the last year, and find little but dismal vacuity, neither business nor pleasure; much intended, and little done. My

health is much broken; my nights afford me little rest. I have tried opium, but its help is counterbalanced with great disturbance; it prevents the spasms, but it hinders sleep. O God have mercy on me.

Last week I published [the first part of] the Lives of the Poets, written, I hope, in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety.

In this last year I have made little acquisition; I have scarcely read any thing. I maintain Mrs. —¹ and her daughter. Other good of myself I know not where to find, except a little charity.

But I am now in my seventieth year; what can be done, ought not to be delayed.

EASTER EVE

April 3, 1779, 11 P.M.

THIS is the time of my annual review, and annual resolution. The review is comfortless, little done. Part of the Life of Dryden and the Life of Milton have been written; but my mind has neither been improved nor enlarged. I have read little, almost nothing. And I am not conscious that I have gained any good, or quitted any evil habits.

Of resolutions I have made so many, with so little effect, that I am almost weary, but, by the help of God, am not yet hopeless. Good resolutions must be made and kept. I am almost seventy years old, and have no time to lose. The distressful restlessness of my nights, makes it difficult to settle the course of my days. Something, however, let me do.

¹ Desmoulins.

EASTER DAY

April 4, 1779.

I ROSE about half an hour after nine, transcribed the prayer written last night; and by neglecting to count time, sat too long at breakfast, so that I came to church at the First Lesson. I attended the Litany pretty well; but in the pew could not hear the communion service, and missed the prayer for the church militant. Before I went to the altar, I prayed the occasional prayer. At the altar I commended my $\Theta \Phi$,¹ and again prayed the prayer; I then prayed the Collects, and again my own prayer by memory. I left out a clause. I then received, I hope with earnestness; and while others received sat down; but thinking that posture, though usual, improper, I rose and stood. I prayed again in the pew, but with what prayer I have forgotten.

When I used the occasional prayer at the altar,
I added a general purpose,
To avoid idleness.

I gave two shillings to the plate.

Before I went I used, I think, my prayer, and endeavoured to calm my mind. After my return I used it again, and the collect for the day. Lord have mercy upon me.

I have for some nights called Francis to prayers, and last night discoursed with him on the sacrament.

EASTER DAY

April 4, 1779.

Purposes,

To rise at eight, or as soon as I can.

To read the Scriptures.

To study Religion.

¹ For meaning of this, see Dr. Jackson's letter to the 'Athenæum,' June 18, 1837.

ALMIGHTY God, by thy merciful continuance of my life, I come once more to commemorate the sufferings and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and to implore that mercy which, for his sake, Thou shewest to sinners. Forgive me my sins, O Lord, and enable me to forsake them. Ease, if it shall please Thee, the anxieties of my mind, and relieve the infirmities of my body. Let me not be disturbed by unnecessary terrors, and let not the weakness of age make me unable to amend my life. O Lord, take not from me thy Holy Spirit, but receive my petitions, succour and comfort me, and let me so pass the remainder of my days, that when Thou shalt call me hence, I may enter into eternal happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JOHNSON'S BIRTHDAY

H.P.M. 12mā, i.e. hora prima matutina, in the first hour of the morning, at twelve o'clock.

Sept. 18, 1779, H.P.M. 12mā.

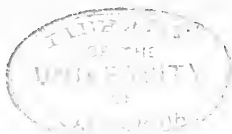
ALMIGHTY God, Creator of all things, in whose hands are life and death, glory be to Thee for all thy mercies, and for the prolongation of my life to the common age of man. Pardon me, O gracious God, all the offences which in the course of seventy years I have committed against thy holy laws, and all negligences of those duties which Thou hast required. Look with pity upon me, take not from me thy Holy Spirit, but enable me to pass the days which Thou shalt yet vouchsafe to grant me, in thy fear, and to thy glory; and accept, O Lord, the remains of a misspent life, that when Thou shalt call me to another state, I may be received to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Epsom.

My purpose is to communicate at least thrice a year.

To study the Scriptures.

To be diligent.



The Year 1780 ♣ ♣

H. 1 A.M., hora prima ante meridian, or one o'clock in the *Ætat* 71 morning.

January 1, H. 1. A.M.

ALMIGHTY God, my Creator and Preserver, by whose mercy my life has been continued to the beginning of another year, grant me, with increase of days, increase of holiness; that as I live longer, I may be better prepared to appear before Thee, when Thou shalt call me from my present state.

Make me, O Lord, truly thankful for the mercy which Thou hast vouchsafed to show me through my whole life; make me thankful for the health which thou hast restored in the last year, and let the remains of my strength and life be employed to thy glory and my own salvation.

Take not, O Lord, thy Holy Spirit from me; enable me to avoid or overcome all that may hinder my advancement in godliness; let me be no longer idle, no longer sinful; but give me rectitude of thought and constancy of action, and bring me at last to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Sunday, June 18.

IN the morning of this day last year, I perceived the remission of those convulsions in my breast, which had distressed me for more than twenty years. I returned thanks at church for the

mercy granted me, which has now continued a year.

THANKSGIVING

ALMIGHTY God, our Creator and Preserver, from whom proceedeth all good, enable me to receive, with humble acknowledgment of thy unbounded benignity, and with due consciousness of my own unworthiness, that recovery and continuance of health which Thou had granted me, and vouchsafe to accept the thanks which I now offer. Glory be to Thee, O Lord, for this and all thy mercies. Grant, I beseech Thee, that the health and life which Thou shalt yet allow me, may conduce to my eternal happiness. Take not from me thy Holy Spirit; but so help and bless me, that when Thou shalt call me hence, I may obtain pardon and salvation, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

JOHNSON'S BIRTHDAY

Sept. 18, 1780.

I AM now beginning the seventy-second year of my life, with more strength of body and greater vigour of mind than I think is common at that age. But though the convulsions in my breast are relieved, my sleep is seldom long. My nights are wakeful, and therefore I am sometimes sleepy in the day. I have been attentive to my diet, and have diminished the bulk of my body. I have not at all studied, nor written diligently. I have Swift and Pope yet to write; Swift is just begun.

I have forgotten or neglected my resolutions or purposes, which I now humbly and timorously renew. Surely I shall not spend my whole life with my own total disapprobation. Perhaps

God may grant me now to begin a wiser and a better life.

ALMIGHTY God, my Creator and Preserver, who hast permitted me to begin another year, look with mercy upon my wretchedness and frailty. Rectify my thoughts, relieve my perplexities, strengthen my purposes, and reform my doings. Let increase of years bring increase of faith, hope, and charity. Grant me diligence in whatever work thy providence shall appoint me. Take not from me thy Holy Spirit, but let me pass the remainder of the days which Thou shalt yet allow me, in thy fear and to thy glory; and when it shall be thy good pleasure to call me hence, grant me, O Lord, forgiveness of my sins, and receive me to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Year 1781 ♣ ♣

The note explaining the one day's lateness of this last New Year's *Ætat* 72 prayer Johnson composed is not without pathos. He was once more in the grip of his old malady.

Of Johnson's return to the use of wine, Boswell writes:—"He (Mr. Thrale) told me I might now have the pleasure to see Dr. Johnson drink wine again, for he had lately returned to it. When I mentioned this to Johnson, he said—"I drink it now, sometimes, but not socially." Mrs. Desmoulins was one of several people in reduced circumstances whom Johnson wholly or partially maintained. She was the daughter of Dr. Swinfen, Johnson's godfather, and widow of Mr. Desmoulins, a writing-master.

January 2.

I WAS yesterday hindered by my old disease of mind, and therefore begin to-day.

January 1.

Having sat in my chamber till the year began, I used my accommodation of the Morning Prayer *to the beginning of this year*, and slept remarkably well, though I had supped liberally. In the morning I went to church. Then I wrote letters for Mrs. Desmoulins; then went to Streatham, and had many stops. At night I took wine, and did not sleep well.

