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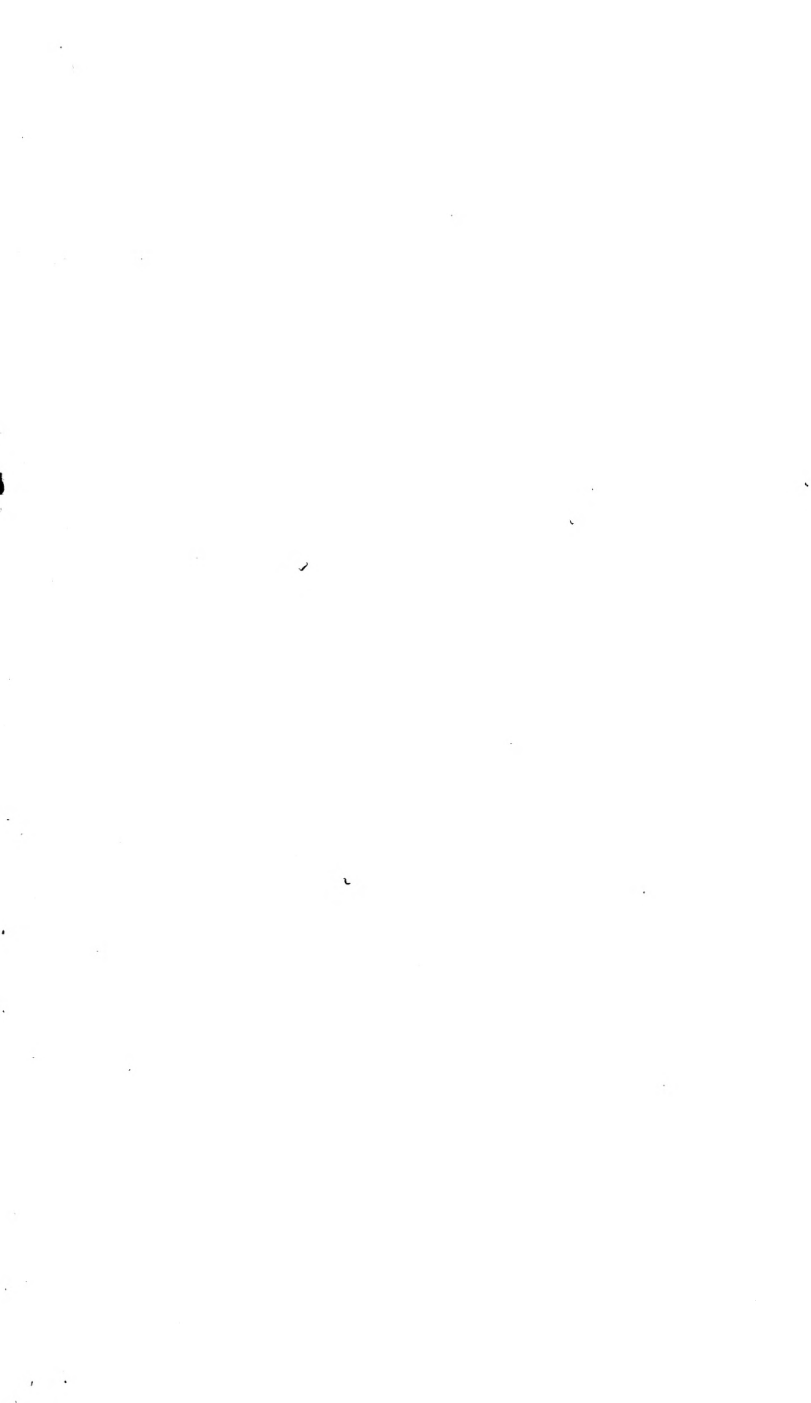
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THE

Star of the West;

BEING

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE

OF

RISDON DARRACOTT,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL,

AT WELLINGTON, SOMERSET,

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

BY JAMES BENNETT.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

BROOKFIELD, MASS.

E. AND G. MERRIAM, PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS.

1829.



PREFACE.

IT was not without considerable hesitation, that the Author ventured to present these Memoirs to the public eye. He had, indeed, often perused the documents with the most desirable emotions, and wished them introduced to more general notice; but he always anticipated the question, why obtrude upon the public, the Memoirs of a man who has slumbered among the dead more than half a century?

Those who have recently entered into their rest, still live in the remembrance of many surviving fellow-labourers; and it is in the breasts of those, who already know something of a man, that we expect to find a curiosity to know more. But, the contemporaries of Risdon Darracott, who would have caught eagerly at his Memoirs, and promoted their circulation among friends, have long since gone to join him,

where the pages of biography are neither read nor needed. And now that another generation has risen up who knew him not, what hope can be indulged of attracting any considerable attention to the memory of one, so long gone by in the procession of ages, as to have left scarcely any that can recal his image ?

For, it is not pretended that the subject of these Memoirs was a Luther or Calvin in the church, confined to no clime, and claimed by every age. The distinguished men, who have created a new æra in religion, may be recalled to notice at any time, and can always justify the interest which they never fail to excite. But the history of those who filled a narrower circle during life, must be recorded immediately after death, or the world will refuse to listen to the instruction which they may be able to afford.

Sometimes, indeed, the powers of the biographer may supply the deficiencies of his theme, and attract attention to the picture, whose original would be despised. As in the life of Savage, we value only the pen of Johnson. But though the biographer of Darracott, pretends to no such powers, while he questions the propriety of extorting attentions to which the subject has no just claims, he has been induced by

the force of various considerations, to print the following Memoirs.

The papers from which the volume is compiled, have long been preserved in the family of the deceased, as precious relics. Frequently presented to the eye of friendship, they have furnished the employment of many interesting hours, and proved the source of the most sacred pleasures. It was owned by all, that they furnish such a picture of a heart devoted to the divine glory, a life consumed in most successful evangelical labours, and a death pre-eminently distinguished by holy triumphs, that it was scarcely less than a duty to draw them from obscurity, and prevent their passing unimproved into oblivion.

Since Christians feel, to their cost, how much they are affected by the spirit and conduct of the living world around them; should we not endeavour to furnish an antidote to the poison, by calling up even those who have been long dead, that we may live in the circle of those who instruct by their superior wisdom, inspire esteem for their character, and stimulate to imitation of their conduct? Whenever the God of all grace indulges the world with distinguished specimens of religion, we should study to perpetuate their usefulness beyond the narrow limits of their mortal race. And though it is to be regretted, that Risdon Darracott

had not found a biographer among his contemporaries, who would have enjoyed superior opportunities of extending and prolonging his influence; it may be hoped, as truth and holiness are immutable, that excellencies such as are here exhibited, will still find their sympathies in the hearts of Christians, and even now rouse to sacred emulation. For it is presumed, that few pious persons will rise from the perusal of these Memoirs, without feeling their humility increased by the consciousness of inferiority, or their zeal inflamed by the sight of superior ardour.

If the work was to be attempted, the connexion of the Author with the family of the deceased, seemed to impose on him the duty; as, by marrying the granddaughter of Mr. Darracott, he has come into possession of the documents from which the volume is compiled. That he has yielded to the force of the considerations which induced the attempt, he is forbidden to regret; whatever reception these Memoirs may obtain from the public. For it has proved a privilege to hold converse with the pious dead.

Should the perusal of this volume afford to each reader but a moiety of the edification and delight they have afforded to the compiler, they will prove one of the most valuable opportunities of usefulness with

which he has been indulged. Of this he would not despair. For though some part of the happy impressions produced, may have arisen from the sight of manuscripts, so tinged with age as to recal the memory of those who have been long at rest, or written with a tremulous hand on the eve of a triumphant death; the principal source of emotions which rendered the compilation of the volume a devotional exercise, was the divine sentiments, the holy tempers, the heavenly anticipations, expressed by Mr. Darracott, or his friends. May these be copied into the reader's breast!

If, in addition to the reasons why the Author has written, it be expected that a preface will contain the summary of what the reader may expect to find, this may be told in one word—religion. Risdon Darracott was not a man of the world, whose Memoirs will increase our acquaintance with the history of his country or age: he passed through this world as a pilgrim to a better, and paid no more attention to the affairs of earth than was demanded by his allegiance to heaven. But as religion has a world of its own, he was, in the noblest sense, a citizen of the world.

In a contracted sphere, he possessed an enlarged heart, which took a lively interest in the concerns of the Redeemer's kingdom, wherever it was established, and in-

roduced him to acquaintance and correspondence with those whose praise is in all the churches. Doddridge, Whitefield, Hervey, the late Countess Dowager of Huntingdon, Dr. Gillies of Glasgow, Mr. Walker of Truro, and Joseph Williams of Kidderminster, persons dear to the memory of catholic Christians, were the friends of his bosom; though several of them he never saw, till he met them among disembodied spirits. Those eminent persons have often been exhibited in their own Memoirs, and they were worthy to form distinct pictures; but here, we may still further increase our acquaintance with them, by viewing them in the group of their coadjutors in that noble work to which they consecrated their days.

But, from the different communions to which the correspondents of Darracott belonged, it will be manifest that the zeal of the sectarian, who can see no religion out of his own pale, will not be gratified with this Memoir. Darracott maintained, indeed, with the firmness of a superior mind, that form of christianity which appeared to him most agreeable to its Great Author; but he was too good-tempered for a bigot, and too devotional to be engrossed by any but the vital principles of religion.

Associations of Christians which require a sacrifice of their distinguishing principles,

are equally disgraceful to all the parties concerned; but co-operation among different communions on general principles, to promote the grand objects in which they are all agreed, has peculiar charms. Such associations form the honourable distinction of the present age. This volume, however, exhibits the operation of the same spirit, though upon a smaller scale. We are but perfecting what Darracott and his contemporaries began. As other men have laboured, and we have entered into their labours; may it be ours to improve to the utmost, the advantages we derive from their catholic zeal!

There are occasions on which we are peculiarly called to sacrifice to truth, and others on which we should pay our vows to charity. The two are indeed harmonious, like the inhabitants of the heaven from which they descend. For "charity rejoiceth in the truth." But while it is often our sacred duty to contend earnestly for the best form of godliness, it is equally incumbent on all Christians, to seize every opportunity for displaying the power of it unincumbered with the distinctions which arise from the weaknesses of men. That the *Memoirs of Risdon Darracott* should exhibit Christianity in this pure uncoloured light, will appear unquestionable to every reader of discernment. This conviction in

the mind of the writer, has induced him to pass over one minor occurrence, in which, though Mr. Darracott would have appeared to advantage, his opponents would have been placed in a shade that would displease those who now adopt their views, and whom it was the author's wish not to irritate but to edify.

There are those who expect to find the records of genius or literature, in the memoirs of an eminent minister of religion; but they are here apprized, that Risdon Darracott never aspired to rank among the literati of his age. His papers furnish no fragments of mental project, no correspondence with the candidates for literary fame. To express, in the simplest language, the thoughts which claim nearer affinity to the heart than the head, was all his aim; and solicitous only to fill heaven with the triumphs of the Redeemer, he was satisfied that his own record was on high.

This, however, will but render his Memoirs more generally useful. It must be the lot of by far the greater number of ministers, to imitate those Apostles, who consumed their lives in preaching, and left no written instructions to the church. And he who should here learn to secure an apostle's reward, may cheerfully resign an author's fame.

The second edition of these Memoirs,

which has been unexpectedly demanded, is now presented to the public, with grateful acknowledgments to the Author of all Good, for the improvement and delight which many have declared themselves to have derived from the work. Thus encouraged, the Author has determined to enlarge the biography so far, as to fill the volume without the addition of Mr Darra-cott's Scripture Marks of Salvation, which accompanied the first edition of the Memoirs. Those Marks, however, with the Editor's Notes, being equally demanded, are reprinted in a form that will admit of their being bound up with the Life, should any one wish to preserve them in one volume.

The enlargement of the present edition has arisen partly from the insertion of additional information concerning Mr. Dar-racott and his friends, and partly also from the expansion deemed necessary to place some circumstances, previously glanced at, in a more conspicuous and useful point of light.

The correspondence between Mr. Dar-racott and his friends, which might have been swelled to a far larger extent, was in the former edition much contracted, in order to keep the volume within the size and price most calculated to promote its circu-lation.

But, in deference to the judgments of some valued friends, who had expressed much pleasure in that part of the work, it is now extended by the addition of several letters, and by the insertion of paragraphs of others, formerly suppressed for want of room. In its present form, the work is devoted with reiterated vows to the service of Him, who has already deigned to honour it with His smiles.

MEMOIRS, &c.

CHAPTER I.

MR. DARRACOTT'S ANCESTRY AND BIRTH.

FOR Christians to sigh after the honours of heraldry is not ambition, but meanness ; since they can claim more than noble or regal descent, being born not of blood, but of God. As, however, the eternal King, the fountain of honour, extends his favour to the seed of those who serve him, calling Israel a people near to him, and assigning this reason, “ ye are the seed of Abraham, my friend ;” it would be ingratitude and impiety to throw away honours so sacred, conferred by such a hand. Nor can a Christian look to the general assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect, and behold there a long line of ancestors who have served God with dis-

tinguished devotion, without feeling himself exalted by the relation, stimulated by their example, and borne on their wings to heaven.

It would, therefore, be injustice to the memory of Risdon Darracott, and an injury to the interests of religion, not to claim for him the honours of which an apostle reminded Timothy, "that his *mother* and *grandmother* were holy women, in whom dwelt the unfeigned faith of God's elect." The subject of the following pages might, indeed, trace his pious ancestry still farther back; for his great grandfather by the mother's side was a confessor in the cause of religion, during the reign of Charles the first. Abhorring the ceremonies introduced by Archbishop Laud into the establishment of his native country, he joined with those who ventured across the Atlantic, to bury themselves in the woods of America. "The sun," said these voluntary exiles for religion's sake, "shines as pleasantly on America as on Britain; the same providence that has guarded us here watches over that country; and why should we hesitate to adopt as our parent a country which would afford us liberty of religion, when our own has proved to us a stepmother?" It required, however, all the force of principle, expressed in this sentence with the eloquence of truth and feeling, to rouse the puritans to such a measure. For the improvements of navigation had not yet diminished the dangers of the voyage, and the

American savages, who still excite horror, were at that time tenfold more formidable.

In that desert world the ancestor of Mr. Darracott was blessed with a daughter ; who was born in the year 1654, and named Hannah. Though it must have been painful to parents who had been accustomed to the comforts of England, to see a daughter growing up amidst the wilds of America ; the puritans and their wives preferred rearing their children to pure religion, under every privation, to infecting them with the contagion of superstition for the sake of the elegant luxuries of life. It cannot, however, be ascertained whether these good old confessors died in their voluntary exile, or returned with their child to end their days in England.

Their American daughter, indeed, became a resident in the native country of her ancestors ; for she was married to Philip Risdon, of Biddeford, in Devonshire, from whom the subject of the following memoir derived his baptismal name. The title of *generous* gentleman, given to Mr. Risdon, in ancient documents, is an indication of what may be called a man of family, raised above the necessity of labour, or trade ; for the fashion of giving titles to those who are supported by industry was not then known. Mr. Risdon's attachment to pure religion brought him acquainted with the daughter of the refugee, who had preferred a good conscience to the comforts of his native land. In her, therefore, he possessed a companion of kindred soul ; for she inherited

her father's pious sentiments and heroic spirit. And in him the emigrant family found the fulfilment of the Redeemer's promise : " There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's ; but he shall receive a hundred fold, now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands."

One daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. Risdon in 1693, whom they named Hannah, after her mother. Upon her, life opened with a more auspicious dawn than upon her maternal ancestors ; for she was not only born in Britain, but under the tolerant reign of William, who had now terminated the religious persecutions which formerly desolated our country, and drove many of its inhabitants into foreign lands. Mr. Risdon died too early to see his daughter settled in life, leaving his mourning relict with her only child, as the solace of her widowhood.

When Miss Risdon came of age in 1714, she was given in marriage to Richard Darracott, at that time the dissenting minister of Swanage, in Dorsetshire. This was one of the numerous host who have verified the poet's beautiful stanza :

" Full many a gem of brightest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear,
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

The Darracotts, as well as the Risdons, were

ancient residents of Biddeford, in Devon. The guildhall of that town is said to contain the portraits of Mr. Darracott's ancestors, who are recorded with honour among the mayors of Biddeford. From this his paternal line, the subject of the following pages was entitled to an estate, which, however, he never possessed.

Richard Darracott, like Moses, learned in all the wisdom of the world, and fit to shine in courts, preferred affliction with the people of God; for, retiring to feed the flock of God, he spent his days watching over a handful of plain people in an obscure country town. When the writer of this memoir walked through the town of Swanage, almost as retired as the quarries by which it is surrounded; entered the singularly antiquated little meeting-house where the faithful pastor preached; and approached the ashlar cottage on the hill where the good man lived, he could not help calling to mind the happy hours employed in reading the records of his wisdom and piety, and saying to himself, "was this all that the world could afford such a man?" But thus the friends of God have been treated in a world at enmity with him. They "wandered in sheep skins and goat skins, in deserts and caves of the earth, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy."

Neither the obscurity of the situation, however, nor the smallness of his charge, ever generated in the mind of Richard Darracott the lazy arrogant conceit, that his callow thoughts were

good enough for his audience. With great care he prepared, not only for the pulpit, where he might sometimes expect to address strangers attracted by his talents, but also for those private meetings of the members of the church, held after the Lord's supper, from which all strangers were excluded. The notes of the addresses he delivered on these occasions, when the pastor usually pours out the fulness of his heart, without any attempt to shine, excite the highest ideas of his intellectual powers, and of the solicitude with which he studied on every occasion to promote the edification of his flock. A minister could not read them without feeling reproved, or without saying, "if such were his most familiar exhortations to a little company of Christians in a vestry, what would have been his exertions to instruct and save the multitudes whom we are frequently called to address?"*

* From a volume of these addresses now lying before him, the author cannot refrain from giving a few extracts, as a specimen of the manner in which some obscure dissenting ministers were employed in feeding their flocks a hundred years ago—

"My friends,

"Meeting together thus in private, while others are at their trades, we declare that we are not of this world, but are pilgrims travelling to a better. Heaven is a Christian's proper home and country. He is born from above, his conversation is in heaven, his eternal habitation is there, his head and Lord there, his best friends and kindred there. At such seasons as these, he meets his country folks to talk about his home, his fellow-travellers to animate each other in their heavenly march. We now meet our Lord: for in this private place, I am reminded of the sweet passage, Canticles vii. 11. where the church desires to go forth to fields and villages, to walk with Christ, to receive counsel, instruction, and comfort from him, with freedom, and without interruption. Those that would converse with Christ must escape from the hurries of the world, to attend upon the Lord without distract-

Well might these fathers of the dissent protest that they did not serve God with what cost them nought, nor supply the lamps of his sanctuary with unbeaten oil. They took alarm at the voice that saith, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently." They teach us what

tion. "Isaac went out into the fields at evening to meditate." Here we may meditate on the grace that hath made us to differ from the rest of the world. Not in outward condition, here all things come alike to all. Is David rich? so is Nabal. If Joseph is favoured of his prince, so is Haman too. Was wicked Ahab killed in battle? so was good Josiah. But with regard to our better part, the inward peace of the soul, how hath our God distinguished us! A good man can look every way with comfort, but the sinner, if his reason were not blinded, would always be in Belshazzar's trembling fit.

"1. If they look *downward*. A Christian can take a view of the grave with comfort. It is only a resting place for his flesh. Death has no sting to his spirit. It is but putting off his clothes, or taking a journey. A stile or two more, and I am at my father's house, amid my treasures, friends, and relations. 'Tis but winking, and I am in heaven. But if the sinner looks down, there is, *first*, a dismal grave to receive his pampered sinful body. A mighty change from former indulgences,—the bed of down changed into a bed of dirt and putrefaction, and, shortly after, into a bed of flames; for when he looks lower, he sees, *secondly*, a dreadful hell opening for him, devils gaping for him. He dares not die, he cannot live.

"2. If they look *backward*. The believer says, with Paul, "I have fought the good fight," or with Hezekiah, "remember how I have walked before thee in truth." But ah! the sinner dares not look back at all. He would dread to have God remember how he has walked. For he now remembers his swarms of vile thoughts, the many hard speeches which he has uttered against the ways and people of God.

"3. They look *forward* with different views. The Christian with comfort and boldness to the day of judgment, the second coming of Christ. He says, "come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." But the sinner is described by Christ, when he says, "men's hearts shall fail them for fear, and for looking for those things which are coming upon them. For when he sees the Saviour that once wooed him, coming in flames of fire to judge him, whither shall he fly? O tremendum Dei judicium.

"4. See the difference between the righteous and the wicked,

vigorous thought and intense feeling should distinguish the discourses, delivered in the name of Jesus, on eternal things.

In this retired, contracted sphere, Richard Darracott found in Miss Risdon such a partner as would make any situation pleasant. Inheriting, with undiminished force, the spirit of martyrdom which had induced her mother's father to emigrate to the new world; she cheerfully took up her abode at Swanage, where her fine talents, cultivated by her father's care, rendered her a fit companion for a man adapted to more polished society than his flock could furnish.

Mrs. Risdon was much gratified by her daughter's union to a man, eminently devoted to the cause for which her father had suffered exile; and, as the young couple constituted all that was dearest to her in life, she determined to accompany her daughter to her residence, and fix her home in their humble dwelling. Here she had the happiness to see Mrs. Darracott present her husband with a daughter, who was, early in life, married to Mr. Isaac Clark, a dissenting minister at Bow, in Devonshire. Shortly before the birth of her next child, Mrs. Darracott was called to

when they look *upward*. The Christian lifts up his head because his redemption draweth nigh. They see their crown, their treasure, in heaven, and their hearts leap for joy. It *now* makes their hearts beat gladly, how much more when just entering into possession. When the sinner looks upward, he sees a heaven that denies him admittance. The judge says, "I know you not." There is an angry God, whose face is a flaming fire against thee though' it smiles on thy pious neighbour."

the painful task of committing to the grave the remains of her beloved mother, who was then in her sixty-third year.