January 2, 1781.

I ROSE according to my resolution, and am now to begin another year; I hope with amendment of life. I will not despair. Help me, help me, O my God. My hope is—

To rise at eight or sooner.

To read the Bible through this year, in some language.

To keep a journal.

To study religion.

To avoid idleness.

ALMIGHTY God, merciful Father, who hast granted me such continuance of life, that I now see the beginning of another year, look with mercy upon me; as Thou grantest increase of years, grant increase of grace. Let me live to repent what I have done amiss, and by thy help so to regulate my future life, that I may obtain mercy when I appear before Thee, through the merits of Jesus Christ. Enable me, O Lord, to do my duty with a quiet mind; and take not from me thy Holy Spirit, but protect and bless me, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY

Mr. Thrale, a rich Southwark brewer, and his wife, Mrs. Thrale (afterwards Mrs. Piozzi), occupy a prominent place in the life of Johnson. At their home in Streatham he frequently stayed for long periods.

April 13, 1781.

I FORGOT my prayer and resolutions, till two days ago I found this paper.

Sometime in March I finished the Lives of the Poets, which I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work, and working with vigour and haste.

On Wednesday 11, was buried my dear friend Thrale, who died on Wednesday 4; and with him were buried many of my hopes and pleasures. About five, I think, on Wednesday morning he expired; I felt almost the last flutter of his pulse, and looked for the last time upon the face that for fifteen years had never been turned upon me but with respect or benignity. Farewell. May God, that delighteth in mercy, have had mercy on thee.

I had constantly prayed for him some time before his death.

The decease of him, from whose friendship I had obtained many opportunities of amusement, and to whom I turned my thought as to a refuge from misfortunes, has left me heavy. But my business is with myself.

September 18.

MY first knowledge of Thrale was in 1765. I enjoyed his favour for almost a fourth part of my life.

EASTER EVE

April 14, 1781.

ON Good Friday I took, in the afternoon, some coffee and buttered cake; and to-day, I had a little bread at breakfast, and potatoes and apples in the afternoon, the tea with a little toast; but I find myself feeble and unsustained, and suspect that I cannot bear to fast so long as formerly.

This day I read some of Clarke's Sermons. I hope that since my last communion I have advanced, by pious reflections, in my submission to God and my benevolence to man; but I have corrected no external habits, nor have kept any of the resolutions made in the beginning of the year; yet I hope still to be reformed, and not to lose my whole life in idle purposes. Many years are already gone, irrevocably past, in useless misery; that what remains may be spent better, grant, O God.

By this awful festival is particularly recommended newness of life; and a new life I will now endeavour to begin, by more diligent application to useful employment, and more frequent attendance on public worship.

I again, with hope of help from the God of mercy, resolve,

To avoid idleness.

To read the Bible.

To study religion.

ALMIGHTY God, merciful Father, by whose protection I have been preserved, and by whose clemency I have been spared, grant that the life which Thou hast so long continued may be no longer wasted in idleness, or corrupted by wickedness. Let my future purposes be good,

and let not my good purposes be vain. Free me, O Lord, from vain terrours, and strengthen me in diligent obedience to thy laws. Take not from me thy Holy Spirit, but enable me so to commemorate the death of my Saviour Jesus Christ, that I may be made partaker of his merits; and may finally, for his sake, obtain everlasting happiness. Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY

1781.

I ROSE after eight, and breakfasted; then went early to church, and before service read the prayer for the Church Militant. I commended my ^θ¹ friends, as I have formerly done. I was one of the last that communicated. When I came home I was hindered by visitants, but found time to pray before dinner. God, send thy blessing upon me.

Frank, or Francis, Barber, was the coloured servant of Johnson. There was a strong attachment between master and servant, and Johnson left the bulk of his money to Barber.

Monday, April 16.

AT night I had some mental vellications, or revulsions. I prayed in my chamber with Frank, and read the first Sunday in the Duty of Man, in which I had, till then, only looked by compulsion or by chance.

This day I repeated my prayer, and hope to be heard.

I paid the Pew-keepers.

I have, I thank God, received the Sacrament every year at Easter since the death of my poor dear Tetty. I once felt some temptation to omit it,

¹ Sic MS.

but I was preserved from compliance. This was the thirtieth Easter.

IN MEMORY OF THRALE

June 22, 1781.

ALMIGHTY God, who art the giver of all good, enable me to remember with due thankfulness, the comforts and advantages which I have enjoyed by the friendship of Henry Thrale, for whom, so far as is lawful, I humbly implore thy mercy in his present state. O Lord, since Thou hast been pleased to call him from this world, look with mercy on those whom he has left; continue to succour me by such means as are best for me, and repay to his relations the kindness which I have received from him; protect them in this world from temptations and calamities, and grant them happiness in the world to come, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

September 2, 1781.

WHEN Thrale's health was broken, for many months I think before his death, which happened April 4, I constantly mentioned him in my prayers; and after his death, have made particular supplication for his surviving family to this date.

JOHNSON'S BIRTHDAY

Instead of the usual melancholy, there is a marked note of cheerfulness on this day. 'As I came home, I thought I had never begun any period of life so placidly,' is the unique record. And so, to mark this red-letter birthday, we read, 'I had a dinner, and invited Allen and Levett.'

Allen was a printer, and Johnson's landlord. Of him, nearly twenty years before this, Boswell has the record: 'One day, when he (Johnson) had dined with his neighbour and landlord in Bolt Court,

Mr. Allen, the printer, whose old house-keeper had studied his taste in everything, he pronounced this eulogy: "Sir, we could not have had a better dinner, had there been a *Synod of Cooks*."

Robert Levett was an old friend of Johnson, and lived with him. On his death, in 1783, Johnson wrote: 'My old friend Mr. Levett is dead, who lived with me in the house, and was useful and companionable.'

Vesp. 10° 40', circ., i.e. about 10.40 o'clock at night.

September 18.

THIS is my seventy-third birthday, an awful day.

I said a preparatory prayer last night, and waking early, made use, in the dark, as I sat up in bed, of the prayer [beginning of this year].

I rose, breakfasted, and gave thanks at church for my creation, preservation, and redemption.

As I came home, I thought I had never begun any period of life so placidly. I read the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, and looked into Hammond's Notes. I have always been accustomed to let this day pass unnoticed, but it came this time into my mind that some little festivity was not improper. I had a dinner, and invited Allen and Levett.

What has passed in my thoughts on this anniversary, is in stitched book K.¹

My purposes are the same as on the first day of this year, to which I add hope of

More frequent attendance on public worship.

Participation of the Sacrament at least three times a year.

Sept. 18, Vesp. 10° 40', circ.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who hast added another year to my life, and yet permittest me to call upon Thee, grant that the remaining days which Thou shalt yet allow me, may be past in thy fear and to thy glory.

Grant me good resolutions and steady persever-

¹ [This book is not in the Editor's possession.]

ance. Relieve the diseases of my body, and compose the disquiet of my mind. Let me at last repent and amend my life; and, O Lord, take not from me thy Holy Spirit, but assist my amendment, and accept my repentance, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

VISIT TO LICHFIELD, ETC.

Concerning this journey, Boswell writes: 'In autumn he (Johnson) went to Oxford, Birmingham, Lichfield, and Ashbourne, for which very good reasons might be given in the conjectural yet positive manner of writers, who are proud to account for every event which they relate.' As Boswell suggests, perhaps the true and sole reason is to be found in these notes, viz. his desire to renew old friendships, and do some little good.

Mrs. Aston was a maiden lady, daughter of Sir Thomas Aston, whose family Johnson had known from his Oxford days. She lived at Lichfield.

Mr. Hector was an old schoolfellow of Johnson, and a lifelong friend. He was a surgeon in Birmingham, and was very kind to Johnson when he was practically homeless, and without a career, after leaving the Market-Bosworth school. Johnson lived with Hector as his guest for six months, at the house of Mr. Warren, 'the first established bookseller in Birmingham.'

Sunday, October 14, 1781
(properly Monday morning).

I AM this day about to go by Oxford and Birmingham to Lichfield and Ashbourne. The motives of my journey I hardly know. I omitted it last year, and am not willing to miss it again. Mrs. Aston will be glad, I think, to see me. We are both old, and if I put off my visit, I may see her no more; perhaps she wishes for another interview. She is a very good woman.

Hector is likewise an old friend, the only companion of my childhood that passed through the school with me. We have always loved one another. Perhaps we may be made better by some serious conversation, of which however I have no distinct hope.

At Lichfield, my native place, I hope to shew a

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good example, by frequent attendance on public worship.

At Ashbourne, I hope to talk seriously with —¹.

The Year 1782

The month of March, from the 17th, is dealt with very fully this *Ætat* 73 year. And it is the only month commemorated in the 'Meditations.' The references to his wife, who had now been dead thirty years, are peculiarly touching and tender. 'Perhaps Tetty knows that I prayed for her. Perhaps Tetty is praying for me. God help me.' A very sweet devotion on the part of this gruff old man after so long a separation! Of the persons mentioned here, it may be noted that Mrs. Lennox was a contemporary author for whom Johnson had great regard; Miss Reynolds was the sister of Sir Joshua Reynolds; Miss Thrale was Thrale's daughter; the Rev. Herbert Crofts was the author of a *Life of Dr. Young*; Dr. Laurence was the friend and physician of Johnson; Rev. Mr. Shaw was a writer on Ossian, and author of a *Gaelic Dictionary*; Rev. G. Strahan was the first editor of this book; Rev. Dr. Taylor, of Ashbourne, was an old friend of Johnson's; Davis was a bookseller of Russell Street; Right Hon. W. Windham was a Norfolk gentleman; Mrs. Williams was the blind lady whom Johnson maintained so many years in his house; Dr. Percy was Bishop of Dromore; Lucy was Lucy Porter, Johnson's stepdaughter; and Lowe was an artist of that day.

Writing comprehensively of this year, Boswell says: 'In 1782 his (Johnson's) complaints increased, and the history of his life this year is little more than a mournful recital of the variations of his illness, in the midst of which, however, it will appear from his letters, that the powers of his mind were in no degree impaired.'

March 18.

HAVING been, from the middle of January, distressed by a cold which made my respiration very laborious, and from which I was but little relieved by being blooded three times; having tried to ease the oppression of my breast by frequent opiates, which kept me waking in the night and drowsy the next day, and subjected me to the tyranny of vain imaginations; having to all this added frequent catharticks, sometimes with mercury, I at last persuaded Dr.

¹ Taylor.

Laurence, on Thursday, March 14, to let me bleed more copiously. Sixteen ounces were taken away, and from that time my breath has been free, and my breast easy. On that day I took little food, and no flesh. On Thursday night I slept with great tranquillity. On the next night (15) I took diacodium, and had a most restless night. Of the next day I remember nothing, but that I rose in the afternoon, and saw Mrs. Lennox and Sheward.

Sunday 17. I lay late, and had only Palfrey to dinner. I read part of Waller's Directory, a pious rational book; but in any except a very regular life difficult to practise.

It occurred to me, that though my time might pass unemployed, no more should pass uncounted, and this has been written to-day, in consequence of that thought. I read a Greek chapter, prayed with Francis, which I now do commonly, and explained to him the Lord's Prayer, in which I find connection not observed, I think, by the expositors. I made punch for myself and my servants, by which, in the night, I thought both my breast and imagination disordered.

March 18. I rose late, looked a little into books. Saw Miss Reynolds and Miss Thrale, and Nicolaida; afterwards Dr. Hunter came for his catalogue. I then dined on tea, etc.; then read over part of Dr. Laurence's book *De Temperamentis*, which seems to have been written with a troubled mind.

My mind has been for some time much disturbed. The peace of God be with me.

I hope to-morrow to finish Laurence, and to write to Mrs. Aston, and to Lucy.

19. I rose late. I was visited by Mrs. Thrale,

Mr. Cotton, and Mr. Crofts. I took Laurence's paper in hand, but was chill; having fasted yesterday, I was hungry, and dined freely, then slept a little, and drank tea; then took candles and wrote to Aston and Lucy, then went on with Laurence, of which little remains. I prayed with Francis.

Mens sedatior, laus Deo.

To-morrow Shaw comes. I think to finish Laurence, and write to Langton.

Poor Laurence has almost lost the sense of hearing; and I have lost the conversation of a learned, intelligent, and communicative companion, and a friend whom long familiarity has much endeared. Laurence is one of the best men whom I have known.

Nostrum omnium miserere Deus.

20. Shaw came; I finished reading Laurence. I dined liberally. Wrote a long letter to Langton, and designed to read, but was hindered by Strahan. The ministry is dissolved. I prayed with Francis, and gave thanks.

To-morrow—To Mrs. Thrale—To write to Hector—To Dr. Taylor.

21. I went to Mrs. Thrale. Mr. Cox and Paradise met me at the door, and went with me in the coach. Paradise's Loss. In the evening wrote to Hector. At night there were eleven visitants. Conversation with Mr. Cox. When I waked I saw the penthouses covered with snow.

22. I spent the time idly. Mens turbata. In the afternoon it snowed. At night I wrote to Taylor about the pot, and to Hamilton about the Fœdera.

23. I came home, and found that Desmoulins had, while I was away, been in bed. Letters from

Langton and Boswell. I promised L— six guineas.

24. Sunday. I rose not early. Visitors Allen, Davis, Windham, Dr. Horsley. Dinner at Strahan's. Came home and chatted with Williams, and read Romans ix. in Greek.

To-morrow begin again to read the Bible; put rooms in order; copy L—'s¹ letter. At night I read 11 p. and something more, of the Bible, in fifty-five minutes.

26. Tu. I copied L—'s letter. Then wrote to Mrs. Thrale. Cox visited me. I sent home Dr. Laurence's papers, with notes. I gave D—² a guinea, and found her a gown.

27. W. At Harley Street. Bad nights—in the evening Dr. Bromfield and his family—Merlin's steelyard given me.

28. Th. I came home. Sold Rymer for Davies; wrote to Boswell. Visitors Dr. Percy, Mr. Crofts. I have, in ten days, written to Aston, Lucy, Hector, Langton, Boswell; perhaps to all by whom my letters are desired.

The weather, which now begins to be warm, gives me great help. I have hardly been at church this year; certainly not since the 15th of January. My cough and difficulty of breath would not permit it.

This is the day on which, in 1752, dear Tetty died. I have now uttered a prayer, of repentance and contrition; perhaps Tetty knows that I prayed for her. Perhaps Tetty is now praying for me. God help me. Thou, God, art merciful, hear my prayers, and enable me to trust in Thee.

We were married almost seventeen years, and have now been parted thirty.

¹ Lowe.

² Desmoulins.

I then read 11 p. from Ex. 36 to Lev. 7. I prayed with Fr. and used the prayer for Good Friday.

29. Good Friday. After a night of great disturbance and solicitude, such as I do not remember, I rose, drank tea, but without eating, and went to church. I was very composed, and coming home, read Hammond on one of the Psalms for the day. I then read Leviticus. Scott came in. A kind letter from Gastrel. I read on, then went to evening prayers, and afterwards drank tea, with buns; then read till I finished Leviticus 24 pages et sup.

To write to Gastrel to-morrow.

To look again into Hammond.