It is probable that the pangs of this separation contributed to hasten her own end ; for from this time she drooped, and this lily of the valley was destined to be soon transplanted to the bowers of Paradise. Within a few weeks, she followed her parent to the grave, having died in child-bed, shortly after giving birth to the subject of these memoirs. Could she have foreseen what would be the character of her son, she would gladly have sacrificed life to bless the cause of Christ, which she loved better than life, with such a minister. But, without this additional motive, her heavenly mind enabled her cheerfully to resign the husband of her youth, and the infant fruits of their love, to depart and be with Christ, which, with the Apostle, she pronounced " far better." She died in 1716, in the twenty-fourth year of her age. The remains of the mother and daughter are deposited in the same tomb, near the door of the established place of worship, in Swanage.* Lovely and pleasant were they, in life, and in death they were not divided. A

* At this place, about twenty years ago, preached a gay young clergyman ; who, passing by the house of one of Mr. Darracott's former flock, and overhearing him at family prayer, on the evening of the Lord's day, took the liberty of violently kicking at the door, to disturb the family in its worship. When questioned concerning his conduct, the reason he assigned was, that he thought the family were a set of Methodists, and he would have all such people rooted up. But the reader will now rejoice to

grey Stone, much worn by the foot of the passenger, exhibits the following appearance and inscription :—

<p>In this Tomb, lies the Body of HANNAH, Wife of R. DARRACOTT, in this Parish of SWANAGE, Minister of the Word of God. She, filled with Graces and adorned with rare Abilities, at the COMMAND OF GOD, forsook her HUSBAND and her INFANTS, to fly to Heaven, on the Tenth of FEBRUARY, in the year { of Salvation 1716. { of her age 24.</p>	<p>In this Tomb, also lies the Body of HANNAH, the Mother of the aforesaid HANNAH. She was born IN NEW ENGLAND ; whither for the Sake of Religion, her FATHER had fled. She was married to PHILIPP RISON, Gent. at BIDDEFORD. She came hither with her DAUGHTER, and in a short time put off MORTALITY, on the Third of JANUARY, in the year { of Salvation 1716. { of her age 63.</p>
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Mr. Darracott had now passed through the flowery part of his path, for all the rest was thickly set with thorns. The recollection of his short-lived domestic bliss was rendered more

learn, that the pastor of the congregation received, a year or two after, the following letter from the same clergyman.

Dear Sir,

I have had the unspeakable happiness to have my views entirely changed, with regard to the religious sentiments I preached at Swanage. I, who once persecuted the truth as it is in Jesus, now preach it. Indeed, Sir, I do not deceive you. Jesus Christ has wonderfully revealed himself to my soul.—I am a brand plucked from the fire.—I am a monument of divine love.—I reject the doctrine of heathen morality I preached at Swanage, and elsewhere. I preach nothing now but the everlasting gospel of

painful, by the sight of the babes who were deprived of their mother at that period of life, which most needs a mother's care ; and when he sought to supply that loss by a second marriage, he plunged into an abyss of woes. For, after remaining some years in a widowed state, having determined to marry again, he fixed his affections on one who had first attracted his notice, by the appearance of eminent religion.

His former partner was a woman of such excellencies, as would have eclipsed the charms of most others ; but Mr. Darracott remembered her with regrets more poignant, in consequence of the perfect contrast between her and his second wife. He hoped, indeed, to have found one of kindred spirit : but was soon alarmed by the discovery of her hatred to the piety of which his heart was the altar and his house the temple. On remonstrating with her, and asking, " did I

Jesus Christ ; and in this letter, I tell the people of Swanage, I have built them upon their own righteousness ; but now declare, there is no hope but in a Saviour alone—I have the interest of my Saviour warm at heart, and the love of God abundantly shed abroad in me. May God keep my heart warm and animated in his cause and glory. As I believe you preach the Gospel, I write to you and acknowledge I have done an injury to you, and your people, and the cause of Christ at Swanage. I entreat your pardon, I did it in ignorance and unbelief. And now, my conscience will not be easy till I have confessed this.

And I am not ashamed to confess it to you, to them, and all the world. I beg pardon, also, of an old Gentleman in your Society, whose door I violently assaulted, while at prayers in his own house.

May the Lord prosper the cause of Christ at Swanage, and all the people of God there ; and prosper you in all your well-meant undertakings. My brotherly love to all, that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

Your unworthy, but labouring Servant in the Gospel.

not witness your secret retirement for devotion before I married you? and had I not reason to think that religion was your element and delight?" he received a reply which went as a dagger to his heart: "The greater hypocrite was I; for it was all done to gain you."

It must be perfectly unnecessary to say, that such an explanation blasted all prospect of domestic felicity. For as religious hypocrisy is an attempt to put a trick upon omniscience, it is most hateful to God, and operates by his just judgment as a deadly poison to the heart and conscience of the hypocrite. Whatever pains, therefore, this pious man might have been disposed to take for the conversion of the unhappy creature by whom he had been ensnared into a connexion fatal to his peace; she soon proved that a good husband, won by guilty arts, will become hateful to female depravity. Forsaking the guide of her youth, and renouncing an honourable connexion of which she was not worthy, she threw herself into the arms of a man fit for such fellowship of iniquity; and after having slept in the bed of the adulterer, she lay down at death in a bed of thorns.

Many interesting and instructive reflections are suggested by this event. The anguish which it must have occasioned to such a man as Mr. Darracott will excite the sympathy of every reader. It is, then, consoling to know that he was not tortured with the reflections of his own conscience, for rushing with his eyes open into a

connexion forbidden by the divine word. To search the heart is not our prerogative, and therefore not our duty. He might confidently look up to him who sometimes sees fit to wound his servants in the tenderest place, but ever affords them consolation under the afflictions of his providence, and converts the severest trials into eternal blessings. Far different was the case of a minister, who was thus warned by an elderly female of his congregation against a connexion which he was about to form : " I shall expect no blessing to attend your ministry from the time you take an enemy to Christ into your bosom." The event justified the premonition.

It cannot now, indeed, be known with certainty, whether Mr. Darracott acted with all the circumspection, which a connexion so important demands. The affections are too often first consulted, and when they have become clamorous, they extort from the reluctant judgment a sentence in their own favour. Such evidences are then admitted, as on cool retrospection we pronounce invalid. The concurrence of events which brought the objects together, the time of the first meeting, the very bias of the mind towards the union, are all adduced to prove the divine designs in the affair ; so as to call off the judgment from consulting that infallible rule, by which we are to try events and tempers, and to know the will of heaven.

This affliction which befel Mr. Darracott, furnishes, however, a solemn warning against all

dissimulation in religion, which may perhaps accomplish its object, but will certainly blast the enjoyment. Here we see an unhappy female succeed in winning the person with whom she was enamoured ; not perceiving, till it was too late, that a kindred disposition is essential to the happiness of life. Those who study to deserve, rather than to obtain, the object of desire, are sure of success ; for *with* the object they then have a blessing, and *without* it they find compensation in their own improvement. Young persons should learn from hence to abhor hypocrisy, which poisons all the character, and by a thousand paths conducts to misery ; while those who have the care of youth should be roused to warn them against disingenuousness, taking care never to afford them the encouragement which they will usually take, if they can practise it without detection.

But as we are here led to reflect, how limited are the means of discovering the real character of those with whom we are about to enter into the nearest relation of life, we should feel the truth of the scriptural maxim, that a good wife is from the Lord. Those who have succeeded in forming a happy union, which gives a cheerful colour to the whole of life, should gratefully acknowledge that they owe it, not to their own perspicacity, but to the divine goodness. The ministers of religion, who have peculiar need of pious partners, to whom they impart a portion of their own public character, have peculiar cause

to adore the kindness that leads them to a suitable companion. For a failure in this point, has blasted the usefulness of many an able man.

When Mr. Darracott shook off the viper that stung him to the heart, he had the happiness of reflecting, that there were no children by this connexion to make the separation more difficult, and that his son and daughter by the former marriage were not now to be educated within the contagion of a wicked woman. His upright affectionate soul, formed for that sweetest solace of human life—domestic endearment, never entirely recovered from the shock; for, what would to any man have been severe, is, to the minister of religion, peculiarly aggravated. It often exposes him to disadvantages in his private walk, and compels him to abstain from some subjects of great public interest.

But it is not in the power of any foe to make a good man entirely wretched. The true sources of bliss are too deep to be poisoned by the hand of the wicked. In communion with God, in the faithful discharge of pastoral duty, and in rearing his children for the service of Christ, Mr. Darracott experienced those consolations which soothed his pains. Nor was the time of trial long; for he was called to enter into rest before he had completed his fortieth year.

Before that period, however, he had removed to Chumleigh, in Devon. Whether this step was occasioned by his domestic affliction, or whether

it was taken with the hope of recovering his elasticity of mind by change of scene, cannot now be known ; but as we follow such a man to his last retreat, and to his tomb, we reflect with awe on the inscrutable counsels of Him, who puts the largest cup of affliction into the hands of those, whom he loves best. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE BIRTH OF MR. DARRACOTT TO HIS SETTLEMENT AT WELLINGTON.

SWANAGE, in the isle of Purbeck, on the sea coast of Dorsetshire, has been already pointed out as the birth-place of Mr. Darracott. The first of February, in the year 1717, was the day which gave to the world this child, who was the death of his mother, but afterwards became his father's comfort, under what was worse than the death of a beloved wife, the infamy of her successor. Risdon, his mother's maiden name, was given to him at his baptism by his afflicted surviving parent, who sought to perpetuate a name dear to him, when dedicating to God with sorrowful devotion the tender branch whose parent stock was cut down by the hand of death. Thus the good man, reminded that he himself was mortal, and that he might be soon called to leave his children orphans in the world, laying hold of the true refuge of the Christian parent, the covenant which God has made with his people and their seed after them, said, "Although my house be not so with God (as I could wish), yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; this is all my salvation

and all my desire, although he make me not to grow."

When his son was about five years old, Mr. Darracott removed to Chumleigh, in Devonshire. In this town, where young Risdon received the first rudiments of learning under parental tuition, he afterwards consecrated to Christ the first labours of his ministry as his father's successor. Of his boyish days nothing is known worthy of record. It is believed that when his improvement created demands which the leisure of his father could not supply, he was placed under the tuition of Mr. Palk, a dissenting minister of South Molton, in Devonshire. This good man, as an eminent schoolmaster in his day, was a blessing to the rising generation; but it is to be regretted that it should ever be necessary for ministers to give themselves to any other employment but that of their ministry, which demands all their moments, all their talents, and all their souls.

The estimation in which the master is said to have been held by all competent judges, joined to the talents which the pupil is known to have possessed, render it reasonable to presume that Risdon Darracott early acquired considerable proficiency in classical learning. But as he afterwards exclusively devoted his existence to another and a nobler pursuit, his compositions never betrayed that classical enthusiasm, never poured forth that learned lore, which usually marks the productions of those who have risen to eminence in elegant literature.

From school, young Darracott went, at about the age of fifteen, to a dissenting college to study for the ministry. The serious readers of his life will, therefore, now naturally look for an account of the commencement of his religion. Of this, however, none but very slight and defective records remain. No doubt can be entertained of the divine blessing having so far accompanied the care of his pious father to train him up in the way in which he should go, that he never openly departed from it. His correct morals left him no reason to lament, with many, the sins of his youth, and his early attention to the duties of religion, rendered it impossible for others to mark the period of his conversion.

But the most early training, and the most skilful pruning, leave the nature of the tree unchanged. Nor was Mr. Darracott among the number of those who imagine that it is the privilege of such favoured youths as himself to be exempted from the necessity of regeneration. He ever inculcated with the zeal of conviction, and the skill of experience, the doctrine of the new birth. Many will, therefore conclude, that as he entered upon a course of studies for the ministry as early as the fifteenth year of his life, he must have enjoyed the happy change before that period. For it will be said, surely a pious minister would not have devoted his son to preach the gospel to others, before it was ascertained that he had experienced its influence himself, and was called to the work

by that Redeemer whose sole prerogative it is to give to his church pastors and teachers.

It must not, however, be unnoticed, that the first dissenters brought with them from the communion, from which they had but recently emerged, other ideas of entrance into the ministry. That sacred calling, charged with so awful responsibilities, was too often chosen from no higher motives than predilection for a father's profession, fondness for literary pursuits, or a wish to favour a delicate constitution with exemption from secular labours. It is, therefore, difficult to ascertain whether Risdon Darracott experienced the vital change which produces true religion, before he went to the seminary for the ministry, or whether he found, while there, the inestimable blessing which he was professedly studying to proclaim to others.

In the choice of a seminary for his son, Mr. Darracott was happily directed by the public voice to that over which Dr. Doddridge presided at Northampton. The academy exhibited at this time, indeed, the evil consequences of admitting young men to study for the ministry, before they had given sufficient evidence of their regeneration, or their call to the work. But the character of the tutor was, in the instance before us, a counterpoise to the evil; for Doddridge proved an eminent blessing to his pupil. While in the seminary, young Darracott lost his father, but found another in his tutor. The affectionate heart of the doctor soon formed a strong attach-

ment to the youth, in whom he perceived a soul panting for the noblest distinction. A humble diligence in his studies won the tutor's esteem, and inspired such hopes of future eminence as are supremely grateful to those who are formed for the education of youth. Some manuscript volumes, written at college, equally attest the ability of the instructor and the industry of the pupil. But it was the frankness of young Darracott's mind, the purity and strength of principle manifest in all his conduct, and the ardour of his devotion which so fixed the affections of Doddridge, as to induce him to say, "I hope this young friend will be the guardian of my widow and orphans, should I be called away by death."

As there was a vast diversity of character among the students, the reader is prepared to hear that the subject of these memoirs took into his bosom those whose personal religion afterwards rendered them eminent among the faithful preachers of the gospel. Mr. Fawcett, who became successor to Baxter, at Kidderminster, said, when preaching Mr. Darracott's funeral sermon, that he looked back on their friendship formed at Northampton, and cemented by two and twenty year's continuance. The character of Mr. Pearsall, of Taunton, another of his early friends, serves also to mark the pious turn of Mr. Darracott's mind.

If, indeed, Northampton was not the place of his new and better birth, it was while he was

there, pursuing his studies for the ministry, that his religion blazed forth with that seraphic ardour which distinguished his future days. To this period of his life he ever after looked back with peculiar delight ; and, when on the verge of eternity, referring to it, he recommended to his children the service of that God whom he had served upwards of twenty years. Whether he conceived that his religion then commenced, or whether he thus referred to that era of his existence, because his devotedness to God then became more decided, and, his studies drawing to a close, he began to serve God in the gospel of his Son, cannot now be ascertained.

It is, however, upon the whole, probable, that the college of Northampton was young Darracott's new and better birth-place. Well might he look back upon that scene with grateful wonder ; for they who go to such institutions in a state of nature, are likely to leave them despisers of the grace of God. It is well, when the religion, which was previously possessed, is there preserved uninjured. For the scriptures have warned us, that youth are in danger of being lifted up by admission into the office of the ministry, and thus falling into the snare of the devil ; while it is obvious, that classical studies, as well as constant intercourse with others who are in the high day of life, and the full flow of spirits, may lower the serious devotional tone of the mind. Happily, however, Risdon Darracott, instead of losing any portion of the religion he formerly

had, found at Northampton, that which he before had not : so that instead of coming forth to teach a system of heathen ethics, or to preach a gospel of which he had no experience ; he entered upon the exercise of his ministry, with all the simplicity of youthful feelings, and all the zeal, inspired by mercy recently received.

From this time, his heart declined every other distinction but that (which is indeed the loftiest) of being the devoted servant of Jesus Christ. He now formed some of those friendships with pious and distinguished persons beyond the pale of his own communion, which were the honour and delight of his future days.

While a student, he became the friend of Hervey, the author of the "Contemplations," and of "Theoron and Aspasio," a work, which, with all the faults imputed to it, has been honoured with extensive usefulness. The letters of Mr. Darracott to this young friend cannot be laid before the reader, as they were left in the hands to which they were sent ; but those of Hervey sufficiently indicate the devotional strain of the correspondence, which the following specimen will testify. It was written in answer to a letter consulting him on the formation of a religious society among the students.

" Dear Sir,

" I return you my heartiest thanks for your kind present, and kinder letter. The Lord make

them as beneficial as they were acceptable unto me ! You tell me, my example has had a great and good influence upon you. Strange and glad tidings ! Amen ! Hallelujah ! Sure the principalities and powers in heavenly places will be filled with wonder and pleasing amazement ; will tune their highest and most triumphant strings, when they behold their immortal King vouchsafing to work, to carry on the cause of his Christ, by an unclean and sinful worm !

“ This cool morning, I took a walk, with a design to consider the scheme which you are going to set on foot. My thoughts were all along attended with abasement and admiration, to perceive you having recourse and consulting me, when you daily converse with gentlemen who are far my superiors in wisdom and knowledge : but, especially, since you have the happiness of living under the same roof with the judicious and devout doctor. Yet, sir, I fear I am one of those who, as the inspired apostle says, “ are blind and cannot see far off.” Nevertheless, since you press for my opinion, for the all-commanding sake of our Redeemer, I cannot, I dare not, withhold it.

“ I think then your proposal, as far as I can see into it, is very proper ; and if discreetly managed, and steadily persisted in, cannot fail of being advantageous to yourself and others. “ It is not good that Man should be alone,” said the Divine Beneficence at the beginning. And if company was a blessing, if it was requisite and

necessary to complete man's happiness in Paradise ; sure it is much more a blessing, much more requisite and necessary to complete his holiness in a degenerate and corrupt state. This seems to be evident for several reasons ; four of which at present occur to my mind.

“ 1. Because we are ignorant and short-sighted, oftentimes unable to distinguish good from evil, or to discern the things that are excellent. But God is pleased to reveal to one what is concealed from another. So that in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom.

“ 2. Because we are lovers and admirers of ourselves, unwilling to see our own errors, and therefore unlikely to amend them. Whereas our friends will, with a meek but impartial spirit, show us our faults. As a looking-glass that will not lie, they will fairly set before us all our blemishes. And may we not say with the wise man, “ In such faithful witnesses there is health.” May I evermore have such friends, and I will value them more than a brother !

“ 3. Because we are weak and irresolute ; easily shaken from the most laudable purposes, and apt to let go our integrity upon any opposition. But a band of friends who are like-minded, inspires us with courage and constancy. If we have seconds and associates in our warfare, we are much more emboldened to persevere in fighting the good fight. “ A threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

“ 4. Because we are slothful and lukewarm in

religious duties, of a Laodicean temper, and apt like Gallio, "to care for no such things." But a holy fellowship will kindle and keep alive a holy fervour. As coals united and laid together burn and glow, but separate and single soon lose both their light and heat. How often have I gone into the company of my dear friends, listless and spiritless, like one whose nerves were all unstrung; yet when I came home, I have found myself quite another person; vigorous and active, sanguine and "zealously affected in good matters." This, no doubt, was the Lord's doing, and "it is marvellous in our eyes."

This, therefore, shows how mightily the Supreme Being is pleased with, and how signally he blesses such assembling of ourselves together, which is another, and perhaps the best argument for executing the project you are debating upon. Methinks it is also an excellent means of enlarging our affections. We are prone, very prone to be straightened and contracted in our bowels. And I believe, a continual interchange of friendly actions, and affectionate discourses, (which are necessary to keep up the society you mention,) is one of the best ways to strip ourselves of all ungenerous and unchristian selfishness; one of the best ways of learning to "love as brethren, and to be dear unto one another as our own souls."

"But I must have done, I find myself running beyond the bounds of an epistle; nay, have I not tired your patience already? I only beg of you

to excuse my weakness and want of judgment, I hope you will not expose this to my prejudice, but hide and draw a veil over what I have written in meekness and fear. Pray let me know the issue of your deliberations. How glad should I be to hear, that when you come together to advance the life and power of religion, you remember and pray for

“ Your obliged friend, and humble servant,
“ J. HERVEY.”

“ *Hardingstone, June 3, 1736.*”

This correspondence was equally honourable to both parties. It was to the praise of the student, that he was projecting pious schemes with ardent zeal, and consulting his seniors with profound humility. A humble zeal may be expected to last, like Darracott's, to the close of life ; but the ardour which disdains counsel, will prove like the momentary flash of gunpowder. To Hervey, it was highly honourable that he condescended to hold the correspondence of friendship with the youth, who was just learning to serve God, in the Gospel of his dear Son. Such kind attentions, may not only encourage a modest youth, but may through him, prove a blessing to thousands ; for, nineteen years after, Mr. Darracott sent Mr. Hervey's letter to a Christian friend, accompanied with the following remarks.

“ This is the first letter I received, as I remember, from Mr. Hervey. A little before this,

I had an interview with him at a good man's house, who belonged to the Doctor's church, and lived in the parish. Mr. Hervey's father lived about two miles from Northampton. Though it is now almost nineteen years ago, I retain a delightful impression of our converse then. I was at this time forming a religious society in Northampton, which I communicated in a letter to Mr. Hervey: this is his answer, and contains a few cogent arguments to recommend it. I bless God I then began to taste the pleasure David speaks of, when he says, "we took sweet counsel together," and must bear it upon record that some of the most delightful hours of my life have been those spent in *social exercises*. I am glad you have formed yourselves together to this purpose, and send you this to encourage you herein, and may every time you meet furnish you with the best arguments, even your own experience of the comfort and advantage of it.

"RISDON DARRACOTT."

"Remember me kindly to every member of your society, my heart is with you, my prayers for you, may you increase, both in number and grace, and be of one heart and one soul."

Burning to enter upon the delightful work of preaching Christ, Mr. Darracott commenced his labours in a village near Northampton. Here the barbarous spirit of persecution which formerly so disgraced our country, and now occasionally bursts forth from the cold formal pretenders to pharasaic righteousness, as flames from the snow-

clad crater of a volcano scarcely yet extinguished, gave our young evangelist a specimen of the trials which he was about to endure. The house in which he was preaching was beset by the village mob, with imprecations demanding the preacher, in hopes of being gratified by wreaking their vengeance on the disturber of their fatal peace. His hearers, however, befriended him, and while the rioters were breaking in on one side of the house, they handed him through a window on the other; thus he escaped, like Paul let down in a basket from the wall of Damascus.