30. Sat. Visitors Paradise, and I think Horsley. Read 11 pages of the Bible. I was faint; dined on herrings and potatoes. At prayers, I think, in the evening. I wrote to Gastrel, and received a kind letter from Hector. At night Lowe. Pr. with Francis.

31. Easter Day. Read 15 pages of the Bible. Cætera alibi.

PRAYERS WRITTEN FOR HIS STEP-DAUGHTER

At the Table

ALMIGHTY God, by whose mercy I am now permitted to commemorate my Redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ; grant that this awful remembrance may strengthen my faith, enliven my hope, and increase my charity; that I may trust in Thee with my whole heart, and do good according to my power. Grant me the help of thy Holy Spirit, that I may do thy will with diligence, and suffer it with humble patience; so that when Thou shalt call me to judgment, I may

obtain forgiveness and acceptance, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

At Departure, or at Home

GRANT, I beseech Thee, merciful Lord, that the designs of a new and better life, which by thy grace I have now formed, may not pass away without effect. Incite and enable me, by thy Holy Spirit, to improve the time which Thou shalt grant me; to avoid all evil thoughts, words, and actions; and to do all the duties which Thou shalt set before me. Hear my prayer, O Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

These Prayers I wrote for Mrs. Lucy Porter,¹ in the latter end of the year 1782, and transcribed them October 9, 1784.

ON LEAVING MR. THRALE'S FAMILY

'The death of Mr. Thrale had made a very material alteration with respect to Johnson's reception in that family. The manly authority of the husband no longer controlled the lively exuberance of the lady; and as her vanity had been fully gratified by having the Colossus of Literature attached to her for so many years, she gradually became less assiduous to please him. Johnson's penetration was alive to her neglect . . . for on the 6th of October this year we find him making a parting use of the library at Streatham, and pronouncing a prayer which he composed on leaving Mrs. Thrale's family.'—Boswell.

It must not be forgotten that Boswell had no love for Mrs. Thrale, and was always rather jealous of Johnson's intimacy with that family.

October 6, 1782.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercy, help me, by thy grace, that I may with humble and sincere thankfulness remember the comforts and conveniences which I have enjoyed

[Daughter-in-law to Dr. Johnson, and lately living at Lichfield.]

at this place, and that I may resign them with holy submission, equally trusting in thy protection when Thou givest and when Thou takest away. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, have mercy upon me.

To thy fatherly protection, O Lord, I commend this family. Bless, guide, and defend them, that they may so pass through this world, as finally to enjoy in thy presence everlasting happiness, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

O Lord, so far as, etc.—Thrale.

October 7.

I was called early. I packed up my bundles, and used the foregoing Prayer, with my morning devotions somewhat, I think, enlarged. Being earlier than the family, I read St. Paul's farewell in the Acts, and then read fortuitously in the Gospels, which was my parting use of the library.

The Year 1783 ♪ ♪

I HAD JUST HEARD OF WILLIAMS'S DEATH

Anna Williams was a woman of considerable literary ability. She Ætat 74 was the daughter of a Welsh physician. She came to London during Mrs. Johnson's lifetime, in the hope of being cured of a cataract in both her eyes, and was received into Mrs. Johnson's household. After Mrs. Johnson's death, Johnson received her into his house that she might, more comfortably than in lodgings, have an operation performed. She became totally blind, and thereafter remained a constant member of Johnson's household. Her sufferings, or her natural disposition, made her peevish and fretful, and the long-suffering patience and goodness of Johnson to her, excited the admiration, and almost the indignation, of Boswell.

September 6.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who art the Lord of life and death, who givest and who takest away, teach me to adore thy providence, whatever Thou shalt allot me;

make me to remember, with due thankfulness, the comforts which I have received from my friendship with Anna¹ Williams. Look upon her, O Lord, with mercy, and prepare me, by thy grace, to die with hope, and to pass by death to eternal happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Year 1784 ♪ ♪

EASTER DAY

Ætat 75

Johnson was now breaking fast. The winter had tried him sorely. Asthma and dropsy had sadly weakened the robust frame; but he had partially recovered, and was looking hopefully for the advent of warmer weather. He had now, however, reached his last Easter, and his prayer is very solemn and earnest. To Bennet Langton he wrote on April 8: 'I am still disturbed by my cough; but what thanks have I not to pay when my cough is the most painful sensation that I feel. Let me have your prayers for the completion of my recovery.' It was for his partial recovery that he so fervently thanks God in this prayer. To Dr. Taylor he wrote on Easter Monday—the day following the composition of this prayer—'My life is very solitary and very cheerless. O my friend, the approach of death is very dreadful.' But hope still mingled with his tremulous fears: 'I hope for some help from warm weather, which will surely come in time.'

April II.

ALMIGHTY God, my Creator and my Judge, who givest life and takest it away, enable me to return sincere and humble thanks for my late deliverance from imminent death; so govern my future life by thy Holy Spirit, that every day which Thou shalt permit to pass over me, may be spent in thy service, and leave me less tainted with wickedness, and more submissive to thy will.

¹ [This lady, who was afflicted with blindness, lived many years with Dr. Johnson, and died in his house. She wrote several Poems, which were published in one volume 4to, 1766.]

Enable me, O Lord, to glorify Thee for that knowledge of my corruption, and that sense of thy wrath, which my disease and weakness and danger awakened in my mind. Give me such sorrow as may purify my heart, such indignation as may quench all confidence in myself, and such repentance as may, by the intercession of my Redeemer, obtain pardon. Let the commemoration of the sufferings and death of thy Son, which I am now, by thy favour, once more permitted to make, fill me with faith, hope, and charity. Let my purposes be good, and my resolutions unshaken; and let me not be hindered or distracted by vain and useless fears, but through the time which yet remains, guide me by thy Holy Spirit, and finally receive me to everlasting life, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

AGAINST INQUISITIVE AND PERPLEXING THOUGHTS

Johnson was now at Ashbourne, whither he had gone in the hope that the change of air and scene might benefit his health. This prayer is quoted by Boswell, with the remark, 'While in the country, notwithstanding the accumulation of illness which he endured, his mind did not lose its powers. He translated an ode of Horace, and composed several prayers. I shall insert one of them, which is so wise and energetic, so philosophical and so pious, that I doubt not of its affording consolation to many a sincere Christian when in a state of mind to which I believe the best are sometimes liable.' The prayer is characteristic of Johnson's method of dealing with the great mysteries of faith and life.

August 12, 1784.

O LORD, my Maker and Protector, who hast graciously sent me into this world to work out my salvation, enable me to drive from me all such unquiet and perplexing thoughts as may mislead or hinder me in the practice of those duties which Thou hast required.

When I behold the works of thy hands, and consider the course of thy providence, give me grace always to remember that thy thoughts are not my thoughts, nor thy ways my ways. And while it shall please Thee to continue me in this world, where much is to be done, and little to be known, teach me, by thy Holy Spirit, to withdraw my mind from unprofitable and dangerous inquiries, from difficulties vainly curious, and doubts impossible to be solved. Let me rejoice in the light which Thou hast imparted, let me serve Thee with active zeal and humble confidence, and wait with patient expectation for the time in which the soul which Thou receivest shall be satisfied with knowledge. Grant this, O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

It has been thought that Dr. Taylor's name should be placed in the blank. Johnson was now staying with him.

Ashbourne, August 28, 1784.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, who afflictest not willingly the children of men, and by whose holy will now languishes in sickness and pain, make, I beseech Thee, this punishment effectual to those gracious purposes for which Thou sendest it; let it, if I may presume to ask, end not in death, but in repentance; let him live to promote thy kingdom on earth, by the useful example of a better life; but if thy will be to call him hence, let his thoughts be so purified by his sufferings, that he may be admitted to eternal happiness. And, O Lord, by praying for him, let me be admonished to consider my own sins, and my own danger, to remember the shortness of life, and to use the time which thy mercy grants me to thy glory and my own salvation, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[The following Prayer was composed and used by Doctor Johnson previous to his receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, on Sunday December 5, 1784.]