On application to the magistrates, who were then sitting in the neighbourhood, he found that instead of affording redress and protection, they were disposed only to gratify their own prejudices and bigotry, in defiance of the laws which they had sworn to execute, and to the hazard of the public peace which they were appointed to preserve. By this and some other circumstances, it appeared that the mob was encouraged by those whose education should have elevated them above vulgar prejudice, if their religion had not purified them from selfish and malignant passions. It is, however, pleasing to reflect, that while the superior zeal of Christians in the present day more frequently provokes the spirit of persecution, these disgusting ebullitions of barbarism now excite horror by their rarity, as well as by their atrocity.

To their gothic bigotry, young Darracott's philanthropic zeal furnished a fine contrast. It

is delightful to behold in one that enters on the ministry, a soul all on fire ; for many are the circumstances which conspire to quench the sacred flame, as we advance in life. Some few, indeed, enjoy the rare felicity of acquiring in advancing years more than the fires of youth ; but the majority of christians, as they increase in wisdom and experience, abate somewhat of their youthful fervours. What a chilling sight, then, is a young minister without zeal ; for what frosts may we expect in the wintry age ?

Mr. Darracott being, from this time, frequently employed in preaching, received the following licence, or testimony, from his tutor and two other ministers.

August 22, 1737.

“ We, whose hands are hereunto subscribed, do certify all whom it may concern, that having examined Mr. Risdon Darracott concerning his proficiency in his studies, and being sufficiently assured of his unblamable conversation, judge him to be well qualified to enter upon the office of preaching ; and do advise and encourage him to do so, recommending him to the divine blessing, and to the due regard of all Christian societies that need and desire his assistance. Witness our Hands.

“ J. Norris.

“ T. Cartwright.

“ P. Doddridge, D. D.”

Such testimonials were formerly stamped with higher authority than is now attached to them by

dissenters. They may be abused, but they are also calculated to answer a most valuable end. If stern authority formerly checked the liberty of prophesying, the neglect of due recommendation now exposes the churches to the intrusion of adventurers, without character, and without principle.

From the academy, Mr. Darracott removed to Chumleigh, in the summer of the year 1738, when he had just passed his majority. His father being now dead, and the church still destitute of a pastor, he went, not merely to visit his friends and wander over the scenes endeared by early association, but to enter upon the work of the ministry, of which he never for a moment lost sight. This must have been a sphere peculiarly interesting to him. Standing over his father's ashes, and leading the devotions of that church with which he had first learned to join in the worship of God, he laboured with much approbation, and not without some effect. But as the congregation was divided in its choice between him and another young minister, he determined to relinquish the advantages he possessed, and retiring, sought another field of usefulness. In this he affords a salutary lesson to those who are entering on the pastoral care.

That the numbers who compose a Christian church, with all their diversity of ages, habits, and tastes, should frequently preclude the hope of perfect unanimity in the choice of a pastor, may be readily conceived. But where the mi-

nority is considerable, either in numbers, or in weight and worth, a young man who comes fresh and immature from a seminary, should not feel surprised or wounded ; nor should he by any means conceive it due to his character and the solicitations of his admirers, to risk the peace of a church, by struggling to maintain his post. The church's separation ought to wound him much more than his own rejection. These divisions are sometimes, indeed, productive of the happiest consequences in the increase of places for the preaching of the gospel, and in the consequent increase of hearers ; but they frequently kindle passions so guilty in the sight of God, and so dishonourable in the eyes of the world that Christians should study to obtain the good without the evil. And when a young minister humbly follows where the Redeemer leads, seeking a field of acceptance and usefulness, without strife or division, his tenderness to the sacred body of Christ will usually be rewarded by that success which should, above every other consideration, be dear to his heart. Such was the recompence of Risdon Darracott, who removed from Chumleigh to Penzance, in Cornwall.

The spirit with which he retired from a scene endeared to him by his paternal roof and the ashes of a beloved father, will be seen in the following letter to his friend Pearsall.

“ *Penzance, Nov. 2, 1738.* ”

“ My dear friend,

“ Since I received your kind and affectionate letter, I am removed, to a very considerable distance from the place where I then was. I hope a good Providence has made the remove. The meeting I then presided at, divided about me and another young minister ; an invitation being sent me just then by the people where I now am, I thought proper to accept it, on purpose to withdraw from those who unhappily divided. I am, I think now, as to the place, in the most agreeable situation I ever saw. It lies close to the sea-side, and commands a very large prospect ; it has abundant pleasant walks ; the town throughout is very rich and populous. The meeting is but small, but the people are very substantial ; and, what to me is mostly valuable, they are very affectionate and truly religious. If I do not settle with them, which at present I am a little doubtful of, it is owing to the distance it is from my estate and relations ; however, may that God who has hitherto led and guided me, direct my mind and overrule my thoughts in suberviency to his glory. I hope that, and that only, will be the end I shall always in life propose. O that I may live to God, that when I die, I may die with the pleasing hope of living for ever with him !

I have heard lately some melancholy accounts about the academy ; I know not how true they are. I am really most truly concerned for its

welfare, and would desire you would give a little account how things are with you. May God be abundantly better than my fears, and exceed my fondest hopes concerning it! I find the work of composition much easier, and can make two sermons a week with pleasure: but ah! I find it still hard to keep up the spirit of religion in my heart, and to go through my work with a becoming temper: I am too apt to grow cold and lose my spiritual unction. O that the divine Spirit may breathe upon me and give me life! I earnestly desire a continuance in your prayers, and do assure you, you shall always in mine be affectionately remembered. The good God be with you and bless you, build you up in all valuable learning and true religion, and make you eminently useful in your day and generation!

“ Please to write me when at leisure, and direct for me at Mr. Enty’s, in Penzance, Cornwall. Give the same direction to Mr. Merivale. My respects to those of the gentlemen who may ask for me. I am, my dear friend,

“ With a great deal of respect, yours,

“ Risdon Darracott.”

His acceptance and success at Penzance left him no reason to regret his former scene of labour. “ The Spirit of God,” he said to a friend, “ is usefully moving upon the hearts of men here; through my preaching, several are awakened, and setting their faces towards Zion; some very vicious and debauched characters are reformed, the young men show great seriousness,

and I have great hope of several of them ; and what makes all this the more remarkable is, that there was a strange lukewarmness among professors themselves when I came hither ; the church seemed to have a name that it lived but was dead. The people so much love me, and I find myself so affectionately concerned for them, that I believe I shall settle with them ; though I shall not determine, till I go up into Devonshire, which will be about a fortnight hence. Some of my friends do not think it convenient to fix with them, as the congregation is but small, and the interest of the dissenters weak through the whole country ; but yet, is the day of small things to be despised ? Could I get such a friend as you near me, it would determine me at once, but the ministers throughout the country, it must be acknowledged are poor preachers, and the interest sinks in their hands. I am sorry at the account you give of yourself about fixing, as I fear I must ever despair of being near you. The London ministers too well know their interest in the city to let you come down into the country. I have sent you two little books, “ Dr. Watts on the Strength and Weakness of Human Reason,” and his “ Redeemer and Sanctifier,” as an instance of my kind regard for you. I beg I may have a letter from you when you have received them. I send them by a private hand, but hope they will come safe. I much approve of your leaving the Saturday night society ; I saw the inconvenience of it myself before I left

the country ; though I have received very great advantages from it, and rejoice that I set it up ; still as the mixed company was found a fault, you did well to separate.”

The prosperity which attended Mr. Darracott's ministry at Penzance was greatly promoted by private means, which are of far greater importance than many seem to imagine. That pastoral visits and social meetings for private devotions, ought not to preclude opportunities for study, nor induce a habit of desultory preaching, is readily admitted ; for this would be sacrificing the primary means of usefulness to the secondary. But after employing in the study as much time as is consistent with the preservation of health, and essential to the mental improvement which good preaching requires, sufficient leisure will still be left for abundant pastoral attentions, without which the flock will never prosper. “ I am determined,” says Mr. Darracott, “ to set up a religious society here ; I have spoken of it from the pulpit, and it seems well relished ; I shall preach some whole sermons upon it, to encourage and direct in it.”

“ I have again increased my labours, and I do assure you with a great deal of pleasure, to preaching three times on the sabbath. I have added a private lecture to some young men in my own room every Friday evening, and a public lecture every Wednesday ; in both which, God does seem already to give me great encouragement. I make it my constant delightful bu-

business to visit the people from house to house, by which I inform myself how religion is regarded by them, being led to suit my public discourses more advantageously. Several seem to be under convictions, which I hope will end in true conversion. I bless God, as to my health, I never was better; I seem to renew my strength as I renew my labours. I meet with some particular temptations. O pray for me!

“I had lately a very large and kind letter from the Doctor; I am, indeed, delightfully pleased with the account he gives of things thereabouts. Mr. Whitefield, I find, has been there. I have written a letter to that good man, to desire him to come down into Cornwall, but I fear his going so soon to Georgia will prevent him. I therefore desired the Doctor to write to Mr. Morgan to come down, or get some person of the like holy fire: do you, my dear friend, exert your utmost influence with Mr. Morgan. This country is sadly ignorant, and deserves as much compassion as Wales can do. I am daily seeing how teachable a disposition they are of, and how greatly they thirst after the gospel, and it is a pity they should perish in such multitudes for want of it. Here are, indeed, many clergymen, but they are sadly negligent of their flocks.”

In another letter he says, “I am going to visit every person in my congregation, and talk with them. Pray for me.”

While he was thus labouring with ardour and

success, he was seized with an alarming disorder, in the year 1738. In the February of that year, he wrote an account of his illness, not, as afflicting him by threatening his life, but as disappointing him when indulging the hope of more abundant labours and success. A few weeks after, he gave to a friend a detail of "the conversion of another soul," in a style which expressed a deep sense of the Redeemer's declaration, that one soul outweighs a world. Under this impression, he endeavoured to console himself, and compensate his flock for the abridgment of his public labours, by increased attention to all private means of usefulness. But the debility of which he complained, so rapidly increased, and was accompanied with spitting of blood to a degree so alarming, that he was thought to be far advanced in a consumption.

As a change of air was deemed requisite, he removed to Barnstaple, in Devonshire, where he had many friends. Here he spent the former half of the year 1739. He could not preach as usual, but endeavoured to employ himself by embracing such means of usefulness as still lay within his reach, and particularly by corresponding with his pious friends. Whitefield and Wesley were among the number, and he mentions the promise of the former to come and supply his lack of service in the West of England. As he began to recover, after leaving Penzance, it was thought the air of that place would not agree with him, which induced him to look out

for a new field of labour. The presbyterian congregation at Wellington, in Somersetshire, being destitute of a pastor, and having heard of his situation and character, were, happily for them, induced to give him an invitation, which led to his permanent settlement and distinguished success.

With pleasure we see, that no inferior motives but that the hand of God removed him from a field of labour which promised so abundant a harvest. For the consideration which some urged, that Penzance was at a great distance from his relations and estate, was unworthy of a minister of Christ. Every genuine minister enters upon the work voluntarily ; but when he has put his hand to the plough, he is forbidden to look back upon friends and estates, and pleasant residences, on pain of being pronounced unfit for the kingdom of God. Wo to the minister who is not guided by his master's interest as his polar star ! The most paradisaic spot is blasted by the Saviour's frowns, and the loveliest circle of friendship may soon be converted into the haunt of discord and the furies. But, " as he that loveth his life immoderately shall lose it ; while he that sacrificeth it for Christ's sake shall keep it to life eternal ;" Risdon Darracott, who was contented to serve Christ far from friends, was, by the kindly afflictive hand of the Saviour, sent back to enjoy his friends with new relish, and pursue his ministry with increased success.

CHAPTER III.

FROM MR. DARRACOTT'S SETTLEMENT AT WELLINGTON TO HIS LAST ILLNESS.

AFTER having preached occasionally at Wellington for some time, Mr. Darracott went to reside there, early in the year 1741. This town, which contained but a few thousand inhabitants, would be deemed by many too narrow a field for such a labourer. But he who deserved a nobler sphere had a heart to create one. If the town was not large, the congregation to which he was invited to preach, formed but a very small proportion of its inhabitants. The members of the church amounted to no more than twenty-eight; though their former pastor, Mr. Berry, who died at an advanced age, had the reputation of a very excellent man. Perhaps his ministry had been protracted, as that of some valuable men has unhappily been, beyond the period of mental or physical vigour, and thus had contributed at last to the diminution rather than the increase of his flock.

It is deeply to be deplored, that this should often arise from the want of provision among dissenters for those who are worn out in the service of the church. What language but that of Pericles, which left stings in the minds of his

hearers, should be employed, when expressing the astonishment and shame produced by the reflection, that thousands of churches should have existed for a century and a half, possessed of hundreds of thousands of pounds, and never established a fund to support ministers whose age renders them incompetent to the work. May the spirit of christian benevolence soon wipe away from us this reproach !

The successor of Mr. Berry, far from lingering on the verge of the field, contenting himself with looking about and intending to labour, instantly devised modes of usefulness new to his flock, and entered upon his work with a spirit which excited equal pleasure and surprise. His fame soon spread, and curiosity drew from the surrounding country crowds of strangers. Whether the pressure of the crowd offended those who loved to be at ease in Zion, or his preaching proved too faithful for those who said "prophecy to us smooth things," or from what other cause it originated, it is not now certain ; but some of the trustees of the meeting-house became his avowed enemies. Withdrawing from his ministry, they locked up their pews, which the eagerness of the hearers who were standing in the aisles frequently burst open. The opposition, however, gradually died away, and left him without an enemy, where he certainly deserved none.

Thus encouraged, he determined to accept the call of the church to the pastoral charge. On the eleventh of November, 1741, he was ordained

by twelve ministers, among whom no other names are now known, but those of Mr. Moon, of Bridgwater; Mr. Stodden, of Taunton; Mr. Palk, of South Molton; Mr. Westcott, of Tiverton; and Mr. Chorley, of Uffculm. What part of the service each one took, is not known. Mr. Darracott's confession of faith was brief; as he wisely abstained from the vain attempt to adduce the proofs of the doctrines which he avowed as his creed. To the question proposed, "What are your ends for taking upon you the work of the ministry?" he replied, "If I know any thing of my own heart, I think I may say with the greatest certainty, I have no end of life but to serve God, and no pleasure like it. And especially in entering the ministry, I know no other motive but the glory of God in the salvation of souls. May I promote this, and I have all my desire!"

On the evening of this day of fasting and prayer, he wrote the following reflections.—
"Nov. 11, 1741, in the evening of my ordination. This has been a solemn and delightful day. I have now put my hand to the gospel plough, with a desire never to look back. I have now publicly devoted myself to the work of the ministry, and I heartily rejoice in what I have done. May I never defile the sacred office! May I never prove a dishonour to my Lord and Master! May I not be a loiterer, but a labourer in his work! and may my labours be crowned with abundant success! Hitherto I have found it to be delightful work, nor have I altogether

laboured in vain. I can never be enough thankful for what I have seen, and do still see, of a divine blessing upon my poor labours, while I would be encouraged hereby, to hope and pray for greater success. Grant this, dear Lord, to thy unworthy servant, and thou wilt herein gratify his warmest wishes and his highest ambition. Amen and Amen."

Similar reflections he recorded on the evening of the first Sabbath on which he administered the Lord's supper. "Dec. 4, 1741. This day I have been administering the sacrament for the first time; and a most delightful season it has been to my soul. I cannot forbear saying on this occasion, Lord! who and what am I that thou shouldest bring me hitherto! Four were this day admitted, three of whom date their saving impressions under my poor ministry since I have been here. How does my heart rejoice herein, and all that is within me bless and magnify God! Six more were also proposed, whose hearts I hope divine grace has laid hold of. O what has God done by a poor worm already! There is a visible change upon the face of the congregation, which is at once pleasing and hopeful to me. I trust, indeed, that God has much work to do by me here, and that he has much people in this place to gather in. Whatever he has done, whatever he shall do by my poor ministrations, this be now and ever my humble song, "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy name alone be all the glory and all the praise. Amen."

Such reflections were auspicious omens. If God has promised to fulfil the desires of them that fear him, it could not be doubted, that these aspirations after usefulness, would be indulged with a gracious answer. Many are ambitious to shine in the public assembly, who care not what appearance thy make before God in the closet ; but, where religion is thus distinguished in secret, it will not fail to throw a glory round the pulpit. But what hope can be entertained of that man's success, who treats his ordination as a ceremonious exhibition, who enters on his work with no holy longings, and deposits at the foot of the cross no solemn prayers ?

Being now settled in his pastoral charge, he determined to enter into the married state. He had seen in the afflictions of his father's latter days, reasons for serious caution, which he did not neglect. His affections had been for some time fixed on Miss Katherine Besley, of Barnstaple. This lady was, like himself, a descendant of the puritan confessors, who founded the dissenting churches. Her mother's name was Peard, whose ancestor, Oliver Peard, is mentioned with honour in the " Nonconformist's Memorial," as minister at Barnstaple. Miss Besley's fine person was inspired with such a mind as Mr. Darracott deserved. The religion of the puritans, in whose scriptural principles she was well instructed, was by her perpetuated to a

period when it unhappily began to be despised as antiquated.

Their marriage, which was celebrated in the month of December, 1741, was a happy event to them both. She found in him all the generous tenderness implied in the sacred name of husband ; and his heart, alike unfitted for the solitude of celibacy, and the contentions of an inauspicious marriage, found in her, repose from the fatigues of his ministry, and solace under the afflictions of life. Her health was not vigorous, but, except in the times when her illness alarmed his fears, she relieved him from all earthly concerns, for which he had an utter aversion.

When he entered on domestic life, and reared an altar to God where he had pitched his tent, he penned a hymn, which will excite, indeed, no high idea of his poetic genius, but will discover to the pious reader what is infinitely more valuable, a spirit of devotion animating him in every relation of life.

I.

Oh ! God of Bethel, whose kind hand,
Has all our fathers led,
And in this desert howling land
Has still their table spread.

II.

To thee our humble vows we raise,
To thee address our prayer ;
And trust ourselves and all our ways
To thy indulgent care.

III.

If thou, through every path we go,
Wilt be our constant guide ;
If thou our food and raiment too
Wilt graciously provide ;

IV.

If thou, as we press on our way,
 Wilt cheer us with thy love,
 And ne'er permit our feet to stray
 Till reach'd thy house above :

V.

Thee will we choose to be our God,
 To thee ourselves resign ;
 With all we are and have, O Lord,
 We will be ever thine.

VI.

For if, O Lord, thou ours wilt be,
 We can give up the rest ;
 Our souls possess'd alone of thee,
 Are infinitely blest.

At this time he received from Dr. Doddridge the following letter, which expresses all the benevolence and piety of the Doctor's heart.

“Northampton, Feb. 16, 1741-2.

“ My dear friend,

“ Though I have too much reason to begin my letter with excuses for so long a silence ; I will trust to your goodness to supply that deficiency, and rather begin it with congratulations. I do therefore most heartily congratulate you on your entrance upon the full exercise of the most honourable and most delightful office in the world. I congratulate you on your relation to so good a people ; on your being honoured with such singular success, to have a society of such persons among you, raised from death to such a degree of spiritual life, by the almighty hand of God.

And I also congratulate you, on entering into the matrimonial state with so agreeable a companion for life as I hear Mrs. Darracott is. A person who, if my information be right, has all the charms of person, temper, and character ; and is likely not only to be a faithful but a delightful companion in the way to heaven. May God multiply his blessings upon you both ! May you both strengthen each other's hands, and quicken each other's hearts in the great business of life ! And may God give you health and prosperity in your worldly affairs, and make you long-lived blessings to each other and to the church.

“ My family has been visited with an affliction which is grievous to us, the death of Mr. Lowe, who died of a galloping consumption last Wednesday, and is this evening to be interred. It is a sad stroke upon us, but softened with this circumstance, that though he came hither against his will, God was here pleased to convince him, as he told me almost with his dying, at least with his labouring breath, of many errors which he had imbibed from the pernicious writings of that wretched Chubbs and some other persons, and brought him to those views of Christ, and that dependance upon him for life and salvation, in which I hope he is now rejoicing in the presence of God above. He expressed his joy in the strongest terms that ever he came under this roof, and I hope his dying conversation was more useful than the living labours of some are likely to be.

God grant that the impression may be deep and lasting !

How is it that when eternity comes into view, some honest moral people, who before had thought lightly of the gospel, grow into a sudden admiration of it, and dare not fix their own dependance upon any thing else, without any thing to work their conviction but their own inward experience? It is a circumstance worth noticing, and worth communicating. Adored be divine grace, we are making it our daily refuge : and I hope and trust it will hold up our hearts in peace and joy, when every thing else puts on a gloomy aspect, and the shadow of the grave is spread dark and thick over us. Faith has an eye that will penetrate through the cloud, and God has a voice which I hope our souls will then hear, and will fill them not only with serenity, but, if it be his will, with transport.

I was particularly mindful of you, on your first sacrament day, and doubt not but you had much of the presence of God in it. I think of accepting your kind invitation in the month of June or July, if God prolong my poor unprofitable life ; (for, alas ! 'tis too much so,) to that period. O that my heart were more entirely his ! O that my life were one continued series of zealous active services ! Go on vigorously in your work, my dear brother, preach Christ crucified to perishing souls as their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Lift him up as on the cross, for

the healing of precious immortal souls, that they may look unto him and be saved.

I have hopes that God will spread the savour of his name abroad, and will revive religion among you and us. I feel the presence of God in my soul, in a more delightful manner than I can express, and I think when I pray for the advancement of his interest in the world, there is some token of good given in to me, which encourages me to believe that my prayers are heard. Salute all your society in my name, and assure them that I wish them increase of grace and peace. I have not time to add any thing more, but that I am, most cordially yours,

“ P. Doddridge.”

Such comforts as Mr. Darracott now enjoyed have caused some men to sink the public in the domestic character, reminding us of the bee whose wings have become incapable of flight by immersion in its own honey. But Mr. Darracott happily escaped this ungrateful perversion of the favours of heaven. He pursued his labours with new zeal, and the Redeemer crowned them with augmented blessings. His hearers increased to such an amount as constantly to overflow the place of worship, which, however, served to display the purity of his motives and his freedom from vanity; for in all his correspondence he mentions only that which is the grand end of hearing, the conversion of souls to God, and the increased dominion of religion over the hearts of professed Christians.

These evidences of his usefulness were continually inspiring him with fresh delight, so that the eight and twenty original members of the church soon saw themselves surrounded at the Lord's table by accessions far beyond their own number.

He opened houses for worship in most of the adjacent villages, where he preached weekly. In one, which was about a mile from Wellington, and from the character of the inhabitants was called Rogue's Green, such a change was effected, as produced a change of the name. Drunkenness, rioting, and indeed sin of every description, formerly seemed the only business of the inhabitants. Not one of them was known to pretend to prayer or religion under any form. But it pleased God to crown Mr. Darracott's preaching here with such efficacy, that, after a time, the traveller heard on an evening the sound of prayer and praise in almost every house. The place lost its former name, and is now called Roe or Row Green.

But the great high-priest of the church, who was made perfect through sufferings, had too much regard for this faithful servant to leave him destitute of conformity to himself in this most endearing part of his character so essential to the perfection of religion. Mr. Darracott was, in the month of May, 1743, thrown upon the bed of sickness, which would not have been mentioned here (as neither the affliction nor its consolations can be reckoned extraordinary in the history of a Christian) were it not that it affords an oppor-

tunity of introducing a letter to him from Dr. Doddridge, of which no pious reader will wish to have been deprived.

“ Yes, my dear and invaluable friend, though it be a Sabbath and a sacrament day, if you desire a few lines from me by return of post you shall be sure to have them, and I doubt not that our dear Lord will not only excuse, but accept such an office of love, in such sacred moments too. But my heart is pained while I undertake it, when I consider in what circumstances I am writing to you. Good Mr. Fawcett had prepared me for that shock which the latter part of your letter was to give me, by acquainting me with your illness, your dangerous illness. And O! what a wound was it to my heart, to mine which loves you as a tender parent, and more than a parent, if that can be possible, to me who look upon you as eminently my joy, and my crown.

“ Must the residue of your days, my dear friend, be cut short in the midst? must the world and the church lose you? Alas! it is almost like a sword in my heart. 'Tis what I hardly know how to bring my mind to submit to, and acquiesce in, with that humble deference which we owe to that infinite wisdom which is to determine the affair. But I would fain say, “ Father, thy will be done !” I would give you up to him whose claims to you are so much greater than ours; not without a secret hope that he would give you back again to our humble

prayer, and will make your life the sweeter, and your labour yet, if possible, more acceptable and useful in consequence of this threatening illness. Of this, at least, I am sure, he has stirred up my spirit, and that of several others, to pray earnestly for you, and to plead almost as for our own soul. And I cannot but think that the consequence is, he will spare you a little to recover strength.

“ If, however, our dear Lord who hath redeemed you by his blood should lead you immediately to himself; O happy man that you are ! O favourite servant, so soon to be called home ! so soon ripened for heaven, and brought thither ! “ Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.” Blessed will you be in that holy society in which you will then be fixed ; in that perfect state free from every evil of mind or of body, full of everlasting, uninterrupted, ardent love, love like that which fills the breasts of cherubim and seraphim. You will see our dear Lord.

“ I did but dream awhile ago, that our Lord Jesus Christ was come into the room in which I was, and gave a signal that he was opening the door ; and my heart sprung with such a joy that I immediately awoke as in an extacy ; and I can truly say, I never felt a joy in my whole life that seemed to equal it. It appeared to be a ray of heaven, and it seems, though it happened before

I saw you last, to have left something of a trace of heaven on my soul to this moment.

“What then will your waking raptures be? your substantial joys? you will forget this poor body; perhaps forget the dearest of all your relatives, or if you remember them, it will be to adore God who keeps and blesses them, and will undoubtedly magnify his mercy to them. If you should see them even in affliction, your heart will rejoice, in that you will view their afflictions in the light of heaven. You will think what benefit you yourself have received from chastenings which were not for the present joyous but grievous, and will see the interval of time that hinders the embrace of the perfect spirits in glory but as a moment, and the twinkling of an eye.

“Away then, my dear friend, with every mournful view. Begin, begin upon earth the songs of heaven. Tell all that are around you what God hath done for your soul, and what he is still doing. Open the inward joy of your heart to them, and let them see what that gospel you have preached does for you, that they may envy your dying bed, if yours be so; and may, amidst all their sorrows, rejoice that you are going to your Father.

Look, my dear brother, look to Jesus, our rising, ascending, Lord. Behold him pointing upward, amidst the raptures with which he was leaving this poor world of ours; pointing upward, and saying, “I ascend to my father and to your father, to my God and to your God.” O happy man

that you are, so quickly to ascend after him! Receive in this case not my condolence, but congratulation; my pity is not yours, but dear Mrs. Darracott's. How shall I name that amiable woman in such a circumstance? The Lord support her, the Lord spare her, and lay not this trial upon her. But if she must bear it, may he himself who alone can do it, make up the loss, and be a better husband to her than that very delightful one he may take away. Commit her to his Providence and his grace, without a suspicious thought; her and her dear child. O my dear friend, be assured God will take tender, constant, generous care of them both. Had God given me possession, proportionable to my love to you, I would say, she should be as my sister, and the little one as my daughter, and greatly should I think myself honoured and blessed in supplying the wants of both.

“ But of this be assured, that I will watch over them according to my ability. They shall want no counsel; no assistance that I can give or procure for them, shall stand foremost in the list of those whose necessities, if they should be in any necessity, I will remember, and to the utmost of my power exert myself to help. But I rather pray, if it be the blessed will of our dear and gracious Disposer and Lord, that you may be spared to show kindness to my widow and orphans, than I to yours. But farewell! you see to what the line or two, which you asked of me, is grown up. My overflowing heart would have

made it much longer, would my time, my paper, and my business have allowed it. For alas! it seems to me that I do but now begin to learn with how much tenderness I am,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your affectionate brother and friend in everlasting bonds, which death, instead of dissolving, will tie the faster,

“ P. Doddridge.”

“ He that watereth others shall be watered also himself. Give and it shall be given to you; good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom; for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.” These promises were most strikingly verified in the history of Doddridge. The letter which has now opened to the reader the kindness, sympathy, and piety of the doctor’s breast, was requited and surpassed by one sent to him in his last illness by Mr. Barker, minister of Salter’s Hall, London. It must be well known to every reader of Doddridge’s life.

But, as some who may peruse this volume may not have seen that valuable work, the letter is here presented, as a fit companion to the former :—

“ Lessingham, Meal, and Barker, are too nearly interested in that precious life, which now appears in danger of being cut off in the midst of its days, to hear of its waste and languishing

without great concern, and fervent prayer to God.

“How your letter affected my heart in public, your friends are witness; but what I felt for my dear brother, and the ministers and churches of Christ, God and myself only know. I will not now say, why did you spend so fast? why did you not spare yourself a little sooner? I will rather heartily thank you, that you use all the means you can to repair your frame, and restore and prolong your usefulness. It is the kindest thing you can do, and the highest instance of friendship you can now shew us; and I acknowledge your goodness to us, in this point, with tears of joy. Consent and choose to stay with us awhile longer, my dear friend, if it please God. This is not only needful to Northampton and its adjacent towns and villages, but desirable to us all, and beneficial to our whole interest. Stay Doddridge, O stay and strengthen our hands, whose shadows grow long! Fifty is but the height of vigour, usefulness, and honour. Don't take leave abruptly. Providence hath not directed thee yet, on whom to drop thy mantle. Who shall instruct our youth, fill our vacant churches, animate our associations, and diffuse a spirit of piety, moderation, candour, and charity through our villages and churches; and a spirit of prayer and supplication into our towns and cities, when thou art removed from us? Especially, who shall unfold the sacred oracles, teach us the meaning and use of our bibles, rescue us from the bondage of

systems, party-opinions, empty, useless speculations, and fashionable forms and phrases; and point out to us the simple, intelligible, consistent, uniform religion of our Lord and Saviour? Who shall—But I am silenced by the voice of Him, who says, ‘ Shall I not do what I will with my own? Is it not my prerogative to take and leave, as seemeth me good? I demand the liberty of disposing of my own servants at my own pleasure. He hath laboured more abundantly. His times are in my hand. He hath not slept as do others. He hath risen to nobler heights than things below. He hopes to inherit glory. He hath laboured for that, which endureth to eternal life: Labour, which the more it abounds, the more it exalts and magnifies its object, and the more effectually answers and secures its end.—It is yours to wait and trust,—mine to dispose and govern.—On me be the care of ministers and churches.—With me is the residue of the Spirit.—Both the vineyard and the labourers are mine.—I set them to work, and when I please, I call them and give them their hire.’ — With these thoughts, my passions subside,—my mind is softened and satisfied,—I resign thee, myself and all, to God, saying, ‘ thy will be done!’

“ But now for the wings of faith and contemplation. Let me take thy hand, my dear brother, and walk a turn or two in yonder spacious regions. Yes, it is so; we read it in the book of God, that word of truth and gospel of our salvation—that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ

shall all be made alive. The one ruined his posterity by sin; the other raiseth his seed to immortality. This poisoned the dart and inflamed the wound of death; but Jesus Christ redeemeth us from this captivity. See, thou christian minister, thou friend of my bosom and faithful servant of God, see the important period, when the surprising signs and descending inhabitants of heaven, proclaim the second coming of our divine Saviour! The heavens open and disclose his radiant glory.—Hear the awakening trump.—See, the dead in Christ arise glorious and immortal—leave corruption, weakness and honour behind them, and behold their Lord and Head seated on his throne of judgment, attended and surrounded with the ministers of his power and pleasure, and shining in all the fulness of celestial glory;—and not only see but share his victory and lustre,—partake of his image and influence. And behold the demolished fabric reared again, stately and ornamented—shining and illustrious—permanent and durable—to demonstrate how entirely death is vanquished, all its ruins repaired; and what was once meat for worms is now a companion of angels: for when ‘this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality,’ every eye will be fastened on the mighty conqueror, and every voice and harp be tuned for that transporting song, ‘O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?’ Yes, Doddridge, it is so. The fruit of our Redeemer’s sufferings and

victory is the entire and eternal destruction of sin and death. And is it not a glorious destruction? a most blessed ruin? No enemy so formidable—no tyranny so bitter—no fetters so heavy and galling—no prison so dark and dismal—but they are vanquished and disarmed;—the unerring dart is blunted and broken—the prison pulled down and razed. Our Lord is risen, as ‘the first-fruits of them that slept.’

“How glad should I be to hear, that God is so pleased to prolong thy life on earth, to declare the glorious truths and teach us to improve them! In this, your friends with you, and many more in every place, join, and make it our common petition to the great Disposer of all events. Use every means you can for the recovery of your health, for the sake of your friends, among whom is your faithful and affectionate,

“J. Barker.”

No one can wonder to hear Orton, the biographer of Doddridge, say, “the Doctor was so deeply affected with the friendship expressed in this letter, and the divine consolations it administered, that there was reason to fear that his tender frame would have sunken under the emotions of his gratitude and joy.” The reader of these two beautiful letters, can scarcely persuade himself that the writer of the latter had not seen that of Doddridge, and determined to surpass it.

From an affliction rendered pleasant by the

consolations of God, and the friendship of the just, Mr. Darracott came forth like a giant refreshed with wine. It is not, indeed, surprising that such consolations as he enjoyed should feed the flames of his zeal, and suggest new modes of improving life to the utmost. To the ordinary addresses from the pulpit he added letters written to those whom his sermons had failed to impress, or whose impressions were but recent. Sometimes, instead of sending, he would read them to those for whom they were intended; thus he gave a more solemn address than ordinary conversation allows, while yet he avoided the appearance of formal preaching.

A letter written to a friend at this time develops the heart of a faithful pastor. "When I wrote last, I think I told you I had buried a young convert God gave me, who died lately; that I preached his funeral sermon, and was desired to preach it again the Sabbath following. I did so, with renewed prayers that God would give us another to fill up the room of the deceased; and God gave me great freedom to speak to young persons on the happiness of being in Christ. A young lady I saw was much affected. When I came home I found myself much impressed to pray for her in particular, and the next morning to write to her on the subject. I accordingly did, and in the evening having taken her up into my study, I read my letter to her, at which she wept much; I asked her whether she had not been impressed, and she told me, she had. This

appeared remarkable to us both; for till this time I had little thought of her, seeing her quite gay and unconcerned; and she owned, that till lately she had never been affected. Just upon this, even that very week, it pleased God, in order to establish and confirm the work, to bring dear Miss Baker to take up her abode at my house. I immediately acquainted her with it, and she was much surprised and delighted. The week after, a society was formed of females for private prayer."

"While I was writing this, I was called down to speak with Miss Norman, and to my great surprise found that she was come to talk with me about her soul, and wished particularly to be taken into communion. I find she has been under concern a long time, and blesses God she ever heard me: this is the more surprising, as the whole family has been very strange to us and is still."

It is not to be supposed that he laboured without opposition, or enjoyed success without affliction. The fruits of his labours were sometimes snatched from his hands by those who differed from him in some points, not however essential to a Christian's hopes: but what most grieved the affectionate soul of Darracott was, to see that those who had not won the converts from the world, could estrange their hearts from him who had.

Opposition of another kind too, tried whether his patience would keep pace with his zeal. He

had been for some time in the habit of preaching at Langford, a village about two miles from Wellington. On one occasion, when accompanied by a number of his friends from the town, the congregation became so numerous, that he was obliged to stand at the door to afford to the whole company the benefit of the worship. Just before he began to preach, a neighbouring gentleman came up at the head of a mob armed with clubs, swearing and threatening to fall upon him if he attempted to preach. Though Mr. Darracott assured this gentleman-rioter that the house was registered, and that he was under the protection of the law, it only drew forth the heroic declaration of not caring for the law. Mr. Darracott deemed it prudent, lest mischief should ensue, to desist from preaching at that time. He drew up an account of the affair, and threatened to prosecute, which intention he afterwards abandoned.

This mode of opposition was not resorted to again. Those who in the heat of wine, at the head of a band of rioters, bid defiance to law and government, have usually too much tenderness for their persons, property, and honour, coolly to risk a fine or a jail, for the sake of venting their hatred to the preaching of the gospel. The reader will not be surprised to learn, that it was such a gentleman as opposed him on this occasion, who, on seeing Mr. Darracott pass by, pronounced this eulogium on him, "there goes a man who serves God as if the Devil were in him."

Thus the demons themselves were compelled to publish the Saviour's praise: "we know thee who thou art, the holy one of God." Indeed the praises which impiety has bestowed upon religion, would, if collected, form a volume of no small size or interest.

This volume will doubtless be produced, when the judgment shall sit, and the books shall be opened. It will then appear, that the christian's light has so shone before men, that they have seen the good works of the righteous, and will be compelled to glorify God in the day of visitation. But we can scarcely conceive of a testimony to the zeal of a christian more striking, than that given to Darracott. It was manifest, even to his enemies, that he served his Maker with a devotion more than human: but as they were not in the habit of ascribing any thing to divine influence, they attributed his zeal for God to the impulse of the Devil.

In the year 1745, Mr. Darracott felt, in common with most who were deeply interested in the welfare of religion, the most distressing alarms from the rebellion in the north. The progress of the Pretender brought to the view of the non-conformists, the days when their fathers were hunted into holes and corners, or immured in prisons. Their children were filled with horror at the prospect of the return of the Stuarts, whom they regarded as the sworn foes of liberty, of conscience and pure religion.

This storm, however, which threatened to blast

all his prospects of usefulness was soon blown over, and left Mr. Darracott to exchange the cry of danger, the prayer of faith, for the song of praise, and the grateful inquiry "what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" The dread of speedy termination to his labours, taught him, indeed, to work while it was day, and his zeal was abundantly rewarded by seeing such crowds flock around his pulpit, as made it absolutely necessary to enlarge the place of worship. The sum which they proposed to expend was only a hundred pounds, but as this was one-fourth of what the whole place had cost about twenty years before, it was also more than the slender finances of the congregation could afford; so that it became necessary for him to undertake the disagreeable task of travelling to collect among other societies.

That they built, not merely to accommodate casual hearers, will be seen from an account of the increase of the church which he wrote about this time. It is dated "November 11, 1747, the sixth anniversary of my ordination." He kept this as a day of fasting and prayer, a practice which cannot be too warmly recommended to ministers; for it is the natural result of eminent religion employed in the work of the ministry. To an unsuccessful minister it might suggest such reflections, and prompt to such conduct, as might save him from being thrown aside by an indignant God, as a vessel in which he has no pleasure. To those who have succeeded, like

Risdon Darracott, it must be unnecessary to recommend such days of review ; they have already been tried and sufficiently recommended themselves by numerous benefits, and by such exquisite pleasures as Mr. Darracott here expressed.

“ O what thankfulness and joy has it raised in my heart to-day, to look over a list of so many seals given to my worthless labours : I have been praising God for one hundred and twelve souls, since this day six years, added to the church ; the far greater part of whom have been begotten again in Christ Jesus under my ministry, and of all I have good hope. A list of names which I would not part with for the joys of the whole earth.”

The following letter to his sister in law, gives so full an account of his success at this time, that it will form the best continuation of the narrative which it may seem to interrupt.

“ *Wellington, Feb. 10, 1746-7.*

“ My dear sister,

“ I am now set down to give you some account of things here : and I think there never was at one time a greater work going on than there is just now. Ever since my refusal of Petherton, there hath been a fresh work here among us. The first who were awakened, and I believe are now effectually converted, were Alexander Swine and his wife ; and there is this remarkable in it,

that though he had been two years under my ministry, and about the beginning of it was taken very ill and given over, at which time I attended him often and prayed with him; yet till about three months ago, when I went down to see him and his wife, and talked with them about their souls, and spent some time in prayer, he hath declared to me since, that he was never before once affected, nor ever prayed in all his life. But then he felt a mighty power going forth with my discourse and prayer, and from that time is so enlightened and wonderfully changed as surprises himself and all that intimately knew him; and now behold he prays, so that his very neighbours take notice of it.

“He was taken into the church, the first of January, to the full satisfaction of all. And his wife, who was always brought up among the dissenters, and for many years had been under convictions, and laboured hard to bring over her husband to the meeting; yet never felt the work to be deep in her soul, till that very day. So that they were both as it were born again at the same time, and under the same means, though she was taken into the church the month before her husband; they now live together sweetly in the fear of God, and their house is become the house of prayer.

“The next remarkable work was by two sermons I preached; one in the evening of the old year, from those words, Rev. x. 5, 6. ‘And the

angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer.' And the other, on the new year's day morning, from Moses's invitation to his brother in law, Numb. x. 29. 'We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you. Come thou with us, and we will do thee good : for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.'

“ Under both those sermons many were awakened, and still continue to give good hopes. Among the rest Miss Gifford, to whom I wrote a letter the new year's day after the sermon, and sent her by Miss Haine, which was much blessed, so that she immediately came to me, and with many tears thanked me. I hope the Lord will soon add her to the church. She was that evening with the women's society. Her brother James is under great concern, and I have wrote a letter to send him, may God make it as successful as his sister's was.

“ One Mr. Oland, a farmer, (whom I believe you knew) hath been more than ordinarily concerned of late about his soul. He hath always been a moral man, but, for some Sabbaths past, he hath been much affected under the word ; and in my last address from the Lord's table to the spectators, was so struck that he was obliged to lay down his head. I have this week sent him a letter, and am waiting the success. Here are

several others under great concern, whom you don't know, and some of them that I was myself never acquainted with, till the concern they were under brought them to me. A set of sermons I have been some time preaching, on our lost and undone state by nature, and recovery by the Lord Jesus Christ, are much blessed. On Lord's day, I was told that a company of boys met together to pray, and are much altered in their temper. I am to meet them next Saturday night, at the house of one of the boys' father's.

There is one instance more of the Lord's work I must be sure to tell you, as perhaps the most remarkable of all; and that is the bringing in one at the eleventh hour. His name is Fry, a farmer, one of the oldest in the congregation, being fourscore years old at Candlemas. Though he hath been a constant attendant on the worship of God for so many years, yet he owns he was never any way awakened till I came hither, and never so much as of late. He came to me before our last preparation, and with tears told me, he could not die satisfied until he had given up his soul to Christ in his own ordinance. And from what conversation I then had with him I had encouragement then to propose him, and am since more satisfied. So that I believe he will be received next time. Thus can we sing to the glory of our dear Redeemer.

Wide as the reach of Satan's rage,
Doth thy salvation flow;
'Tis not confin'd to sex or age,
The lofty or the low.

“ Oh ! my dear sister, when you read this, go and bless God on our behalf. Shout with us the praises of free grace. I see more every day that the grace of God is free ; and for this reason it will be adored by all the happy subjects of it to all eternity. It passes by whom it will, and chooses whom it pleases. The place, the person, and the instrument of the work, is all owing to the free grace of God. Else why is Wellington so favoured, when larger, better places are not so distinguished ? such and such in this place marked out, when others are left ? Why is so weak, so worthless a creature made use of, and others who are better not employed ? Oh ! my dear sister, I am constrained to say, Lord, why am I chosen ? and see no other answer can be returned, but, O Lord, because it seems good in thy sight. To him be all the glory.

“ But I have now wrote so much of these things, I have left scarce room to say any thing else. Let me just tell you we are all well as yet, but the small-pox is come into town, and we are daily expecting to be tried with it. All our's is the Lord's, and let him do as he pleases. We join in most affectionate respects to you and brother. The Lord be with you in the needful hour, and in every other hour, and be better than all your fears. Trust him with your all, with whom you have trusted your soul. Farewell ; in the Lord, yours,

“ Risdon Darracott.”

As the heart of the good man was full of his success, he sent a similar account to Dr. Doddridge, which drew from him the following reply.