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, I am now, as to human eyes it seems, about to commemorate, for the¹ last time, the death of thy Son Jesus Christ our Saviour and Redeemer. Grant, O Lord, that my whole hope and confidence may be in his merits, and thy mercy; enforce and accept my imperfect repentance; make this commemoration available to the confirmation of my faith, the establishment of my hope, and the enlargement of my charity; and make the death of thy Son Jesus Christ effectual to my redemption. Have mercy upon me, and pardon the multitude of my offences. Bless my friends; have mercy upon all men. Support me, by thy Holy Spirit, in the days of weakness, and at the hour of death; and receive me, at my death, to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

[The following Meditations and Prayers have no dates in the MS.]

I DID not, this week, labour my preparation so much as I have sometimes done. My mind was not very quiet; and an anxious preparation makes the duty of the day formidable and burdensome. Different methods suit different states of mind, body, and affairs. I rose this day, and prayed, then went to tea, and afterwards composed the Prayer, which I formed with great fluency. I went to church; came in at the Psalms; could not hear the reader in the lessons, but attended the prayers with tranquillity.

¹ [He died the 13th following.]

To read the New Testament once a year in Greek.
 Receiving the Sacrament,
 I profess my faith in Jesus.
 I declare my resolution to obey him.
 I implore, in the highest act of worship, grace to
 keep these resolutions.
 I hope to rise to a new life this day.

On the 17th, Mr. Chamier took me away with him from Streatham. I left the servants a guinea for my health, and was content enough to escape into a house where my birthday not being known, could not be mentioned. I sat up till midnight was past, and the day of a new year, a very awful day, began. I prayed to God, who had [safely brought me to the beginning of another year], but could not perfectly recollect the prayer, and supplied it. Such deservations of memory I have always had.

When I rose on the 18th, I think I prayed again, then walked with my friend into his grounds. When I came back, after some time passed in the library, finding myself oppressed by sleepiness, I retired to my chamber, where, by lying down, and a short imperfect slumber, I was refreshed, and prayed as the night before.

I then dined, and trifled in the parlour and library, and was freed from a scruple about Horace. At last I went to bed, having first composed a prayer.

19. Sunday. I went to church, and attended the service. I found at church a time to use my prayer, O Lord, have mercy—

July 30.

ALMIGHTY God, creator and governor of the world, who sendest sickness and restorest health, enable me to consider, with a just sense of thy mercy, the deliverance which Thou

hast lately granted me, and assist by thy blessing, as is best for me, the means which I shall use for the cure of the disease with which I am now afflicted. Increase my patience, teach me submission to thy will, and so rule my thoughts and direct my actions, that I may be finally received to everlasting happiness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ON THE STUDY OF RELIGION

ALMIGHTY God, our heavenly Father, without whose help labour is useless, without whose light search is vain, invigorate my studies, and direct my inquiries, that I may, by due diligence and right discernment, establish myself and others in thy Holy Faith. Take not, O Lord, thy Holy Spirit from me; let not evil thoughts have dominion in my mind. Let me not linger in ignorance, but enlighten and support me, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O LORD God, in whose hand are the wills and affections of men, kindle in my mind holy desires, and repress sinful and corrupt imaginations; enable me to love thy commandments, and to desire thy promises; let me, by thy protection and influence, so pass through things temporal, as finally not to lose the things eternal; and among the hopes and fears, the pleasures and sorrows, the dangers and deliverances, and all the changes of this life, let my heart be surely fixed, by the help of thy Holy Spirit, on the everlasting fruition of thy presence, where true joys are to be found. Grant, O Lord, these petitions. Forgive, O merciful Lord, whatever I have done contrary to thy laws. Give me such a sense of my wickedness as may produce true contrition and effectual repentance, so that when I shall be called into

another state, I may be received among the sinners to whom sorrow and reformation have obtained pardon, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, whose clemency I now presume to implore, after a long life of carelessness and wickedness, have mercy upon me. I have committed many trespasses; I have neglected many duties. I have done what Thou hast forbidden, and left undone what Thou hast commanded. Forgive, merciful Lord, my sins, negligences, and ignorances, and enable me, by thy Holy Spirit, to amend my life according to thy Holy Word, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

OMERCIFUL God, full of compassion, long-suffering, and of great pity, who sparest when we deserve punishment, and in thy wrath thinkest upon mercy; make me earnestly to repent, and heartily to be sorry for all my misdoings; make the remembrance so burdensome and painful, that I may flee to Thee with a troubled spirit and a contrite heart; and, O merciful Lord, visit, comfort, and relieve me; cast me not out from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me, but excite in me true repentance; give me in this world knowledge of thy truth, and confidence in thy mercy, and in the world to come life everlasting, for the sake of our Lord and Saviour, thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

EJACULATION

Imploring Diligence

O GOD, make me to remember that *the night cometh when no man can work.*

— the night cometh when no man can work

SOME OPINIONS OF DR. JOHNSON

ON

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION



Unless marked otherwise, these opinions are taken
from Boswell's 'Johnson.'



SOME OPINIONS OF DR. JOHNSON ON THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY

ON the 14th we had another evening by ourselves at the Mitre. Talking of those who denied the truth of Christianity, he said: 'It is always easy to be on the negative side. If a man were now to deny that there is salt upon the table you could not reduce him to an absurdity. Come, let us try this a little further. I deny that Canada is taken, and I can support my denial by pretty good arguments. The French are a much more numerous people than we are, and it is not likely that they would allow us to take it. 'But the ministry have assured us, in all the formality of the Gazette, that it is taken.' Very true. But the ministry have put us to an enormous expense by the war in America, and it is their interest to persuade us that we have got something for our money. 'But the fact is confirmed by thousands of men who were at the taking of it.' Ay, but those men have still more interest in deceiving us. They don't want that you should think the French have beat them, but that they have beat the French. Now, suppose you should go over and find that it really is taken, that would only satisfy yourself; for when you come home we will not believe you. We will say you have been bribed. Yet, sir, notwithstanding all these plausible objections, we have no doubt that Canada is really ours. Such is the weight of common testimony. How much stronger are the evidences of the Christian religion ?

The conversation then took a philosophical turn. Johnson: 'Human experience, which is constantly contradicting theory, is the great test of truth. A system built upon the discoveries of a great many minds is always of more strength than what is produced by the mere workings of any one mind, which can do little. . . . As to the Christian religion, sir, besides the strong evidence which we have for it, there is a balance in its favour from the number of great men who have been convinced of its truth, after a serious consideration of the question. Grotius was an acute man, a lawyer, a man accustomed to examine evidence, and he was convinced. Grotius was not a recluse, but a man of the world, who certainly had no bias to the side of religion. Sir Isaac Newton set out an infidel, and came to be a very firm believer.'

On Sunday, April 19th, being Easter Day, after the solemnities of the festival at St. Paul's Church, I visited him, but could not stay to dinner. I expressed a wish to have the arguments for Christianity always in readiness, that my religious faith might be as firm and clear as any proposition whatever, so that I need not be under the least uneasiness when it should be attacked. Johnson: 'Sir, you cannot answer all objections. You have demonstration for a First Cause; you see He must be good as well as powerful, because there is nothing to make him otherwise, and goodness of itself is preferable. Yet you have against this, what is very certain, the unhappiness of human life. This, however, gives us reason to hope for a future state of compensation that there may be a perfect system. But of that we were not sure, till we had a positive revelation.'

He (Johnson) said: 'No honest man could be a Deist, for no man could be so after a fair examination of the proofs of Christianity. I named

Hume. Johnson: 'No, sir, Hume owned to a clergyman in the bishopric of Durham that he had never read the New Testament with attention.'