“ Northampton, March 30, 1747.

“ My very dear friend,

“ I thank you, and above all, I thank God for the charming contents of your letter, which I have this evening received, and which was a most reviving cordial for me, after I came out of the pulpit, where I have been ending my sermons on the parables for this year, concluding this night those on the prodigal son, which I hope I have not been prosecuting without much blessing from that gracious Saviour by whom it was uttered. I have been bowing my knees to the Father of all mercy, to return him my most unfeigned thanks for the signal honour he is pleased to confer upon you, and for the, I think, almost unparalleled encouragement he is giving to your ministry, very far beyond what I can pretend to. But when I consider how very little I deserve, I rather wonder that I am not left totally destitute of all success, than that all my wishes are not answered. I rejoice to observe the humility with which you express yourself in the midst of all. 'Tis by the grace of God you are what you are, both with respect to ability, zeal, and success. 'Tis my hearty prayer that all the gifts, graces, and blessings of God's holy Spirit,

may more and more be made to abound towards you.

“I am particularly pleased with the account you give me of writing letters to some of your people with such good success. Perhaps it may put me upon doing the like. God has made use of your letters to quicken, as well as to comfort me, and will by it, I doubt not, quicken my prayers for you. Let yours for me, I beseech you, be continued.”

Mr. Darracott could say, as Dr. Doddridge did in this letter, that his pecuniary embarrassments increased with his prosperity in the work of the Lord. For in the year 1748, the hospitality which his generous soul practised as a pastoral duty, was so far beyond his income, that it became necessary to provide some remedy. The relief was instantly afforded. He said with pious gratitude, “Never have I seen so much of the kindness of Providence. He has raised up friends unsought, and indeed unheard of, especially a French merchant at Plymouth. The heads of my people came generously forward to consult, and offer their help to raise my salary. They have already, this last quarter, raised it considerably, and laid such a scheme to be pursued for the future, as will be much for its augmentation. The young people, both men and women, have made a handsome subscription.” Who would not regret to see such a heart as Mr. Darracott possessed, distressed and withdrawn from his nobler pursuits by worldly cares?

At this period of his life, he undertook the painful task of travelling to collect money, in order to defray the expenses of enlarging the place of worship in which he preached. The task, however, was rendered less odious to him than it has proved to many, by the general prepossession in his favour, which the extraordinary success of his ministry had produced.

He wrote thus to his friends at home : “ God has wonderfully succeeded me. You will be surprised to hear what God has wrought ! What may we not expect, when the Lord is on our side ! In Bristol, cases are so frequent, that it was thought I should get little : but the enlargement of a house, by reason of so many coming from the established church, is a thing so peculiar at this time, especially when the dissenting interest in most places is sinking, that many give to it, who had resolved to give no more. Indeed the case, perhaps, has not its like in the nation : about two hundred come to the place, more than when I first came, and nearly one hundred and twenty communicants are added to it in seven years.”

Those cases which were then interesting by their rarity, are now happily very frequent, so that they fail to attract attention in consequence of their perpetual recurrence. To the letter of Darracott, his biographer would contrast one lately received from a valued friend. “ I am just returned from a missionary journey. It gave me great pleasure to observe, that in almost every place, the congregations are flourishing, both as

to religion and numbers ; and that the ministers are active. In some places, they had lately been enlarging, and in others, were *now* enlarging their places of worship. Mr. D—, at H—, has, in twenty years, raised from the foundation, a congregation of eight hundred people. Village-preaching was the grand instrument. Out of his has sprung another congregation at C—, a village about six miles distant, which has now a minister of its own. At W—, in Norfolk, where, four or five years ago, there were not three hundred people, I assisted at the opening after an enlargement, which will contain five hundred more. This has been by the ministry of Mr. A—, a young man, in the space of three years. Mr. C—, of A—, is enlarging his place to hold two hundred and fifty more, which is the utmost extent of their ground. Mr. S—, of C—, is enlarging his too. Mr. D—, of B—, is a very efficient minister. The congregation has been doubled in his time, and a new place of worship built, which will contain eight hundred people. These things shew us what may be done, and furnish powerful motives to increased exertions for extending the boundaries of the Redeemer's kingdom. Stir up all your neighbours to seek the like things in their congregations." Happy are your eyes that they see, what Darracott, with many other excellent men, desired to see but saw not.

Mr. Darracott's enlarged heart, which panted for the salvation of men to the ends of the

earth, took a lively interest in the triumphs of religion wherever it was enjoyed, and by whatever instrument it was produced. This introduced him to the acquaintance of all the most honoured servants of Christ in his day; and early in the year 1750, he received a visit from the apostolic Whitefield, who was then on his way to embark for America.

In a letter to Lady Huntingdon, Whitefield says, “at Wellington, I lay at the house of Mr. Darracott, a flaming successful preacher of the gospel, and who, I think, may justly be styled **THE STAR IN THE WEST**. He hath suffered much reproach, the common lot of all that are owned in the Lord’s vineyard, and, in the space of three months, he hath lost three lovely children; two of them died, the Saturday evening before the sacrament was to be administered. But weeping did not hinder sowing, he preached the next day, and administered as usual: our Lord strengthened him, and, for his three children, hath given him above thirty spiritual ones, and he is in a likely way of many more. He hath ventured his all for Christ, and last week a saint died, who left him and his heirs two hundred pounds in land. Did ever any one trust in the Lord and was forsaken? At his place, I began to take the field for the spring. At a very short warning a multitude of souls assembled, and the bread of life, that cometh down from heaven, was dispensed amongst them.”

Of this visit Mr. Darracott sent the following

narrative to his kind friends at Poundsford Park, near Taunton.

“ Wellington, Nov. 7.

“ Dear and much-esteemed Madam,

“ I send this to you, assured that to your spirit and temper nothing is so grateful as to hear of the prosperity of our dear Lord’s kingdom; and of this I bless God I can now write you, in the remarkable entrance the Lord was pleased to give to his eminent servant, the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, lately amongst us. He came hither, last Saturday was fortnight, with a design of going on to Exeter that day. But we entreated him to stay; at length he inclined to, on which I immediately gave notice that he would preach in the evening, at six o’clock in my meeting-house; and though it was a very rainy day, and the notice but short, the house was so crowded, even at the doors and windows, that at the lowest computation there was a thousand people. Such a crowd, with the profound silence and the lights we had in the house, made it solemn. But to see how the people were melted all in tears, was more affecting.

“ He preached from those words, ‘ Beginning, at Jerusalem,’ which was the charge our Saviour gave his apostles, when he sent them forth into all nations to preach his gospel, that they should first preach it in Jerusalem, that wicked city, and make the first offer of pardon through his blood, to those vile miscreants that had so lately shed it.

From whence he drew this proposition, "that the dear Lord Jesus Christ would have the vilest sinners to be saved," and applied it in such a moving manner, as melted down some of the most stout-hearted sinners there. I hope it was the Lord's passover night, when many consciences were sprinkled with his precious blood.

"However, it was but the earnest of greater things done on the following Sabbath. Mr. Whitefield gave out that he would preach the next day, at eight in the morning, and at four in the afternoon. Because he would not interfere with the public worship any where; and though it was so early the next morning, there were hundreds stood at the doors and windows, who could not get in. He preached a sermon from those words of our Lord's to the blind man whom he cured of his blindness, 'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?' which seemed to affect the people, and especially those of the richer sort, more than that in the evening; at four, he preached again from those words, 'Old things are passed away, and all things are become new,' when there was such a concourse of people came together, that he was obliged to preach in a field adjacent to the meeting-house. There was then thought to be four thousand people, and still the greatest reverence and seriousness I ever saw in any of our public assemblies, and the word came with such power that, look where I would, I saw people affected.

"Surely the Lord God is with this servant of

his, or else whence this power in his preaching ? was it ever known that any mere man could open a sinner's heart, and melt down the obstinate will ? When men are pinched to the heart, and cry out, ' what shall I do to be saved ? ' is this the effect of any human power ? No, Lord, this is thy own doing, for ' 'tis marvellous in our eyes,' and to thee we give the glory, while we are rejoicing in the instrument. For my own part, I am not afraid to say I received him as an angel of the Lord ; I felt myself strengthened by him, and enjoyed the sweetest Sabbath in all my life, in my joint work with him. I preached, at our usual time, to a greater number than ever before, and I think with more power and success. I only add, our whole town seemed highly delighted with him, and scarce any, openly at least, speak against him. My dear wife, who was once prejudiced against him, thinks now she loves him more than I do. He is, I believe, now at Bideford. I wish you could see him, I am sure you would immediately discern that spirit in him, which would make you value him. I expect him a longer time in his return from the west, when he will go to Taunton, whither Mr. Fawcett has invited him. And may God open for him a large door there, and wherever he preaches the gospel."

Such scenes as Mr. Darracott here records, would have made ordinary minds jealous. But eminent piety produces true magnanimity. The voice of heaven pronounced John Baptist, the

greatest that ever was born of woman, and he it was who saw the rising honours of his successor with unenvying complacency, saying, "he must increase, but I must decrease. The man who is truly awake to the divine glory, and the interests of the church, will exult in seeing these objects secured, though it may be by means which will eclipse his fame. The language of our hearts should be, perish the honour of the creature, live the glory of the Saviour.

But the sight exhibited, in the burying-ground adjoining to Mr. Darracott's place of worship, where the faithful pastor was seen sitting at the feet of one whom he had invited to preach to the flock, in the hope, that the stranger would succeed where he had failed, was supremely honourable to him, who sacrificed his own importance to their salvation. While many, who stood aloof from Whitefield, and nibbled at his fame, saw their own glory lost, in the ruin of their congregations; Darracott enjoyed, in the prosperity of his flock, the highest honour and delight, next to the approbation of God. Thus the Saviour says, "Him that honoureth me, I will honour, and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed;" for if we take care of Christ's honour, he will take care of ours.

In the autumn of the following year, 1751, he received a visit from another eminent man, in very different circumstances. Dr. Doddridge his revered tutor, who was now on the verge of

the grave, being advised to take a voyage to Lisbon, spent, on his way to Falmouth, a day with his beloved pupil. Mr. Darracott was the last friend he visited in his native country, and it may be easily conceived that the sight of such a disciple, in the zenith of his usefulness, afforded exquisite delight to him who had trained him up for the ministry. The Doctor had indeed, been accustomed to call the minister of Wellington "his crown of rejoicing," and others had revered the tutor for the sake of the pupil. Mr. Walker, of Truro, once wrote to Mr. Darracott thus: "I have not your warm heart: Doddridge was not my tutor. Dear man! I love him more, since I have known you."

Mr. Darracott on a review of this visit, exclaimed, "Dear worthy man! How shall I mention him in the circumstances in which he is? Ever since he was here, my thoughts have followed him. He came here, Sept. 22, in the evening, and went away next morning, about ten. He had a delightful Sabbath, he told me; he heard dear Mr. Pearsall in the morning, and then took his leave of public ordinances with these words (Ps. xlii. 4.), and wept much. The morning he left us, he was in a happy frame, and had joys, which he said were even too great for his feeble body to sustain. He seemed weaker than when I left him at Bideford; most thought he would not be able to bear the voyage; however he has now tried it. He got to Falmouth, on Saturday, about seven in the evening, and on

the Monday morning, he went on board. His servant told me he was very weak still, and took leave of him as if he should see him no more." Of the death of his tutor, Mr. Darracott was speedily informed by a letter from Dr. Cantley, his physician, at Lisbon.

The friendship between these two devoted servants of Christ, was highly honourable to both. Darracott paid a willing homage to the literary eminence of his tutor ; who felt himself honoured and blessed in the superior usefulness of this favourite pupil. Very lovely and pleasant were they in their lives, and in death they were not long divided. For, though Doddridge consoled himself in the prospect of death, with the hope that one whom he had trained up for the ministry, would long survive him to carry on the work, now dropping from his tremulous hands, it seemed good to Him, who forms polished instruments, but can do without them, to call away Darracott, soon to rejoin his honoured friend in the mansions of immortal bliss.

In the month of March, 1752, Mr. Darracott paid a visit to Kidderminster, where his old friend and fellow-student, Mr. Fawcett had succeeded to the charge of the church, founded by Richard Baxter. These two brethren in work and in spirit, exchanged, for the mutual edification of their respective charges. Mr. Darracott was welcomed to the house of his affectionate correspondent, Joseph Williams, with an ardour which

will be best expressed by himself. In a letter to Mrs. Darracott, he says,

“ *Kidderminster, March 25, 1752.*

“ Dear Madam,

“ As what I shall say will cost you nothing, it is an inducement to put pen to paper, and try to say something to whom I owe so much obligation, which otherwise would be a dear groat’s worth. I was deeply in debt before, which is now swelled to a mighty sum, by the valuable and important loan you so readily, so cheerfully, have lent us, and, though but for a few weeks, at the expense of so much self-denial. I scarcely knew another man upon earth, since the dear Dr. Doddridge is gone to heaven, at least not another in Europe, since dear Mr. Whitefield is gone to America, who merits so cordial a welcome to my house, my arms, my heart, or who could impart to me, by his presence, so much pious joy, as dear Mr. Darracott: and yet, through the smiles of an indulgent Providence, I am not destitute of many very dear and desirable Christian friends. Nor yet do I know the minister, who, in the absence of our dear pastor, is more esteemed and beloved by the body of our society, at least, the more serious part of them. My joy is still increased, by the daily accession of joy he inspires into the breast of my dear other self, and Miss Molly Darracott, yea, and into every servant.

“ Nor can I imagine, that an angel from heaven, should one of the shining host deign, in a visible

form, to visit my habitation, could be so agreeable a guest, for he would rather terrify than cheer me by his presence, whereas this dear man diffuses a constant serenity and joy all around him. Before he came, my joy was full, and not a little increased by my dear Theodosia, heaven's last best gift; but now indeed I have, to use our blessed Saviour's words, 'good measure pressed down, and running over,' given into my bosom.

"I am hereby led to think—O what will the society of heaven be! No doubt the love and favour of God, the smiles of the glorious Emanuel, will be the heaven of heaven; and yet the society of glorious angels, and perfected spirits of just men, affords a delicious prospect. O what will it be, to be called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb! What will it be to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, with Moses, David, Paul, Peter, John, Baxter, Doddridge, the general assembly, and church of the first-born in the kingdom of our Father! There my dear Darracott, my late dear Phebe, my present dear Jane, and you and I, and numbers of our dearest friends who are gone before, or will follow after, shall enjoy one another's company in such a manner, and to such advantage, as in the present state, we neither can conceive nor sustain. Haste that dear day, when there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain!

"But my time is filled up, before my paper.

May these find you, dear madam, walking in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, who are daily walking in the fear of the Lord. May that heavenly guest abundantly make up the sweetness and joy, which the absence of your dearest earthly comforter must needs subtract. May his presence and soft whispers cheer you night and day, and guardian angels make you and yours their daily care. Above, or amidst all, may the grace of Him that hung on the tree be with your spirit. In him I am, with tenders of dear respect, and under manifold obligations, dear madam, your obliged humble servant,

“Joseph Williams.”

The laborious application of mind required to preach incessantly to the same people, made it necessary for Mr. Darracott to seek the relaxation produced by a change of scene, which admitted of preaching sermons already composed, to an audience to whom they would be new. When such measures are adopted, with a view to the Redeemer's service and the edification of his church, they are eminently conducive to the usefulness of ministers. The mind, which, by the perpetual recurrence of the same scenes and duties, was beginning to lose its elasticity, feels additional stimulus in a new circle ; and the man who, adding the charm of novelty to that of eminence, attracted attention at Kidderminster, returned again to Wellington, to appear at once a new preacher and an old friend.

But the relaxation of Mr. Darracott was not idleness. He passed his time at Kidderminster, not in festive entertainments, which afford fewer pleasures than regrets, but in more abundant and diversified labours for the welfare of his fellow-men, which made *his* appear "like angel visits short and far between." That this visit to Kidderminster was eminently useful, he was afterwards informed by some delightful letters; and on his return home, he adopted several of the plans, of which he had seen the success in the congregation of his friend. For, instead of returning to his own charge, dissatisfied with his lot, hankering after other scenes, and indisposed to the cheerful, vigorous discharge of his constant duties, Mr. Darracott appeared as "a giant refreshed, rejoicing as a strong man to run his race."

Two causes of uneasiness, however, soon arose to disturb both the pastor and the flock. Mr. Darracott's growing family was but slenderly provided for, by the congregation at Wellington, and his reputation attracted invitations from other churches. Thus his own mind was embarrassed, both by the difficulty of providing for those who were dear to him, and by the uncertainty which he felt concerning the path of duty; while his flock was alarmed at the prospect of losing one bound to them by so many ties, and whose place it would be so difficult to fill.

In the autumn of the year, 1751, the pressing

invitation of the church at South Petherton excited most serious consideration, in consequence of the straitened circumstances of his increasing family. It appears that he consulted a lay friend, who wrote him the following letter, after having freely expressed his opinion concerning the proposed removal.

“*London, Dec. 14, 1751.*

“Reverend and dear Sir,

“It gives me a sensible pleasure that you took so kindly what I wrote, though in a stronger light than I intended it, for I am fully persuaded *you* have not so learned Christ; but, nevertheless, it is *ordained* they that preach the gospel should live by the gospel; and where a large family has not a sufficient provision, it cannot fail to oppress a poor minister’s spirits, and create him numberless anxieties to harass his mind, and weaken his hands, in his Master’s work; and as I feared this was the case with you, I proposed the remedy which you so modestly refuse; but if you fall under any difficulties, pray don’t be guilty of a culpable modesty in concealing it from me.

“Oh, sir; you have been used to such a plentiful harvest, you cannot tell how to bear a scanty crop! Many, very many churches may say to you, as Gideon did of the Ephraimites, ‘is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?’ Be not, therefore, discouraged, for that would be as when a standard-bearer fainteth; but pursue the excellent

method you are in, even plying the throne of grace, and God has promised, at evening time it shall be light.

“ Your ardent breathings after the conversion of souls is certainly not only lawful, but laudable, and may what you have heard of your success at Kidderminster, be only as the earnest of what you are still to be favoured with.

“ I am in no apprehension that you can part with, or be indifferent about, the great truths of the gospel, of which you have tasted the sweetness, and felt the power in your own soul ; but I know sometimes the sweetness of temper you are possessed of, may, in such a manner, sheath your zeal as to make a rejecter of the truth, flatter himself you are not so sensible as you really are of its importance ; and therefore you will forgive me, that I gave you the caution.—What you did say I never heard ; but a person, who is both an Arminian and Arian, admired your charity both in and out of the pulpit : and, not to have given you a hint of it, would have been unfaithfulness to our common Lord, and to you his faithful minister.

“ Nothing is more abused than the word charity, nor more violently forced into the service of error. Whenever, therefore, I hear it used by persons that oppose the truths of the gospel, I esteem it as a watch-word, to put me on my guard : no wonder, then, I gave you the alarm. You really have warmed my heart with the sweet, judicious, and savoury model of your

preaching, which you exhibit in your last, written like a man who feels every sentiment of the freeness and riches of divine grace, in such a manner as to feast his very soul, and thus effectually to raise him above all the frowns and discouragements a carnal world or lifeless professors can cast upon him. May you every day be more and more invigorated, by an abundant increase of such spiritual sensations ; which the world know nothing of, and therefore reproach.

“ If you have some such worldly hearers, the greater will the danger be of the serious Christian being starved by your removal, which must be the case, if the former have any influence in choosing your successor. May infinite Wisdom direct and determine your resolution !

“ I shall not forget your friend, and by remembrance of me and mine, at the throne of grace, you continually lay a fresh obligation upon, dear sir, your affectionate humble servant,

“ Dennys De Berdt.”

This letter deserves high commendation. So pernicious consequences had followed from the indulgence of a false candour, that it behoved all who were solicitous for the glory of Christ, and the dearest interest of men, to watch against it with jealous care. The soul of Darracott, indeed, was exposed to the appearance, only by that which preserved him from the reality of indifference to the orthodox creed—a heart absorbed in solicitude for the conversion of souls. This, however,

rendered his friend's alarm not less justifiable or commendable.

The christian in private life, who expresses to a minister in a serious affectionate manner, the fears entertained concerning his sentiments and spirits, may do good upon a grand scale ; for he may, through the shepherd, benefit the whole flock. The minister who does not immediately welcome such hints, is most likely to need them ; and he who at first may spurn at the counsel, may, on reflection, see its wisdom, and exclaim with gratitude, " faithful are the wounds of a friend."

The opinion of the good man concerning Mr. Darracott's removal would not have been equally judicious, had he not himself contributed to render it so by assisting to maintain his family at Wellington. Mr. Darracott had sunken some hundreds of his own private property, since he had resided at Wellington, and was now in some embarrassment. A friend, to whom he had made a disclosure of his affairs, immediately applied to that valuable institution in London, known to dissenters by the name of the Fund Board, which immediately voted him five pounds as an annual addition to his salary. This, with the contributions of private friends, enabled him to extricate himself from his embarrassments.

His difficulties returned indeed, as did the invitations of destitute churches. But, though he never could resolve to leave a scene of so much usefulness ; the claims of a delicate wife and rising family induced him at one time to think of

keeping a school. That this scheme was abandoned should excite neither surprise nor regret. His ardent devotional soul bounded off from the instruction of youth in the rudiments of human learning, to lead the souls of men into the heights and depths of redeeming love. And if he hesitated to leave Wellington, lest he should not be so useful elsewhere; was it not equally to be feared that the diminution of his time for pastoral studies and labours might injure the tone of his mind, and make a proportionable reduction from his success in the ministry.

If some change was necessary, his removal should have been preferred. To turn to secular pursuits is to take away one half of the minister from his present charge, and from the service of religion; but to remove to another and a larger sphere, is to give him more entirely to Christ and his church.

To have seen Darracott turn from employing his powers almost day and night, in devising or executing schemes for the salvation of men, to the business of a school, which would have left him but a few fragments of time to employ with exhausted faculties in the exercises dearest to his heart, would have been intolerable; but to have beheld him in a new and enlarged sphere, with unembarrassed mind and undiminished ardour, employing all his powers for Christ, would have been delightful to every impartial eye, though it might have been attended with some pains to the people of his former charge.

From this time, however, he laboured with increased success at Wellington. He seemed almost afraid and ashamed to speak of his prosperity, but could not hide the divine goodness within his grateful heart. "I have nothing to boast of," he says, "being a poor, vile, unprofitable servant. Yet I must own that God is deigning to favour me abundantly. I have not preached for some time, but in demonstration of the Spirit and in power. Fresh seals are continually given to my ministry." Every month he received some into the church, and proposed others to its communion. At one time, the whole congregation were under serious impressions. This is what, perhaps, scarcely any other minister in England has been able to say, though such scenes have not been rare in America.

The following letter, written at the end of the year 1753, expresses the joy of his heart in the care of Providence to his family, and the blessings which crowned his ministry.

"I deserve, my dear sir, none of those warm expressions of your esteem, and least of all do I think myself worthy of that distinguishing regard my God is showing me, in the dispensations of his providence; I have reason to say, with peculiar propriety, 'what am I, and what is my father's house, that God should be pleased to take such care of me.' He spreads my table daily, and supplies my every want. Many a kind friend has he given me, among whom I shall ever gratefully acknowledge good Mr. W. I return

you my hearty thanks, for the fresh instance of your love, which your present letter affords me, and desire you will make them acceptable to your church, at the next meeting. God who is rich in bounty, plentifully requite it to you and them.

“ I have the pleasure to inform you, that the church here still continues to flourish, and God is adding to us, almost every month, such as I hope will be saved. This month twelve years, I was set up as pastor, since which time, we have admitted two hundred communicants wanting two ; and this week we shall take in three more, and propose two, and many more are upon the threshold, whom I hope God will bring in. I never, at one time, saw more under a serious concern of soul than at present ; many have lately been joined to us from the established church, and appear to be excellent Christians. For these things, join with us in giving all the glory to God : “ neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth.” The sweet concurrence of his providence and grace in favour of his cause and interest among us, is what I adore, though I am myself nothing.

At this time, Mr. Darracott wrote the two following letters to a friend. “ A serious concern about salvation spreads both in town and country ; and some very profligate and abandoned sinners are deeply struck. We have set up a charity school in a village four miles off. One of the principal persons there, having been lately

concerned about his soul, chiefly by reading Dr. Doddridge's "Rise and Progress," and some manuscript sermons of Mr. Walker's, has felt a concern for others; and being a single man, and of some substance, has proposed to educate a few children. We have now about thirty children on the list, and I have great hope that the seeds of piety may be sown in their minds, and that religion may enter their families, and take hold of the hearts of the parents too. I go, once a fortnight, to preach a lecture, which is well attended. I am going, this week, to catechise the children, which I shall do before the people, in hopes that it may impress them. It is with great joy I tell you, that God has been pleased to touch the hearts of several here, since I wrote you last, one of the most notorious profligates in the place, and some more reputable characters.

"A few instances of success, which God in the riches of his mercy, has lately favoured me with, have comforted me greatly. One poor man, particularly, who, from the grossest ignorance and stupidity, is so enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, so awakened to concern for his own soul and for others, as surprises us all; for, a little while ago, he could not read a line, but now, after vast pains, he can read a chapter in the Testament; nor can he express his love to that book, or the delight he feels in reading it. The trials he has met with from a wicked partner are exceedingly great, while the sweet, humble, and patient spirit with which he bears them is

truly wonderful. He has brought several of his comrades to our private meetings, and some of them appear concerned.

But what has most affected my heart, is the case of a stranger who has been some time in these parts. He is a young person, known by the name of Dr. Vanghable; he was born at Paris, and is by education a Roman Catholic. He has travelled in most parts of Europe, and has been in England eleven years past. He was tumbler, &c. to Smith, a mountebank doctor, and, for the two last years, has mounted the stage for himself. He has had a stage here, for these three months, and about a month ago, on a Lord's day evening, he came to our place of worship; this was the first time, he says, he was ever in a dissenting meeting-house. I was then preaching on the parable of the lost sheep, under which sermon he was so struck that he could not conceal it. He came the next evening, and was more affected still. Upon this, I wrote him a letter, and gave him an invitation to my house, which he soon accepted. I was with him alone, nearly two hours, and prayed with him. I found him exceedingly ignorant, yet deeply concerned about his soul, desirous to know what to do, and longing to leave his present way of life. I have put into his hands some suitable books, which he reads very carefully.

He has attended me ever since, and I have had a second interview with him, by which I learn that his concern increases; and yet, I cannot but

fear greatly for him, as he cannot at present disengage himself from the stage, and is now going from us into Devonshire. He assures me, however, that he will spend a Sabbath, once a fortnight, with me. His deportment on the stage, and elsewhere, is quite changed, and he assures me he would be glad to leave this way of life, could he by any means get his bread; but he was from his infancy brought up to tumbling, and does not know what to turn his hand to. He has a wife, who is a great snare to him; mountains of difficulty lie in the way, but real grace will make him more than conqueror."

In such scenes as these, Mr. Darracott passed his days; for, though we find on record only a few singular cases, he was continually enjoying such tokens of the divine approbation on his labours. His heart was overwhelmed with delight, and he gratefully acknowledged that the Fountain of bliss had indulged him with the most exquisite pleasures below the skies. Nor, indeed, are such honours given to any who undervalue them; for they who would taste with the Saviour the pre-eminent delights of beneficence, must, like him, be ready to make any sacrifice for this object, and when they attain it, feel satisfied.

In the year 1755, Mr. Darracott published his "Scripture marks of Salvation." They were originally preached as sermons, and, having proved very useful to many of his hearers, were by

them requested in a more permanent form, that the closet might revive the impressions made in the church.

This little pamphlet, is warm with the devotion of the writer's heart. It is in just such a strain, as we might suppose distinguished the sermons, which were honoured with so much success. The Saviour and his Spirit are uppermost in the mind of this writer, who turns away our attention from himself, and from every other object, to fix our whole power of reflection upon our own heart and conscience; that we may ascertain, whether or not we have a portion in the Redeemer's love. This publication considerably increased his correspondence, which was already so extensive as to occupy a large portion of his time. He sent the "Scripture Marks" into many parts of England and Scotland; for, though the modern tracts were not then thought of, Mr. Darracott, and his pious contemporaries, were diligent in distributing cheap books on the most important subjects.

It has been already noticed, that Mr. Darracott was visited with afflictions, as a counterpoise to his prosperity. The loss of three children, two of them in one day, deeply wounded his affectionate heart. He was called, in the year 1756, to resign a fourth child; on which occasion, his friends, who knew the tenderness of his feelings, strove to alleviate his sorrows by their sympathy. Among others, his old college companion, Mr.

Pearsall, of Taunton, wrote him a letter rich in consolations. His own devout submission, he expressed in the following lines on the words of David, "Be still, and know that I am God."

I.

In humble duty I would bow,
My God, before thy feet ;
Convinc'd whate'er thou dost is right,
I cheerfully submit.

II.

Thy gifts I thankfully would own,
As altogether free ;
And what thou tak'st, I can't dispute,
Because thou gav'st it me.

III.

Bless'd be thy name, who more hast given,
Than thou wilt ever take ;
Thou giv'st in covenant thyself,
Nor wilt this cov'nant break.

IV.

Assure my soul, I have a part
In such a lasting bliss ;
Whatever comfort thou wilt take,
I can't that blessing miss.

V.

Let all my other comforts go,
If thou, my God, remain ;
Happy in thee, I'll bear the loss,
Without a moment's pain.

At the commencement of the year 1757, the distresses of the poor affected Mr. Darracott so powerfully, that he exerted himself with great zeal in their behalf. He made a proposal to the principal persons in the town, to raise a subscription for their relief, to which he contributed himself more largely than his own straitened

circumstances seemed to justify. The subscription succeeded, beyond the expectation of every one; and when he was assisting at the parish meeting for the distribution of the money, he seized the opportunity to propose a society for the reformation of manners, by putting into execution the laws against profaneness. In the speech which he delivered to induce the meeting to concur, he urged the state of the nation, which had lately called for a general fast, to avert the judgments of heaven. He was heard with profound attention, and his proposal was unanimously adopted.

It was agreed to begin with executing the laws against Sabbath-breaking. An abstract of these was drawn up, and fixed on the doors of all the places of worship, concluding with these words. "Zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of the Sabbath, love to our king and country, and desire to avert the divine judgments from us, have determined the churchwardens and others to put these laws into execution against all persons without distinction, whereof they give this public notice." The chief men of the town perambulated the streets by turns, every Lord's day, to watch that no violation of the law took place.

"It is delightful," says Mr. Darracott, "to see the happy effects; places of public worship crowded; ale-houses empty; nothing done in the shops of barbers; no idle walkers in the streets; but an air of solemnity through the whole town."

At the close of the first Sabbath, after adopting these new measures, Mr. Darracott preached on the words of Nehemiah, "Then contended I with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, what evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath-day?" The persons who were appointed to inspect the town, took with them "Reynold's Compassionate Address," which they left in ale-houses, and places of evil resort. This was the best part of their proceedings; for vice is a mental evil, which requires moral rather than physical remedies. All human laws against irreligion prove like spiders' webs, which entangle only the smaller flies, while the great offenders burst through them with impunity.

About this time, a recruiting serjeant came into the town, and, being a native of Scotland, went to meeting. While Mr. Darracott was preaching on the words of Jeremiah, "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, what have I done? every one turneth to his course as the horse rusheth into the battle;" the word pierced his heart with intolerable anguish, compelling him to cry aloud "what have I done?" From that day the most delightful change was manifest in all his tempers, conversation, and deportment.

His account of his former life bore a striking resemblance to that of Colonel Gardiner. After a pious education, he had rushed into the paths of sin, and entered the army when he was only

fourteen years old. He had been six and twenty years in the military life, and had twice seen his regiment cut to pieces almost to a man. He had also narrowly escaped death at sea many times. But all the dispensations of Providence, as well as all the sermons he had heard (for, amidst all his wickedness, he attended at public worship) left him not only unchanged, but unimpressed; so that he used to say, "it is not possible for any thing to touch my heart."

But the extraordinary influence of the Divine Spirit, which attended Mr. Darracott's preaching, at last effected the mighty task. Swearing, drunkenness, and impious defiance of heaven, were at once exchanged for prayer, praise, strictness of morals, and fervour of devotion. He stayed only three weeks in the town; and as he earnestly requested to be admitted to communion with the church; they, very properly, consented to deviate so far from their usual practice as to receive him, upon this short acquaintance. The day before he left them, he sat down at the Lord's table, to the great edification of all parties, who exclaimed, "What hath God wrought!" Mr. Darracott offered up for him a parting prayer, when the poor man fell on the neck of his father in Christ, in floods of tears, blessing God that he had ever seen his face.

Shortly after this occurrence, Mr. Darracott received a visit from Mr. Walker, of Truro. This pious clergyman came to see the good work carrying on by means of his dissenting bro-

ther, and to warm his own heart, by bringing it near one which was a flame of fire in the Redeemer's service. How much he was delighted with the scene which he beheld at Wellington, he expressed in a letter to Mr. Darracott, on his return.

“ *Truro, Dec. 15, 1757.*

“ Reverend and dear Sir,

“ Why is his letter so long in coming? you have been saying. He has not forgotten us. Perhaps some mischief has befallen him; he is sick, or brought into trouble. No; the Lord be praised, there is none of this. But my people, my dear people, they had not seen me of so long a season; and don't you think they had much to say to *me*, and I to *them*? I had been much reprov'd in my absence, for the coldness of my heart, and a shameful lifelessness to call upon the Lord and to sinners. O how did the zeal of others reprove me!

Well, I hope I got a little spark among you, and that something like zeal is kindled in the coldest heart in the world. I have to thank God for his love to me at Wellington, in a special manner, and desire to share always in the prayers of the good people I saw there, and to be especially remembered to that honest soul who was so kindly my companion to Collumpton. But you are asking, how is it at Truro? are there any awakenings, since your return? Why, there were many wet eyes, last Sunday, among the backsliders. This is encouragement.

The Lord may please to bless us with one harvest more. I wish I had more heart to pray and labour for poor souls.

“My dear sir, this is our business; and how honourable, how gainful, how delightful! Sure it is the most reasonable, the highest gratification, to see children begotten to God under our ministry. And, methinks, an hour spent with one of these little ones, whom the Lord has given me, is infinitely an overpayment for all I am called to suffer, for whole years, in the cause of our Master. And what then will the joy be hereafter! I love to think how happy we shall be in heaven together; and all God’s people with us. Who, what shall separate us then from our work? “Shall tribulation, &c.?” ’Tis an honour to have the name cast out, or to be cast out in person, for Jesus and souls. To turn a soul from Satan to God, my friend, O what a rich retribution for the loss of all things!

“But stop, and look nearer home. Sir, I have a very bad heart, which needs much establishment in that faith which purifies. Could you see the bottom of me, you would see every thing a man would abhor, particularly pride with two heads taller than the rest, I mean desire of esteem, and secret self-applause. These monsters continually thrust in their faces, which ever way I look; and wherever I am, they are sure to be of the company. Pretty often, indeed, they receive a stunning knock on the head; and then I seem to get rid of them a little; but even then I

never look back, but I see they are dogging me. Do you know how I may use them so roughly as to be quite quit of their company? Or is there not reason to think, that they find I am still too fond of them, and therefore follow me, spaniel-like, though they are used like dogs? But stop again. Is not this too light on so interesting a subject? Why, I know not how, the thought of dear old Williams was on my mind, and it gave me a dash of his manner.

“Pray tell me how you do, and how your people are, especially those under impressions when I was with you; and how is dear Mrs. Darracott. You must tell me every thing. I have a high opinion of the work with you; and to be plain, saw nothing like it in my long journey. O how should the thought of what God has done by you humble you! How should it make all of you fear always; lest, being so distinguished, any of you, by the least misconduct or compliance, should strike a dagger at once through the heart of his Master, and the souls of his neighbours. May I judge by myself, we are all apt to be too selfish, and not to take our measures so much as we should, with a compassionate regard to those who are without; and who, to all appearance, must lie and perish in their sins, unless we help them in our respective places.”

From the close of the year 1757, may be dated the termination of Mr. Darracott's most distinguished success; for, though he continued to

preach nearly a year afterwards, with marks of divine approbation, his health began to decline, and his labours were necessarily abridged.

Of this he soon began to complain. When a minister's heart is not in the right place, his flock will perceive the declension of which he is insensible; but one who is alive to the great objects of his ministry, will be the first to see and feel, when it is not with them as in former days. In a letter to a friend, Mr. Darracott says,

“ Wellington, Jan. 8, 1757.

“ I have not seen that success, the past year, which I have known in some former years, but I hope something was done; and, at the conclusion, a sweet young creature, about seventeen, was proposed to our communion, which gave me great delight, and may attract others. I have also had some certain accounts of my little books being blessed. Some of them are in Newgate, and have been useful to some poor condemned malefactors there, who are thought to have obtained mercy of the Lord.

“ Mr. Walker writes last week, from Truro, thus: ‘ My dear friend will rejoice with me in the new field of usefulness which the Lord has opened to me, by the coming of two hundred soldiers into the town. My heart was greatly stirred up towards them, and so were many of my dear society; and the Spirit has been wonderfully poured out upon these poor creatures; insomuch that no less than one hundred of them

have been awakened, and this, in about three weeks. The work has been deep with many of them; insomuch that twenty of them are so promising, that I shall put them together in a society."

Thus he consoled himself, when he feared his own usefulness was declining, by turning to behold the success of a brother's labours. This is exactly the spirit which becomes a minister of Christ; for he that can enjoy no prosperity but that which attends his own ministry, has reason to fear, that notwithstanding his usefulness, he is in a great measure preaching himself, and not Christ Jesus the Lord. To warn his disciples against confidence in their success, without due regard to their spirit, our Lord said to those who exclaimed "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name; in this rejoice not, that the devils are subject to you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven. For many shall say to me in the last day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess to them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

After an attack of illness, he wrote, "I hope my return to life has been in mercy, especially to some persons in Broadway, where I have lately bestowed a little labour that seems to be attended with a remarkable blessing. I went, by appointment, last Sunday evening, to give them a lecture;

many seemed affected : but, in conversation and religious exercises at the house where I lodged, it was a more affecting season still. They desired me to stay and preach the following evening, and I was not very reluctant, as I saw some impression made : a greater number were gathered together, and the word still more blessed. Many, again followed me to my lodgings, where we had another affecting season. I was called upon, next morning, to visit a person that was under great distress, by the word he had heard the night before : talking and praying with him greatly affected me, and I left them, with much satisfaction in what I saw."

Thus Mr. Darracott enlarged his sphere, by visiting the adjacent towns and villages, to seek for the sheep of Christ wherever he could find them. He was regarded as the affectionate friend of the souls of men, and all who began to feel solicitous for their salvation, looked to him for counsel and aid. What distinction can be more exalted ? But, as the post of honour is the post of labour ; it brought upon him a load of engagements, which nothing but love to the work could make pleasant.

That his own peculiar charge had no reason to complain of having but half their pastor's heart, or of suffering injury from the extension of his labours in every direction, the following letter will prove.

" Dec. 24, 1757.

" I have lately found more ardent desires to be

useful, and my dear people have been more prayerful, for a blessing. And, I do think, more has been done in a way of awakening, in two or three weeks, than I recollect for this twelvemonth. It is principally, too, among the young women. I had more than twenty such with me, last Sabbath evening : they meet and pray together. My dear daughter is one of them, and fills my heart with joy. I cheerfully hope the impressions will not be all like the early dew or morning cloud ; though, I must own, I have seen so much of impressions dying away, that I cannot be so sanguine as I have been."

He had now increased the number of his communicants, from twenty-eight, to nearly three hundred. Several hundreds more had been deeply impressed by his preaching, but some of them had been removed by Providence ; and the religion of others proved like the morning cloud or the early dew that hasteth away. The place of worship, though it had been enlarged, was still too small ; for numbers stood at the doors. The country around saw, with astonishment, multitudes flock into the town, eager to hear the word which they formerly despised.

But this success was chiefly among the poor ; for the greater part of the rich, whether among the original members of his own congregation, the inhabitants of the town, or the residents in the adjacent villages, despised his preaching as mere enthusiasm. He was, however, in the

highest degree a rational preacher ; for he carefully sought to ascertain the sentiments of the divine mind, the source of reason, and preached them with the fervour which they should excite in all reasonable minds. The purity of Mr. Darracott's motives, was seen by the satisfaction he felt in his success among the poor, amidst all the contempt of the rich. His own mind was formed for more elevated society, and his manners procured him a respectful welcome among some select friends of rank and title. But he laboured, like his Master, to preach glad tidings to the poor, and was satisfied with being able, like him, to rejoice and say, " I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes ; even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

The time now drew near that this faithful servant should return, to give up his account to him that sent him. He was, therefore, previously tried to see whether he could suffer as nobly as he had laboured for God ; and the concluding scene exhibits an example of passive religion, even more eminent than the specimen of active devotion which his life has afforded. If ministers have already been taught how to live, Christians may now come and learn how to die.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. DARRACOTT'S LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

THE first attack of the disorder which removed Mr. Darracott from this world, was in the year 1757, but from this he recovered. His head, however, was so severely affected by the complaint, that his labours, the delight of his heart, were much impeded. To such men as Mr. Darracott, nothing is so fatiguing as inaction. Like angels, they enjoy the activity to which their Maker calls them, and only dread the chain that binds their hands, the clay that impedes their wings. It was, therefore, regarded by the pastor of Wellington as a favour, that, when his exertions were diminished, he was soon called home to the more vital existence of the blessed.

In the middle of the following year, the attacks became more violent. Four times, in eight days, he was seized in an alarming manner. The first time was, on the morning of the Lord's day, which distressed him with the apprehension of not being able to feed his flock. He went through the services of the day, however, with more than ordinary solemnity, if with less than his usual animation. His audience were much affected ;

for he told them he felt all the solemn awe of a man about to put off this tabernacle.

There is a calm seriousness more impressive than the most rapturous animation. In this, the celebrated President Edwards, of New England, excelled. Too feeble to give effect to his compositions by physical means; he supplied every defect by the seriousness of eternity, which reminded his hearers of such scenes of transcendent devotion, as his own memoirs exhibit. This, however, must have been peculiarly impressive to the congregation at Wellington; as they had been accustomed to a manner, which formed a perfect contrast to the stillness of death; for it has been shrewdly observed, that Mr. Darracott looked "like one that lived upon live things."

The last of the repeated attacks which Mr. Darracott suffered, was in the pulpit, on the following Friday, when he was a second time led out of the congregation by some of his afflicted flock. He recovered again so far, as to preach on the following Lord's-day, on the words which afforded him peculiar consolation: "Although my house be not so with God; yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make me not to grow."

Under the impression of approaching mortality, he wrote to a friend, with devout submission,

expressing a joyful hope of soon being for ever with Christ.

On the eleventh of July, 1759, he made a kind of codicil to his will, giving directions concerning his funeral, and other affairs connected with his death. This instrument, instead of the beautiful, neat hand, which distinguishes his former manuscripts, discovers the tremulousness of death, which renders it scarcely legible. He so far recovered, as to afford his family and flock a gleam of hope. But he complains of dragging on heavily, in his private devotions, and public labours.

The first confident expectation of death which Mr. Darracott expressed, was when a month elapsed, without any addition to his church. "Now," said he, "I believe I am near my end : my work is done, and I am going home to my rest." He doubtless had, as the Apostle says, "the sentence of death in himself," which justified his conclusion ; for the mere suspension of ordinary success would not have proved that he was near his home. Many have had what they called several harvests ; seasons, in which they reaped with gladness, the fruit of the seed which they had long ago sown in tears. But it was the privilege of Darracott to have but one harvest, which lasted through almost all his life, and to go quickly home at the close of it, to receive the plaudit of the Lord of harvest.