ON MIRACLES

I MENTIONED Hume's argument against the belief of miracles, that it is more probable that the witnesses to the truth of them are mistaken, or speak falsely, than that the miracles should be true. Johnson: 'Why, sir, the great difficulty of proving miracles, should make us very cautious in believing them. But let us consider: although God has made Nature to operate by certain fixed laws, yet it is not unreasonable to think that He may suspend those laws, in order to establish a system highly advantageous to mankind. Now, the Christian religion is a most beneficent system, as it gives us light and certainty where we were before in darkness and doubt. The miracles that prove it are attested by men who had no interest in deceiving us; but who, on the contrary, were told that they should suffer persecution, and did actually lay down their lives in confirmation of the truth of the facts which they asserted. Indeed, for some centuries the heathen did not pretend to deny the miracles, but said they were performed by the aid of evil spirits. This is a circumstance of great weight. Then, sir, when we take the proofs derived from prophecies which have been so exactly fulfilled, we have most satisfactory evidence. Supposing a miracle possible, as to which, in my opinion, there can be no doubt, we have as strong evidence for the miracles in support of Christianity as the nature of the case admits.'

ON ORIGINAL SIN

I TALKED to him on original sin, in consequence of the fall of man, and of the atonement made by our Saviour. After some conversation, which he desired me to remember, he, at my request, dictated to me as follows: 'With respect to original sin the inquiry is not necessary, for whatever is the cause of human corruption, men are evidently, and confessedly, so corrupt that all the laws of heaven and earth are insufficient to restrain them from crimes.

'Whatever difficulty there may be in the conception of vicarious punishments, it is an opinion which has had possession of mankind in all ages. There is no nation that has not used the practice of sacrifices. Whoever, therefore, denies the propriety of vicarious punishments, holds an opinion which the sentiments and practice of mankind have contradicted from the beginning of the world. The great sacrifice for the sins of mankind was offered by the death of the Messiah, who is called in Scripture "The Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world." To judge of the reasonableness of the scheme of redemption, it must be considered as necessary to the government of the universe that God should make known His perpetual and irreconcilable detestation of moral evil. He might indeed punish, and punish only the offenders; but, as the end of punishment is not revenge of crimes, but propagation of virtue, it was more becoming of the divine clemency to find another manner of proceeding, less destructive to man, and at least equally powerful to promote goodness. The end of punishment is to reclaim and warn. *That* punishment will both reclaim and warn which shows evidently such abhorrence of sin in God as may deter us from it, or strike us with dread of vengeance when we have committed

it. This is effected by vicarious punishment. Nothing could more testify the opposition between the nature of God and moral evil, or more amply display his justice, to men and angels, to all orders and succession of beings, than that it was necessary for the highest and purest nature, even for divinity itself, to pacify the demands of vengeance by a painful death: of which the natural effect will be, that when justice is appeased, there is a proper place for the exercise of virtue, and that such propitiation shall supply, in some degree, the imperfections of our obedience, and the inefficacy of our repentance; for obedience and repentance, such as we can perform, are still necessary. Our Saviour has told us that he did not come to destroy the law but to fulfil: to fulfil the typical law by the performance of what those types had foreshown; and the moral law, by precepts of greater purity and higher exaltation.

Here he said, 'God bless you with it.' I acknowledged myself much obliged to him; but I begged that he would go on as to the propitiation being the chief object of our most holy faith. He then dictated this one other paragraph: 'The peculiar doctrine of Christianity is that of an universal sacrifice, and perpetual propitiation. Other prophets only proclaimed the will and the threatenings of God. Christ satisfied His justice.'

BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY

I TOLD him that our friend Goldsmith had said to me that he had come too late into the world, for that Pope and other poets had taken up the places in the temple of fame: so that, as but a few at any period can possess poetical reputation, a man of genius can now hardly acquire it. Johnson: 'That is one of the most sensible things I have ever heard of Goldsmith. It is diffi-

cult to get literary fame, and it is every day growing more difficult. Ah, sir, that should make a man think of securing happiness in another world, which all who try sincerely for it may attain. In comparison of that how little are all other things! The belief of immortality is impressed upon all men, and all men act under an impression of it, however they may talk, and though, perhaps, they may be scarcely sensible of it.' I said it appeared to me that some people had not the least notion of immortality; and I mentioned a distinguished gentleman of our acquaintance. Johnson: 'Sir, if it were not for the notion of immortality, he would cut a throat to fill his pockets.'

ON A FUTURE STATE

I AGAIN visited him at night. Finding him in a very good humour, I ventured to lead him to the subject of our situation in a future state, having much curiosity to know his notions on that point. Johnson: 'Why, sir, the happiness of an unembodied spirit will consist in the consciousness of the favour of God, in the contemplation of truth, and in the possession of felicitating ideas.' Boswell: 'But, sir, is there any harm in our forming to ourselves conjectures as to the particulars of our happiness, though the Scripture has said but very little on the subject! "We know not what we shall be."' Johnson: 'Sir, there is no harm.' Boswell: 'One of the most pleasing thoughts is that we shall see our friends again.' Johnson: 'Yes, sir, but you must consider that, when we are become purely rational, many of our friendships will be cut off. Many friendships are formed by a community of sensual pleasures: all these will be cut off. We form many friendships with bad men because they have agreeable qualities, and they can be useful to us; but after death

they can no longer be of use to us. We form many friendships by mistake, imagining people to be different from what they really are. After death we shall see every one in a true light. Then, sir, they talk of our meeting our relations; but then all relationship is dissolved, and we shall have no regard for one person more than another but for their real value. However, we shall either have the satisfaction of meeting our friends, or be satisfied without meeting them.' Boswell: 'Yet, sir, we see in Scripture that Dives still retained an anxious concern about his brethren.' Johnson: 'Why, sir, we must either suppose that passage to be metaphorical, or hold, with many divines and all the Purgatorians, that departed souls do not all at once arrive at the utmost perfection of which they are capable.' Boswell: 'I think, sir, that is a very natural supposition.' Johnson: 'Why, yes, sir; but we do not know it is a true one. There is no harm in believing it; but you must not compel others to make it an article of faith, for it is not revealed.' Boswell: 'Do you think, sir, it is wrong in a man who holds the doctrine of Purgatory to pray for the souls of his deceased friends?' Johnson: 'Why, no, sir.' Boswell: 'As to our employment in a future state the sacred writings say little. The Revelation, however, of St. John gives us many ideas, and particularly mentions music.' Johnson: 'Why, sir, ideas must be given you by means of something which you know; and as to music, there are some philosophers and divines who have maintained that we shall not be spiritualised to such a degree but that something of matter, very much refined, will remain. In that case music may make a part of our future felicity.'

While Johnson and I stood in calm conference by ourselves in Dr. Taylor's garden, at a pretty late hour, in a serene autumn night, looking up to the heavens, I directed the discourse to the subject

of a future state. My friend was in a placid and most benignant frame of mind. 'Sir,' said he, 'I do not imagine that all things will be made clear to us immediately after death, but that the ways of providence will be explained to us very gradually.' I ventured to ask him whether, although the words of some texts of Scripture seemed strong in support of the dreadful doctrines of an eternity of punishment, we might not hope that the denunciation was figurative and would not literally be executed. Johnson: 'Sir, you are to consider the intention of punishment in a future state. We have no reason to be sure that we shall then be no longer liable to offend against God. We do not know that even the angels are quite in a state of security; nay, we know that some of them have fallen. It may, therefore, perhaps be necessary, in order to preserve both men and angels in rectitude, that they should have continually before them the punishment of those who have deviated from it; but we may hope that by some other means a fall from rectitude may be prevented. Some of the texts of Scripture upon this subject are, as you observe, indeed strong; but they may admit of a mitigated interpretation.' He talked to me upon this awful and delicate question in a gentle tone, and as if afraid to be decisive.