With this impression of approaching death, (to him no gloomy one) he administered the Lord's

supper, for the last time, Dec. 3, 1758. On the evening of that day, he composed a *meditation*, which he enclosed in a letter to a friend in London. It furnishes a fine specimen of that peculiar kind of devotional exercise, often recommended in the Scriptures, but unhappily little known or practised among christians. This meditation breathes the language of an exalted Christian on the borders of Paradise.

“Is this the voice of my dear Lord? ‘Surely I come quickly.’ Amen, says my willing, joyful soul, even so, come Lord Jesus! Come for I long to have done with this poor low life; to have done with its burthens, its sorrows, and its snares. Come, for I grow weary of this painful distance, and long to be at home: long to be with thee, where thou art, that I may behold thy glory.

“Come, then, blessed Jesus, as soon as thou pleasest, and burst asunder these bonds of clay, which hold me from thee; break down these separating walls, which hinder me from thine embrace. Death is no more my dread, but rather the object of my desire. I welcome the stroke, which will prove so friendly to me; which will knock off my fetters, throw open my prison doors, and set my soul at liberty; which will free me (transporting thought!) from all those remainders of indwelling sin, under which I have long groaned in this tabernacle, and with which I have been maintaining a constant and painful conflict; but which all my weeping and praying,

all my attending divine ordinances, could never entirely cure me of : yea, will perfectly and for ever free me from all my complaints ; give me the answer of all my prayers ; and put me at once in the eternal possession of my warmest wishes and hopes, even the sweet, beatifying presence of thee, O blessed Jesus ! ‘ whom having not seen, I love, and in whom, though now I see thee not, yet believing, I rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’

“ This world has now no more charms to attract my heart, or make me wish a moment’s longer stay. I have no engagements to delay my farewell. Nothing to detain me now. My soul is on the wing. Joyfully do I quit mortality, and here cheerfully take my leave of all I ever held dear below.

“ Farewell, my dear Christian friends ; I have taken sweet counsel with you in the way ; but I leave you for sweeter, better converse above. You will soon follow me, and then our delightful communion shall be uninterrupted, as well as perfect, and our society be broken up no more for ever.

“ Farewell, in particular, my dearest ———. How has our friendship ripened almost to the maturity of heaven ! How tenderly and closely are our hearts knit to one another ! Nor shall the sweet union be dissolved by death. Being one in Christ, we shall be one forever. With what eternal thankfulness shall we remember

that word, "Christ is all in all?" He was so then, indeed, and he will ever be so.

"Mourn not that I go to Jesus first. It is but a little while, and you will come after. And O! with what joy, think you, shall I welcome your arrival on the heavenly shore, and conduct you to him, whom our souls so dearly love? What though we meet no more at Wellington, we shall, we assuredly shall, embrace one another in heaven, never to part more. Till then, adieu! and know, I leave you with the warmest wishes of all felicity to attend you, and the most grateful overflowings of heart, for all the kindest tokens of the most endearing friendship I ever received from you.

"Farewell, thou my dearest wife! my most affectionate delightful companion in heaven's road, whom God in the greatest mercy gave me, and has thus to the end of my race graciously continued to me! For all thy care, thy love, thy prayers, I bless my God, and thank thee in these departing moments. But, dear as thou art, and dearest of all that is mortal I hold thee, I now find it easy to part from thee, to go to that Jesus, thine and mine, who is infinitely more dear to me. With him I cheerfully leave thee, nor doubt his care of thee, who has loved thee, and given himself for thee. 'Tis but a short separation we shall have; our spirits will soon reunite, and then, never, never know separation more. For as we have been companions in the patience and tribu-

lation of our Lord's kingdom, we shall assuredly be so in his glory.

“Farewell, my dear children ! I leave you ; but God has bound himself by a most inviolable promise, to take care of you. Only choose him for your own God, who has been your father's God, and then, though I leave you exposed in the waves of a dangerous and wicked world, Providence, eternal and mighty Providence, has undertaken to pilot and preserve you. With comfortable hope, therefore, I bid you my last adieu ; pleading the faithful and true promise, saying as the patriarch, ‘I die,’ my dear children, ‘but God will be with you : praying in humble faith, that your souls, with those of your parents, may be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord your God.’

“Farewell, ye my dear people ! to whom I have been preaching the everlasting gospel, that gospel, which is now all my hope, and all my joy. Many, very many of you, are my present rejoicing, and will be my eternal crown of glory. And now I am leaving you, I bless God for all the success he has been graciously pleased to give my poor labours among you ; for all the comfortable seasons of grace I have enjoyed with you. I part with you, this day, at the sacred table of our blessed Lord, in the confidence and hope, that though I shall drink no more with you this fruit of the vine, I shall drink it new with you, in the kingdom of our heavenly Father. Only, my brethren, my dearly beloved and longed for, my

joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

“ But, for the rest of you, I mourn to think in what a miserable condition I am leaving you ; and though you will no more hear my voice, and have often, alas ! heard it to no purpose, this once, hear, and regard my dying charge—that you do not continue in a Christless and unconverted state, nor meet me in that state, at the day of judgment.

“ And now, farewell praying and preaching ! my most delightful work ! Farewell, ye Sabbaths and sacraments, and all divine ordinances ! I have now done with you all, and you have done all that was to be done for me. As the manna, and the rock, in the wilderness, you have supplied me with sweet refreshment by the way ; and now I am leaving you, I bless my God for all the comfort and edification I have received by your means, as the appointed channel of divine communications. But now I have no more need of you. I am going to the God of ordinances ; to that fountain of living waters, which has filled these pools below ; and, instead of sipping at the streams, I shall now be for ever satisfied from the fountain-head.

“ Farewell now, my poor body ! Thou shalt be no more a clog to my active spirit, no more hinder me in the service of God, no more ensnare my soul, and pollute it with sin. And now, an everlasting farewell to all sins and sorrows, all doubts and fears, conflicts and temptations !

Farewell to earth and all terrestrial scenes ! Ye are now no more ! An infinitely brighter prospect opens to me !”

“ See the guardian angels nigh,
 Wait to waft my soul on high !
 See the golden gates display'd !
 See the crown to grace my head !
 See a flood of sacred light,
 Which shall yield no more to night !
 Transitory world, farewell !
 Jesus calls with him to dwell.”

Doddridge's Hymns.

But, while his affliction seemed only to afford him the lively anticipation of heaven, it alarmed the fears of many Christian friends, who poured in their letters of sympathy and consolation. Among the rest, his brother Pearsall wrote, “ I am distressed for thee, my brother. I cannot but be afflicted till I hear of your restoration. I yet bless God, that my lamentation is not over a dead friend, as David's was. May he who has so often raised up from beds of sickness, raise you up, and bring you forth as gold. I pity poor Mrs. Darracott under her heavy loads of trouble ; the clouds so often returning after the rain.”

Another wave seemed to bear him towards the shore again ; for his disorder, for some time, was so far alleviated that he was able to write to a friend as if in expectation of returning to life and usefulness : this, which was his last letter, was dated January 2, 1759. It is as follows :

“ My dear friend,

“ Though I am hardly yet able to hold my pen, I am willing to give you this satisfaction, that I am recovering, by writing, though ever so short a letter. I have been longer in pain than I remember ever to have been before, and for some part of the time, it has been sharp pain indeed. But for ever blessed be the rich goodness of my God, I hope I have experienced his supporting and comforting power towards me. So that, though the flesh could not but groan, the spirit did not murmur, but sweetly bowed in submission, as believing my heavenly Father had no other than merciful designs in all, and whatever was the issue, of which I was never more indifferent, it would be all well.

“ And now it has pleased him, who has called home his eminent servant Hervey, to continue a little longer in the world, his unworthy servant Darracott. O that it may quicken me, to be found more faithful and zealous in his service: then, too, shall my dismissal be signed, in the appointed time and way, and I shall follow them who have been my dear delightful companions, to live for ever with them, and with that Jesus whom we loved, and in whom we were united.

“ I have had a solitary Sabbath, besides the loss of some other seasons, I used to enjoy in these holydays. Blessed be God, I can look back upon these times with pleasure now, in my confinement, and say, Lord, thou knowest I have loved thy service, and the place of thy

habitation has been sweet to me. Your letter to my daughter, this morning, affects me tenderly. Be incessant in your prayers for me, and join your praises with mine. Accept our joint love, and be assured, in all the languor of nature, I still feel the flame of our religious friendship burns strong, nor shall death quench it for ever; ever shall I be yours. Pray for me, that if it be the will of God, and our dear Lord Jesus, I may be strengthened to go forth next Lord's day.

“Risdon Darracott.”

He had written, the day before, to his friend Mr. Fawcett, of Kidderminster, saying, “whenever it shall please God to take me away, as I hope you will survive me, I shall leave an office of friendship to be performed by you, which you will not deny me, especially as you will see the glory of God, and the good of souls, are the great things I aim at. I find somewhat infinitely soothing and cheering, in these four lines, which our dear tutor has put into the mouth of a child :

“If to correct me be his will,
I'll bear it with submission still;
A tender Father sure he proves,
And but corrects, because he loves.”

Doddridge's verses for Children.

“Oh! what less than a thousand arguments in that one, for the most cordial, sweet, humble submission? O, my dear brother, how sweet to see our comforts and our crosses, our joyful and mournful circumstances, our life and our death, all in the hands of such a Father; all equally

under his direction, and all evidently designed by him for our good ; all proceeding from his everlasting love which he had for us, terminating at last in our everlasting salvation ! This lays an easy foundation for that precept, which is a strange one to a carnal world—‘ in every thing give thanks.’

His illness continued three months, with intervals of excruciating pain, arising, as was conjectured, from stones in the kidneys, producing such inflammation as extended also to all the adjacent parts : yet nothing was heard from his lips, but continual expressions of praise and thanksgiving. This led the apothecary to declare, in a letter he wrote to announce Mr. Darracott’s death, “ Of all the death-beds I ever attended, I never saw such an instance of holy resignation and triumph.”

About three weeks before he died, on a Lord’s day morning, he said to one that was standing by, “ I am going to that Jesus whom I love, and whom I have so often preached. “ Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, why are thy chariot-wheels so long a-coming ?” He then turned from his own case, to that of others ; and, in a solemn manner, reminded those around him of their appearance at the judgment-seat, exclaiming, “ I charge you, see to it that you meet me at the right hand of God at the great day.”

While affliction pressed heavily upon him, he seemed overwhelmed with a sense of the divine goodness, which he expressed in the following

words : “ Oh, what a mercy it is to have such a rock to build upon as the Lord Jesus Christ ! I have found him to be a firm rock that will not fail. What a mercy it is to have a covenant God,—a covenant that is so well ordered in all things and sure, *that* is all my salvation, and all my desire ! I have found him to be a covenant-keeping God.”

Adverting to his own incapacity for utterance, and fearing lest his divine benefactor should be defrauded of the due revenue of praise, he addressed Mrs. Darracott thus, “ My dear, do you speak of the goodness of God towards me, for I want a tongue but not a heart to praise him.” A friend said, “ I hope your tongue will be loosed again, to praise him in this world ;” he answered, “ if not, we shall praise him in heaven together ; how good God is, he is all love, all goodness.”

Observing some of his flock near him, he shewed the ruling passion strong in death ; for he commenced a sermon on his bed, exhorting them to perseverance in the faith. “ Hold out, and hold on,” said he. “ I trust I have begotten you both in Christ Jesus : may the Lord pour down a plentiful effusion of his Spirit upon you.”

The Psalmist anticipating the divine goodness, said, “ the righteous shall compass me about, for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.” This privilege now filled the heart of the dying saint with gratitude and joy, which he thus expressed. “ What attendance have I got, Jesus is with me ; angels are my guardians ; the blessed Spirit is my

comforter and supporter ; and you, my dear spiritual friends, waiting on me ; and my dear wife, the best of women. But don't think highly of me ; for if you have seen a measure of grace in me, you have seen a great deal of corruption." Then, after a pause, he said to himself, " a little longer, and the Lord will release me." To a friend, who thus expressed his regard, " I hope the Lord will restore you again ;" he replied, " no, that is not to be expected," and then added, " my eyes fail, I am going."

Every common object he seized, and turned to pious use. His speech, his food, the comforts of his bed, were thus improved. Finding his voice falter, he said, " I want a new *tongue* to praise God here ; but if not here, I shall have a new heart and tongue to praise him in heaven." When taking some refreshment, he exclaimed " Blessed be God for this meal ;" and to a friend, who was coming in, he observed, " I have often sat with you at the table of the Lord here ; I am now going to sit around his board above : these have been days in which I have taken great delight, when I have gone to the house of God in company with you." As he had said to his wife, " I must leave you without any formality : when will the day dawn, and the shadows flee away ?" she, anxious for the comforts of his last moments, asked him, " whether he was warm ;" when he replied, " I have a general warmth over my body, and a general calm over my soul."

Sometimes the mental delights he enjoyed,

seemed so far to overcome all sense of physical pain or disease, that he, for a moment, supposed he might recover. Two days before he died, waking in a very delightful frame, he desired that the apothecary might be sent for that he might know what he thought of his case. When the apothecary came, he gave but little hope. Mr. Darracott answered, "all is well; blessed be God, I know in whom I have believed, and can rely on the promises, they are all mine; especially that, 'I will never leave nor forsake thee.' I am sure he will not."

Like one neither unwilling to live, nor afraid to die, he desired that the church might be called together to pray for him, and to give him up to the Lord. When symptoms of recovery appeared, he called on those in the room with him, to bless God for it, and said, "when thou wilt call, I will hear and answer. O blessed promise, I have found it made good to me. Should the Lord raise me up again, surely praise will become this house."

The night before he died, he said, "O what a good God have I in Christ Jesus. I would praise him, but my lips cannot. Eternity will be too short to speak his praises." He earnestly desired that his tongue might be loosed, to speak the praises of God; and it was granted. The night before he died, he was in a delightful frame, full of heavenly joy, with his intellectual faculties in full vigour. When the apothecary came in, he said, "O, Mr. K. what a mercy it is to be in-

terested in the atoning blood of Christ ! You tell me I am dying, how long do you think it will be first ?” It was answered, “ that is uncertain, to a few hours.” “ Will it be to night ?” said he ; “ I believe you will survive the night.” “ Well,” he exclaimed, “ all is well, I am ready.” “ This, sir,” addressing the apothecary, “ is agreeable to the doctrine I have at all times preached, that I now come to the Lord as a vile sinner, trusting on the merits and precious blood of my dear Redeemer. O grace, grace, free grace !”

As his flock lay very near his heart, he was anxious that some of them should enjoy the encouragement afforded by the dying triumphs of their pastor. At his desire, several of them were called, but when they came, his spirits were exhausted, by talking nearly three quarters of an hour. He said to them, however, “ in the faith of that doctrine I have preached to you, I am going to die.” He then related his experience of the goodness of God to him in his sickness, and said, “ if I had a thousand lives to live, I would live them all for Christ ; I have cast anchor on him and rely on his blood, and am going to venture my all upon him.” He then took his leave of each, in a very solemn manner, and said, “ watch your hearts, and keep them with all diligence, for out of them is the issue of life ; as for me, I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me, a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge,

shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but to them all also, who love his appearing.”

When he saw Mrs. Darracott weeping, he said, “ Weep not for me, nor yet for yourself, for you are a child of the covenant. I am going to see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all that are got to glory. Yet,” said he, “ should this be a delusion ? but it is not, for I have the roll in my bosom to be my admittance into heaven, and the testimony of conscience within : my evidences are clear.” He then repeated these verses of Dr. Watts.

“ My God, and can a humble child
That loves thee with a flame so high,
Be ever from thy face exil'd,
Without the pity of thine eye.
Impossible ! for thine own hands
Have tied my heart so fast to thee,
And in thy book the promise stands,
That where thou art thy friends must be.”

Reflecting on the source of his exquisite enjoyments, he exclaimed, “ the Lord had been just if he had sent me to hell ; it was free-grace that has saved me, and it was free-grace that I have preached to others.” To one who said, “ Sir, you are going to receive the fruits of your labours ;” he answered, “ no, it is all free-grace, grace.” This, however, seems to have been spoken with a view to his former meditations, on the source of his religious distinction, and to have been designed to suppress vain-glorious ideas of merit. For, it is true, “ that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he

receive of the Lord." This consideration, the Apostle employs to stimulate christian servants to a faithful discharge of their duties. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily unto the Lord, and not to men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ." Therefore, it is said, by a voice from heaven, "blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and *their works do follow them.*"

Mr. Darracott took the apothecary by the hand, and said, "farewell, my dear friend, I thank you for all that care, trouble, and kindness, you have taken with and for me. Blessed be God, all is well, all is well. I am now going to see dear Williams, Doddridge, and the rest of the glorified saints. Farewell, my friend, a good night to you." In the morning on which he died, his wife came in, and said, "my dear, you are just on the borders of glory;" he said, "I could not have thought it, had not the physician and Mr. K. told me so, the passage is so easy." His wife said, "how will you behold the dear Lord Jesus, when you come to glory!" He replied, "I shall behold him face to face." He then lay in a slumber; and all around thought him dying, as no pulsation could be perceived. But he awoke, in about twenty minutes after, and said, "is Mr. Kennaway come?" it was answered, "yes." "O, my dear friend, how are you this morning, did you not tell me, last night, I was

dying?" it was answered, "I did so." He said, "it could not be, it was too easy. What a mercy it is to be in Christ; O precious, precious Jesus! Now," said he, "I am believing, rejoicing, triumphant too."

As there were ten or twelve of his Christian friends around his bed; he took each one by the hand, and bidding them farewell, said, "you see, my friends, I now am dying in the same faith, I have always preached unto you, and I would not die in any other way for the world. O keep close to Christ." When asked to take something to moisten his throat, he answered, "no, I do not want to delay the time of death: then, with a smile, he cried out, "come, Lord Jesus." He asked again, "is this dying?" when some one answered, "yes;" he replied, "it cannot be, it is too good."

The devout Archbishop Leighton so much dreaded the sight of weeping friends, around his dying bed, that he wished he might die far from such interruptions to calm devotion, such hindrances to heavenly joy. God gave him that which he requested. But precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints; and it is a sight so profitable to men, that we should forego our own indulgences, to afford this privilege to our families and friends. Thus Darracott thought, and calling for his wife and children, he took his leave of them, with the utmost composure and serenity of mind, and submission to his Father's will. Observing them, and all his

other friends weeping, he said to his wife, "my dear and precious wife, why do you weep ; you should rejoice. Rely on the promises. God will never leave nor forsake you, all his promises are true and sure. Well ; I am going from weeping friends to congratulating angels, and rejoicing saints in heaven and glory. Blessed be God, all is well."

He asked, "how much longer will it be, before I gain my dismissal?" it was answered, "not long." "Well," he observed, "here is nothing on earth I desire ! here I am waiting ! what a mercy to be in Jesus!" he then threw abroad his arms, and said, "he is coming, he is coming ! but surely this can't be death. O how astonishingly is the Lord softening my passage, surely God is too good to such a worm ! O speed thy chariot wheels, why are they so long in coming ? I long to be gone." At length he exclaimed, as if beginning a sentence, "faith and hope : " these were his last words. About eleven o'clock in the morning, he lay down, and, just before twelve, fell asleep in Jesus whom he so much loved.

Thus, like Stephen, amidst the pains of martyrdom, and the anticipation of heaven, he expired on the 14th of March, 1759, in the forty-second year of his age.

On opening his will, it was found to contain, besides the disposal of his property, the following sentences.

"It is my will and desire, that I be buried the

fourth or fifth day after my decease, about one o'clock in the morning; and that the time be kept secret from all, but such as are hereafter-mentioned, who are the only persons I desire may attend me to my last bed. My desire further is, that Mr. Thomas, Thomas Snook, William Parsons, Mr. Cade, Thomas Harford, and Robert Pine, carry me to my grave. Let Mr. Varder be sent for to be with them at the time, and let him spend one half hour in prayer in my parlour, before they carry me away. At the grave I would have nothing said, but let them commit my flesh to the dust, in cheerful hope of a resurrection to eternal life; let them all be concerned to give me a joyful meeting at the great day.

“It is also my desire, that my dear brother, the Rev. Mr. Fawcett, be sent for to preach my funeral sermon, about a month or six weeks after my decease, as it shall suit his own conveniency. I would not have him say a word in praise of me, but tell the people, that having loved them, I have loved them to the end; and, as a proof of it, have made a choice of this word. Phil. iv. 1. “Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved:” it is my last and dying charge to them, praying and hoping that God will help my dear brother to carry home the exhortations upon their hearts, and that they will carefully attend to all the affectionate arguments with which the exhortation is urged.

“My further desire is, that the sermon be

printed, and that my dear people would not fail to have each of them one, to be with them when they will see my face no more. By which, though dead, I would be considered as speaking the most affectionately and tenderly to them. If my dear brother approves of it, I would have another edition of my 'Scripture Marks' printed and stitched with my Funeral Sermon; principally on this account, that my dear people may the better remember the gospel I have preached, and what is that stedfastness in the faith, which I am concerned they may hold fast; as I write this, in my own apprehension, on my dying bed, they may believe me, when I say, I have no other view in all this, but the good of souls.

“Before this will be communicated, I shall be gone to my Judge, and I can, and do rejoice, that he is my Saviour. I have good hope through grace, and I have once more seriously tried the foundation of it, and I find it will stand in the prospect of eternity. I can, blessed be God, and I would not but I should, for all the world, be able to give a reason of the hope that is in me; and to my 'Scripture Marks,' I refer, as the solid evidence of my interest in Christ, who, in point of all dependance, love, and esteem, is and has been, for more than twenty years, my 'all in all.'—Adieu.”

According to his request, his body was opened, to ascertain the disorder of which he died. Five stones were found in the left kidney, which had been so inflamed, that putrefaction had nearly

consumed that organ. The parts contiguous, having partaken of the inflammation, betrayed the agony which he must have endured. How exalted, then, must have been the consolations which rendered him so insensible of his afflictions! How forcibly this case illustrates the beautiful expressions of the Apostle, when praying for the Collossians! "That ye may be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints, in light."