CONCERNING PURGATORY, ETC.

I PROCEEDED: 'What do you think, sir, of Purgatory, as believed by the Roman Catholics?' Johnson: 'Why, sir, it is a very harmless doctrine. They are of opinion that the generality of mankind are neither so obstinately wicked as to deserve everlasting punishment, nor so good as to merit being admitted into the society of blessed spirits! and, therefore, that God

is graciously pleased to allow of a middle state, where they may be purified by certain degrees of suffering. You see, sir, there is nothing unreasonable in this.' Boswell: 'But then, sir, their masses for the dead?' Johnson: 'Why, sir, if it be once established that there are souls in Purgatory, it is as proper to pray for *them* as for our brethren of mankind who are yet in this life.' Boswell: 'The idolatry of the mass?' Johnson: 'Sir, there is no idolatry in the mass. They believe God to be there, and they adore Him.' Boswell: 'The worship of saints?' Johnson: 'They do not worship saints; they invoke them: they only ask their prayers. I am talking all this time of the *doctrines* of the Church of Rome. I grant you that in *practice* Purgatory is made a lucrative imposition, and that the people do become idolatrous as they recommend themselves to the tutelary protection of particular saints. I think their giving the sacrament only in one kind is criminal, because it is contrary to the express institution of Christ, and I wonder how the Council of Trent admitted it.' Boswell: 'Confession?' Johnson: 'Why, I don't know but that is a good thing. The Scripture says "Confess your faults one to another," and the priests confess as well as the laity. Then it must be considered that their absolution is only upon repentance, and often upon penance also. You think your sins may be forgiven without penance, upon repentance alone.'

ON FREE WILL

DR. MAYO (to Dr. Johnson): 'Pray, sir, have you read Edwards of New England on "Grace"?' Johnson: 'No, sir.' Boswell: 'It puzzled me so much as to the freedom of the human will, by stating, with wonderful acute

ingenuity, our being actuated by a series of motives which we cannot resist, that the only relief I had was to forget it. Mayo: 'But he makes the proper distinction between moral and physical necessity.' Boswell: 'Alas, sir, they come both to the same thing. You may be bound as hard by chains when covered by leather, as when the iron appears. The argument for the moral necessity of human actions is always, I observe, fortified by supposing universal prescience to be one of the attributes of the Deity.' Johnson: 'You are surer that you are free than you are of prescience; you are surer you can lift up your finger or not as you please, than you are of any conclusion from a deduction of reasoning. But let us consider a little the objection from prescience. It is certain I am either to go home to-night or not; that does not prevent my freedom.' Boswell: 'That is certain. You are *either* to go home or not, does not prevent your freedom; because the liberty of choice between the two is compatible with that certainty. But if *one* of those events be certain *now*, you have no *future* power of volition. If it be certain you are to go home to-night, you *must* go home.' Johnson: 'If I am well acquainted with a man, I can judge with great probability how he will act in any case, without his being restrained by my judging. God may have this probability increased to certainty.' Boswell: 'When it is increased to *certainty* freedom ceases, because that cannot be certainly foreknown which is not certain at the time; but if it be certain at the time, it is a contradiction in terms to maintain that there can be afterwards any *contingency* dependent on the exercise of will or anything else.' Johnson: 'All theory is against the freedom of the will; all experience for it.'

He agreed with me now, as he always did, upon the great question of the liberty of the human

will, which has been in all ages perplexed with so much sophistry: 'But, sir, as to the doctrine of necessity, no man believes it. If a man should give me arguments that I do not see, though I could not answer them, should I believe that I do not see?' It will be observed that Johnson at all times made the just distinction between doctrines *contrary* to reason, and doctrines *above* reason.

Dr. Johnson shunned to-night any discussion of the perplexed question of fate and free will, which I attempted to agitate: 'Sir,' said he, 'we *know* our will is free, and *there*'s an end on't.'



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

I. DR. JOHNSON

Samuel Johnson was born at Lichfield on September 18, 1709. He was the son of Michael Johnson, a bookseller of reputation, but of uneven fortune. For a time Michael Johnson was a Magistrate for the City, and in the year in which his son was born he was Sheriff of the County. Samuel Johnson was educated first at a dame's school, then at Lichfield Grammar School, afterwards at Stourbridge School, and finally at Pembroke College, Oxford. He left school at sixteen, and spent two years at home in close study. Long afterwards, he said he knew as much at eighteen as he did at fifty-three. He entered Pembroke College in 1728, and left after a three years' residence without taking a degree. His father died in 1731, leaving Johnson a fortune of £20. A brief and unpleasant experience as usher in a Market Bosworth school followed. In 1732 he settled in Birmingham, and obtained some literary work in a small way, but was very poor. Four years later he married Mrs. Porter, a widow, who was then forty-six years old. Relying, probably, on her fortune of £800, Johnson opened a school at Edial, near Lichfield. The school failed, and after eighteen months was given up. In 1737 Johnson left Lichfield for London accompanied by David Garrick, who, with his brother George, had been a pupil of Johnson's at Edial. In London, Johnson had a hard struggle with poverty for a time, and more than once had to walk the streets all night because he could not pay for a lodging. Better times dawned when he

began writing for the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In the same year (1738), he published *London: A Poem*, for which he received ten guineas. In 1747 he sent out his *Plan of an English Dictionary*, addressed to Lord Chesterfield. Two years later his tragedy of *Irene* was produced by Garrick, who had prospered greatly and become manager of Drury Lane Theatre. For *Irene* Johnson received nearly £300. In the same year he received £15 for his *Vanity of Human Wishes*. In 1748 he had formed a club which met weekly at a famous beef-steak house in Ivy Lane. Sir John Hawkins; Bathurst, a physician; and Hawksworth, an author of the time, were among the first members. Johnson was now becoming well known, and the publication of *The Rambler*, which began in 1750, and continued until 1752, greatly extended his fame. In 1755 the *Dictionary* was published, and the famous letter to Lord Chesterfield written. For the *Dictionary*, Johnson received £1575. He was now at the head of literary England. Fielding had died the year before. Smollett and Richardson were still writing. So also was Gray occasionally. Burke and Goldsmith had just come to London, and Cowper had recently entered at the Temple. In 1756-57 appeared the *Idler* essays, followed in 1759 by *Rasselas*, for which £100 was paid. After this time, Johnson wrote comparatively little. When George III. came to the throne, a more liberal appreciation of men of letters began to prevail, and Johnson was granted a pension of £300 a year. His last important work, *The Lives of the Poets*, was published in 1781—nine years after it was promised. During this period the Literary Club, formed by Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1764, was in full vigour. At first it met weekly, and afterwards fortnightly, at the Turk's Head, Gerrard Street, Soho. The original members were Reynolds, Johnson, Burke, Nugent, Beauclerk, Langton, Goldsmith, Chamier, and Hawkins. Among others elected in Johnson's time were Garrick, Sir W. Jones, Boswell, Fox, Steevens, Gibbon, Adam Smith, Sheridan, Windham, Lord Stowell, Malone, and Dr. Burney.

In 1773 Johnson and Boswell made their celebrated tour to the Hebrides. In 1783 Johnson formed the Essex Head Club; and in the year following, 13th December 1784, he died. In 1755 the University of Oxford conferred upon him the degree of M.A. In 1765 he received the degree of LL.D. from Trinity College, Dublin; and in 1775 that of D.C.L. from the University of Oxford.

II. BOSWELL

James Boswell was born on 29th October 1740. He was the son of Alexander Boswell, a Scottish country gentleman and a Lord of Session. He was educated at the Edinburgh High School, Glasgow University, and Utrecht. In May 1763 he was introduced to Johnson, and for the following twenty years was one of his most intimate acquaintances. In August of the same year he went to Utrecht to study civil law. After a single term there, he started on a tour of Europe. He visited Rousseau, Voltaire, and many other notable people. At Corsica he made the acquaintance of General Paoli. Returning home, he was called to the Scottish Bar. After numerous love-affairs, he married in 1769 Miss Montgomerie. Soon afterwards, he began his frequent visits to London to cultivate his acquaintance with Johnson. Through Johnson's influence he was, in 1773, made a member of the famous Literary Club. In the same year he accompanied Johnson in his tour to the Hebrides. In 1783, on the death of his father, he became laird of Auchinleck, and saw very little of Johnson during the last year of his life. In 1784 Johnson died, but Boswell was not with him, and as Johnson did not name him in his will, it is thought a coldness had sprung up between them. In 1785 Boswell published *The Tour to the Hebrides*. In the following year he was called to the English Bar, but got no practice. His great work, *The Life of Dr. Johnson*, was published in 1791. Two editions were issued in his lifetime, and he was engaged on the third edition when he died, 19th May 1795, at the age of fifty-five.

III. MRS. JOHNSON

After Johnson's brief and unhappy experience as an usher in the Market Bosworth school, he went to Birmingham as the guest of his friend Hector, a surgeon, and in the hope of finding employment. Among the people to whom Hector introduced him was Mr. Porter, a mercer. Three years afterwards, Mr. Porter having died, Johnson married his widow. Johnson was then twenty-six years old, and Mrs. Porter was forty-seven. Notwithstanding the great disparity in age, the marriage seems to have been 'a love marriage on both sides,' as Johnson gravely informed one of his friends. That it was a love marriage on Johnson's part of the most fervent and beautiful nature, no reader of *Boswell*, or more especially of *Prayers and Meditations*, can for a moment doubt. And that Mrs. Johnson very early in their acquaintance was attracted by the intellectual power and the strong individuality of Johnson, is equally apparent. Lucy Porter, the grown-up daughter of Mrs. Porter, years afterwards, told Boswell that when Johnson was first introduced to her mother, 'his appearance was very forbidding: he was then lean and lank, so that his immense structure of bones was hideously striking to the eye, and the scars of the scrofula were deeply visible. He often had, seemingly, convulsive starts and odd gesticulations, which tended to excite at once surprise and ridicule. Mrs. Porter was, however, so much engaged by his conversation, that she overlooked all these external disadvantages, and said to her daughter "This is the most sensible man that I ever saw in my life."' From Garrick's description of her, as 'very fat, with swelled cheeks of a florid red, produced by thick painting,' Mrs. Johnson seemed little likely to inspire not only passionate devotion, but also respect in a man like Johnson. But Garrick loved to exaggerate for purposes of mimicry. And we have it on the authority of Mrs. Anna Williams, who knew her well, that Mrs. Johnson was a woman 'of a good understanding and great sensibility, but inclined to be satirical.'

We know next to nothing of the details of Johnson's married life, and Mrs. Johnson is one of the least conspicuous characters in Boswell. That is accounted for by the fact that she died long before Boswell came upon the scene, and the Johnson that Boswell makes us know so intimately was a widower. In the *Prayers and Meditations*, however, Mrs. Johnson is made to live again as a woman who inspired in a strong man's heart a love so deep and lasting that it neither failed nor faltered during the long space of fifty years.

Mrs. Johnson died in 1752, and was buried at Bromley, in Kent.

IV. THE REV. GEORGE STRAHAN, D.D.

Dr. Strahan was Vicar of Islington, and subsequently Prebendary of Rochester. He was the son of William Strahan, M.P., a prosperous printer. Both father and son were intimate friends of Johnson, and for the son especially, Johnson had a great affection. At the Islington Vicarage, in his last years, Johnson would occasionally stay 'for the benefit of good air.' During his last illness, Dr. Strahan was in close attendance on Johnson, and 'had the satisfaction,' as Boswell relates, 'of contributing to soothe and comfort him.'

To him Johnson gave the MS. of *Prayers and Meditations* under circumstances related by Dr. Strahan in his preface to the original edition.

JOHNSON'S LONDON RESIDENCES

Finding him this morning in a very good humour, I prevailed on him to give me an exact list of his places of residence since he entered the Metropolis as an author, which I subjoin in a note (Boswell):—(1) Exeter St., off Catherine St., Strand; (2) Greenwich; (3) Woodstock St., near Hanover Square; (4) Castle St., Cavendish Square, No. 6; (5) Strand; (6) Boswell Court; (7) Strand again; (8) Bow St.; (9) Holborn; (10) Fetter Lane; (11) Holborn again; (12) Gough Square; (13) Staple Inn; (14) Gray's Inn; (15) Inner Temple Lane, No. 1; (16) Johnson's Court, No. 7; (17) Bolt Court, No. 8.

TABLE OF DATES

PERSONAL	NATIONAL
Samuel Johnson born September 18th . . . 1709	George I., King . . . 1714
Enters Pembroke Col- lege, Oxford . . . 1728	Stuart rising under Lord Mar 1715
Usher in Market Bos- worth school . . . 1732	The South Sea Com- pany 1720
Settles in Birmingham . 1732	Sir Robert Walpole's Ministry 1721
Marries Mrs. Porter . . 1736	George II., King . . . 1727
School at Edial 1736	Death of Queen Caro- line 1737
Removes to London . . 1737	Rise of Methodism . . 1738
<i>The Gentleman's Maga- zine</i> 1738	Resignation of Walpole . 1742
Publishes <i>London: A Poem</i> 1738	Ministry of Pelham . . 1743
Publishes <i>Plan of Dic- tionary</i> , addressed to Lord Chesterfield . . 1747	Charles Edward in Scot- land 1745
Publishes <i>Vanity of Human Wishes</i> . . . 1749	Duke of Newcastle's Ministry 1754
<i>Irene</i> at Drury Lane . . 1749	Ministry of William Pitt . 1757
<i>The Rambler</i> 1750	George III., King . . . 1760
Wife dies 1752	Pitt resigns 1761
Publishes <i>Dictionary</i> . 1755	Lord Rockingham's Ministry 1765
Receives M.A. from Ox- ford University . . . 1755	American Congress Meets 1765
Publishes Abridgment of <i>Dictionary</i> 1756	Steam-Engine invented . 1765
<i>The Idler</i> 1758	Repeal of Stamp Act . . 1766
Publishes <i>Rasselas</i> . . 1759	Lord Chatham's Ministry . 1766
Pension of £300 a year granted 1762	Wilkes expelled from Commons 1768
	Wilkes three times elected for Middlesex . 1769

154 PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS

PERSONAL	NATIONAL
First meets Boswell 1763	Letters of Junius 1769
Formation of 'The Literary Club' 1764	Lord North's Ministry 1770
Receives LL.D. from Trinity College, Dublin 1765	Boston Tea-Ships 1773
First meets Mr. and Mrs. Thrale 1765	Congress at Philadelphia 1774
Publishes edition of Shakespeare 1765	Battle of Bunker's Hill 1775
Meets King George III. 1767	American Independence 1776
Tour to the Hebrides 1773	Adam Smith's <i>Wealth of Nations</i> 1776
Receives D.C.L. from Oxford University 1775	Alliance of United States and France 1778
Visits France with the Thrales 1775	Death of Chatham 1778
Meets John Wilkes 1776	Lord Rockingham's Ministry 1782
Publishes <i>Lives of the Poets</i> 1781	Pitt's Reform Bill 1782
Essex Head Club 1783	Burke's Reform Bill 1782
Last visit to Literary Club 1784	Coalition Ministry of Fox and North 1783
Death of Johnson 1784	Pitt's Ministry 1783



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