The funeral was conducted according to Mr. Darracott's directions. But though he evidently designed to avoid attracting a crowd to his grave, the time could not be kept entirely secret, and immense multitudes attended at that early hour. The darkness was dispelled by their numerous torches, and its silence broken by their sighs, intermingled with the praises of their deceased pastor.

The request to Mr. Fawcett, drew from him the following letter to Mrs. Darracott.

"Kidderminster, March 21, 1759.

"My very dear Mrs. Darracott,

"I am afflicted in all your affliction. My heart bleeds for you, and for your fatherless children. Nothing in the creature can repair your loss. The kindness of surviving mortals can never heal

this breach. Wherewithal shall I comfort you? Alas! it is not in me. I have lost the most intimate Christian friend and brother that ever I had upon earth. We took sweet counsel together, and our hearts and hands were united in the same pursuits for two and twenty years. But this tie of friendship is dissolved. My friend and brother is gone, and I despair of ever finding an equal in these mortal abodes. Thus I feel for myself in this awful event.

“But mine is a drop, compared with your ocean of grief. Mine is a loss, not to be mentioned with that of the widow and fatherless. Who can comfort you, when you see him no more in your own house, or in the house of God? No more enjoy the meltings of his inmost soul? No more behold that cheerful, self-possessing, ever-smiling countenance? No more join in his prayers and praises? Nor be a witness to his pious labours, his delightful intelligences, or his overflowing joy and triumph through all?

“Happy for us, that we know where to seek solid an satisfying comfort, even amidst this sorrowful scene! God is not dead. Jesus, from whom the most amiable friends derived all their loveliness and excellence, is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. The promises are true and faithful, great and precious. Providence is but accomplishing the designs of covenant love. Out of the eater comes meat, and out of the unsavoury comes sweetness. Death, indeed, has conquered, but it is only in order to be itself

entirely abolished. Our friend is gone from us, but he is with infinitely better friends. He can no more serve and please his family and flock; but it was rich grace that enabled him to serve and please them so much, and so long. We justly mourn the loss we sustain, but we are very unjust, if we do not bless and praise God, that ever we had such a friend, such a relative; that we enjoyed him so freely and fully, and reaped such valuable benefits by him.

“Nor have we lost him now, he is only gone before, got the start of us in this instance, as he did in every thing that was important. He is with him who is the God of the widow, and the father of the fatherless, and who comforts them that are cast down into any trouble. He is where we, through grace, are also going, where we hope to be soon. What an interview will that be? How will our friend look in glory? Where will all our pains and tears at parting be then? How will that meeting reprove our present unbelief?

“O, let us turn our complaints into praises! Blessed be God for such a friend! Adored be divine grace for all his loveliness and usefulness! that he did so much, in so little time; that he lived and died as all will wish to have done! that he rests with the saints in their everlasting rest! that the labourer has now his hire, the weary pilgrim his home, and the heir is come to the full possession of his large, his glorious inheritance.

“ May the spirit of Jesus, which made a dying bed so comfortable to our friend, take the comforts of Jesus and apply them to me, to you, to the dear children, and to all the weeping friends and neighbours around you ! There are comforts for us that are neither few nor small ; do not let us overlook them, nor, through our tears, mistake them.

“ I thank Miss Darracott for her letters, and rejoice at the discovery therein made of her improvements under her dear father. May the Lord Jesus Christ abundantly bless, and comfortably provide for her, and her dear brother.

“ I desire my thanks may be returned to Mr. Kennaway for his letter, and for the copy of what is written on the back of the will. There is not any room for objection to such a dying request, otherwise Mr. Pearsall would have done every thing better. The Lord help me to fulfil this last office for my friend, in a manner worthy of such friendship as his.

“ If it please God to preserve my health, and my family's, I hope to be with you, in April, or May. If you should discern any peculiar reasons for desiring one month, or Sabbath, rather than another, I beg, madam, you will be pleased to inform me. I am expecting Mr. Davey here, from Crediton, and both he and myself would be disappointed, if I should not be at home, when he is here. If he would come hither, in April, I would administer our Lord's supper the last Sabbath in that month, and then go back with him,

so as to be at Wellington, the first Lord's-day in May. I am writing to him. Your, and your dear children's sympathizing friend,

“ B. Fawcett.”

The funeral sermon which Mr. Fawcett preached at Wellington, April 15, exactly a month after his friend's decease, was, by his command, silent concerning his praise. The attentive multitudes, their sighs, and tears, sufficiently proclaimed the worth of their departed shepherd. And in the following picture of a faithful pastor, Mr. Fawcett evidently designed to give the likeness of his friend.

“ If a gospel minister has a heart ever glowing with love to Christ, and love to immortal souls ; if this love makes him abundant in labours, fervent in spirit, serving the lord, and glad to spend and be spent for the people committed to his care ; if by this love he is evidently superior to selfish views, above the influence of filthy lucre, full of anxious concern to convince and convert sinners, and edify saints, ready to every good word and work, and yearning with bowels of compassion towards the ignorant, the stupid, the profligate, the doubting and distressed, the weak and feeble-minded, the poor and mean ; if this love, not only pours out a continual torrent of faithful, affectionate, heart-searching ministrations from the pulpit, both in season and out of season, but opens his house at all times, as a common refuge for the distressed, and especially for soul distresses ; if this love opens his way

into the houses of all his friends, and neighbours, not to serve himself, but them, and especially by bringing eternal things home to their personal converse and immediate attention ; if this love leaves him no idle moments, and shews him to be most of all in his element, when most directly promoting the beginning, progress, or establishment of the divine life in those around him ; if this love makes the prosperity of the churches, and especially of the particular church over which he presides, his chief joy ; in a word, if in consequence of this love, he lives, and best of all enjoys himself, when his people stand fast in the Lord ; is there not a beauty and excellence in such a character, which forces esteem, and obliges even the enemies of Christ and godliness, either silently to admire it, or (which is sometimes the case) freely speak their approbation of it, or in some way to acknowledge its excellence. Was not this the meaning of what a profane gentleman once said to his friend, as they met Mr. Darracott, going to his meeting-house, to preach on a week day, “ there,” says he, “ goes a man, that serves God as if the Devil was in him !”

The letters of condolence which Mrs. Darracott received, were too numerous for insertion. The following, from Mr. Walker, of Truro, afforded the mourning widow much consolation.

“ Truro, June 21, 1759.

“ Dear Mrs. Darracott,

“ I have read in dear Mr. Fawcett’s sermon, the Triumphs of Free Grace, at the most interesting season. What a blessing to you, that the happy subject of them was your husband, to me, that he was my friend ! I doubt not, through grace, such a refreshing scene has mightily confirmed your faith. And how tender the bowels of infinite mercy, that, when you should be called to the greatest trial you can possibly have to go through in the world, that very trial should be attended with circumstances, so irresistibly, (I had almost said fitted to reconcile you to it) and even make you joyful under it ! The loss of so kind a partner is sensibly afflicting. But time will contribute to reconcile you to that. Your greater loss is that of a near, faithful, and excellent friend, example, and helper. Your loss on this side, it is probable, will be increasingly felt, as time, and change of circumstances and ministers, advance upon you. Permit me, therefore, to say, that it is here you need to be on your guard, that you may always patiently submit to the perfect will of your heavenly Father. May you be enabled to say, in every case, and peculiarly in the want of so quickening a guide, “ Even this, O Lord, I needed also, to make me more entirely seek my all in thee.”

“ In the sense of what you have lost, it will be very natural for you to reflect on yourself, that

you did not more value and more profit by the blessing, while it was in your possession. Possibly, in such reviews, Satan may be attempting to cast in his accusations, and to discourage you in the thought of your unprofitableness. I beseech you, yield nothing to him, nor give up the least jot of your confidence in God, through the merits of Jesus, which is what he waits for. Unprofitableness is a just cause of humiliation in the people of God, but never of doubting; rather should we be thankful for any thing received, under whatever means, since the measure, as well as the means, is the gift of God.

“I am much mistaken in you, if you are not enabled to adorn, and will not do so, the gospel of God our Saviour, in your meek and cheerful submission. You had been taught, long before, the Christian’s lot, and that it is through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God; wherefore the day of sorrow has not come upon you unawares; I trust it never will be able to do so. I am sure it cannot, while you have upon your heart, both that God ordereth all things to you, and that he will make all things work together for your good. Still you have your children left you. The Lord make them your comfort, by pouring upon them a double portion of their father’s spirit.

“I am greatly obliged to Miss Kitty for her favour. Were I nearer to her, I would say to her, and I am persuaded she would not take it ill, ‘Comfort your mother, be more careful of her

than ever, study in all things to act as she would have you, and let your conduct be always such as is suited to maintain and improve all reverence towards her in your two little brothers.'

"I doubt not you are sincerely concerned, that good Mr. Darracott's place may be properly supplied. His poor people! I feel and pray for them, desiring to be affectionately remembered to them. I am,

"Dear Mrs. Darracott,

"Your most obedient and faithful servant in Christ,

"Samuel Walker."

Mrs. Darracott passed the rest of her life in widowhood, and spent her last years with her daughter, at Romsey. She died on the 28th of December, 1799, in the eighty-sixth year of her age. She had joined the church at Barnstaple, when only seventeen: and, towards the close of life, used to reflect with grateful pleasure, that she had been enabled to serve the Lord nearly seventy years. Her wise and cheerful piety rendered her, at a very advanced age, highly agreeable and useful to those young persons who were introduced to her company. She often longed for the hour of dismissal, which she at last welcomed with calm triumph.

At her particular request, her corpse was removed to Wellington, to be interred with the remains of her husband. When the tomb was opened for her, a person who had been, forty years before, deeply affected under Mr. Darra-

cott's ministry, but had turned aside to the world, came to see what was left of her former pastor. The sight of his bones so forcibly recalled the views and feelings which his animating voice had first produced, that she burst forth into the most violent expressions of alarm and anguish. Thus the righteous man "being dead yet speaketh:" from his tomb issues a voice, at once alarming to the wicked, and grateful to the believer in Jesus.

Only one such instance occurred, at Mrs. Darracott's interment; for, during the forty years which had elapsed since her husband's death, a generation had gone down to the dust, and few were left who knew the STAR which had once shined in the WEST. But had Darracott's grave been opened, within a few years after his death, it is probable, from the character which some of his former hearers betrayed, that the sight of his corpse would have stung several of them to the heart.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSION.

As we naturally wish to have seen those whose tale has excited admiration and esteem, it may not be unacceptable to the reader to be furnished with a description of Mr. Darracott's person. He was slender, and rather under, than above, the middle stature. His countenance was all animation, benevolence, and happiness. His eye darted, not the flash of genius, but the mild beam of religion. The expression of his mouth, when unopened, gave a pleasing promise of the law of kindness which was upon his lips, and the love of his God which was in his heart. His looks spake all the greatness of goodness.

The manners of Mr. Darracott were, as those of a minister should be, graceful yet simple, indicating the man who, from benevolent condescension, lived 'among the poor, while he was ever prepared to instruct and delight the cultivated mind. All his movements told that his heart bounded with goodness, and his soul was on fire for action. But his constitution was not vigorous, and his body gave early and frequent intimations, that it could not long support the

expenditure to which it was doomed by his ardent spirit.

His disposition, whether it should be ascribed wholly to religion, or, in some measure, to natural temperament, was very lovely. For, with all that ardour which endeared him to the church, and to his friends, he was gentle and forgiving to his enemies. It was frequently observed of him, that, bold as a lion in the pulpit, he was, in the intercourse of life, meek as a lamb. Amidst considerable opposition, he was never roused to anger. In all his letters, he wisely abstained from any mention of his enemies; and, when a member of his family expressed a resolution to have no dealings with a tradesman who had injured him, he strongly censured the spirit, insisting that no difference should be made, except in favour of the offender.

As it is in domestic life, that the power of religion is most unequivocally displayed, Mr. Darracott was distinguished by kind and devout attentions to the present and eternal happiness of all who were about him. The incessant solicitude for the comfort of his wife, which is expressed in many of his private papers, left an impression on her mind, which, through a widowhood of forty years, she cherished with undiminished fondness. His dying exhortations to his children displayed the heart of a Christian father, solicitous only that they might possess the godliness which has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

As a scholar he was not eminent ; for if something must be mentioned under the head of faults, it may be here observed, that his censors reproached him for that kind of zeal which precludes close study. He contented himself with the portion of literature which he brought with him from the seminary of Doddridge. Were none to apply themselves to the study of biblical criticism, the cause of religion, as well as of literature, would essentially suffer. But Risdon Darracott was better engaged. Had he lived to the age when youthful fires subside, and when the usefulness of a minister is seen more in the edification of Christians than in the conversion of the ungodly, he might have felt the want of those additions which many others were making to their stores of knowledge. He felt, however, as a man on the verge of the grave ; and, warned by the frequent attacks of disease, that his course would be short, he laboured to accomplish immediately the great objects of his ministry, instead of preparing for more distant usefulness. As he continually enjoyed the success of his labours, the converts added to the church brought with them the freshness and animation which kept others alive ; and, as he scarcely outlived the age of physical force and animal spirits, his preaching was never deficient in interest.

His "Scripture Marks," which are a tolerably fair specimen, prove that his composition possessed the prime excellencies of purity, perspicuity, and vivacity. To sublimity of imagination, or

elegance of style, he never aspired. His affections, however, abundantly supplied the defects of his fancy, and threw a charm over his language, which endeared him to pious minds.

In the capacity of a divine, he was accurate rather than profound. According to the nomenclature, which obtains among Christians, he was a Calvinist. But his belief of the divine sovereignty, and of the election of grace, was not a bigotted attachment to a system; it was the result of a deep conviction of the total ruin of our nature, and an entire dependance on divine influence, as the only source of true religion. His system, therefore, never appeared, but where it was needed to humble man, to inspire a cheerful confidence in divine grace, or to secure to God, the glory due to him for our salvation.

Though he was a very captivating preacher, he would not, as a writer of sermons, have acquired celebrity from the press. The mode in which he prepared his public discourses might be called superficial. He drew up the outline with logical exactness, usually with an eye to the subject of the discourse, expressed in the title, rather than to the passage on which it was founded. A copious store of texts was noted down for illustration and proof, but without that passing gloss, which, by eliciting the import and the spirit of the Scriptures, forms the riches of a sermon. He scarcely ever provided those right words, whose felicity and energy, render them as nails fastened in a sure place. Hence, had it

not been for the passions, which are always eloquent, his preaching had been unimpressive. But his written sermons, like those of Whitefield, of whom he was a counterpart upon a reduced scale, convey no adequate idea of his preaching. The fire of his heart, the light of his eye, the affection of his tone, and the solemnity of his manner, communicated an inexpressible interest, and made common thoughts appear striking.

Of his sermons, the following letter may give some idea.

“ My dear friend,

“ Never was a letter more seasonably sent than your last, never could a word be more suitably adapted to my present case, than that you copied for me of dying Joshua. It so struck me, that I could not get it out of my thoughts, and I could not but consider it, as a word given me to preach upon, the ensuing day : and the rather, as the subject I had been studying, most of the last week, I found myself so barren upon, that I was questioning within myself, whether I should insist upon it, and yet till this passage came to me in your letter, I could think of no other. But on this, my whole soul fixed with sweetness ; it was the very word I wanted for myself, as I had been conflicting so much of late with unbelief, and I was in hopes it would be of service to many of my people, as I know that mine was also their own case. And now, I cannot but adopt the words of David to Abigail, and say, ‘ blessed be the Lord God, who

sent your letter so opportunely to me, and blessed be your advice, and blessed be you, who have kept me from continuing in a frame so provoking to God, so uncomfortable to myself, and so dishonourable to my profession.'

"I have now the pleasure to inform you, through the rich mercy of God, that the consideration of this passage yesterday, has, for the present, banished every unbelieving and distressing thought, has strengthened my faith, and confirmed my hope in the divine promises. I first took a view of some of those gracious things God has promised to do for his people, with regard to grace here, and glory hereafter, and every other good thing that was necessary in the way; and then showed that none of these promises could fail being accomplished, as they were all made from a fore-knowledge of our persons and cases, from pure and unmerited love, were the promises of a God of almighty power, who could easily effect whatever he promised,—a God who was unchangeable, and whose thoughts of love are, and must be, the same from one eternity to another,—a God of inviolable truth and faithfulness, and never can once alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth,—promises that are farther secured to us by the oath of God, and every one sealed by the blood of his own Son,—promises which the Spirit of all truth has indited, and the experience of all the saints have sealed the truth of."

Mr. Darracott was still more distinguished as

a pastor than as a preacher. He was far from resembling those, whose neglect of their flocks reminds us of what the sacred writer says of the cruel "ostrich, that leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the sand, and forgetteth that the foot of the traveller may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them : she is hardened against her young ones, as if they were not hers ; her labour is in vain, without fear." Mr. Darracott watched, with unwearied diligence, for the fruit of his preaching. This rendered his sermons appropriate, and induced him constantly to choose the most important and useful subjects ; so that his hearers always found him preaching about something which they felt to be of the utmost consequence to themselves.

In the more private attentions the pastor of Wellington was unrivalled. He was a bishop that exercised hospitality ; for his house was ever open to the enquiring traveller, who was asking the way to Zion, with his face thitherward. He convinced all such, by his benevolent countenance and his instructive voice, that their applications were not considered as intrusions.

His method of writing letters to his own hearers, which he sometimes read to them himself, was singular. Perhaps it would succeed in few hands but his own. Uncommon prudence and unbounded benevolence would be required, to avoid giving offence, in addresses so pointed and personal ; but it does not appear, that any of these truly pastoral letters alienated from him a

single hearer ; and by such efforts, how fully did he clear himself of the blood of every man !

The solicitude he felt to win souls, peculiarly deserves to be held up to imitation, as no minister can hope to share in his honours and delights, without a portion of his faithful benevolent spirit. If a month elapsed without some tokens of the divine influence accompanying his ministry, this good man began to mourn, and tell it to his friends around, that they might plead with God for him. The pastoral lists he kept, contributed much to remind him of the state of his flock, to recall to him the success with which the Redeemer had crowned his past labours, and thus to furnish the most mighty stimulus to new exertions.

For public spirit, Mr. Darracott deserves peculiar honour ; as it was not the characteristic of his times. The interests of religion, in all the churches around, were the object of his most lively solicitude ; for, he was far from supposing, that a minister of Jesus Christ is bound to regard only that particular flock, which he has engaged to feed. Yet such a notion has often been the sin of independent ministers, the bane and opprobrium of the Independent cause.

No part of Mr. Darracott's ministry contributed more to his usefulness, than village-preaching. He was, indeed, peculiarly formed for this line of labour. The simplicity of his style, perhaps also, the mediocrity of his thoughts, added to the vivacity and sweetness of his manner, gave

him the high praise of the poor man's preacher ; which is, indeed, the closest imitation of our Lord, of whom it is recorded, that " the common people heard him gladly."

If, in this line, the men of humbler talents may *hope* to excel ; here, also, the more brilliant preacher should *labour* to excel. The simplicity which village-preaching not only admits, but demands, would very much improve the style and manner of those who are in danger of shooting over the heads, and never coming near the hearts of their hearers. Nothing is further from truth, than the notion that preaching to the poor and illiterate, would spoil a man for the more polished hearers ; for our Lord has so entwined our duty and our interest, that he who acquires, by descending to the peasantry, an air of unembarrassed earnestness, seizes the surest means of commanding the attention of the genteel.

Mr. Darracott's diligence in the distribution of tracts, has, in our days, become a common excellence. But with him it was entitled to high praise ; for no tract societies had then furnished variety to suit every taste, or roused even lukewarmness by the force of example. It was, however, to the honour of Williams, of Kidderminster, and some other wealthy laymen, that they assisted this faithful pastor, whose heart was too large for his purse. Many who are busy in getting money, complain that they have no time to distribute bibles or tracts ; but they might, by

the hands of their pastor, disperse abroad the evidence, that in them was fulfilled the prediction, "I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth."

In Mr. Darracott, every lively, faithful minister, found a hearty friend. The most eminent, in different denominations, were his correspondents and visitors ; for there was nothing unsocial or envious in his composition. By this, he proved the eminence of his religion, and powerfully promoted his usefulness. He who will never co-operate with his brethren in the ministry, will do, comparatively, little ; for there are many things we cannot do single-handed ; but the minister who wins the hearts of others, strengthens their hands and fires their zeal. It was forbidden to Mr. Fawcett to make the funeral sermon an *Eloge* on his departed brother ; but no eulogium could have been more honourable than that which he uttered in his letter of condolence to the widow : "I have lost the most intimate christian friend and brother that ever I had upon earth. . Our hearts and hands have been united in the same pursuits, for two and twenty years. He is gone, and I despair of ever finding his equal in these mortal abodes." Such friendships as these among ministers, tend to magnify their office ; while nothing degrades them more, than mutual envy and detraction.

The spirit which Mr. Darracott displayed at

the college, augured well. While his humility and personal religion, secured to him the heart of his tutor, his diligence in study prepared him for the respectable discharge of his future duties. We may, indeed, expect excellent ministers, where we see humble, devout, and industrious students; for, the same spirit which produced docility at Northampton, rendered Darracott too tender of the body of Christ, to occasion a division at Chumleigh, and enabled him to outlive all opposition at Wellington. But an ungovernable spirit in a subordinate station, portends fierce tyranny, or cold haughty reserve, when in the seat of office and of power. May our seminaries be filled with such students, and our churches supplied with such pastors as Risdon Darracott.

The affectionate, profitable correspondence carried on between the tutor and his former pupil, was much to the praise and advantage of both. Doddridge shewed the heart of a scriptural teacher, "for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry," by the intercourse which he maintained with the young men, after they left his house; and Darracott ever proved his personal religion and zeal for the success of his ministry, by the manner in which he courted the counsel and exhortations of the former guide of his studies. Thus he was rendered anxious to be able to give a good account of his progress, to one, in whose esteem he wished to live; and the tutor was kept alive to the great objects of his

Institution, by what he heard of the success which had attended the labours of his favourite pupil. There are no places, where these details are more needed, than at colleges, where the study of languages, science, and the technical part of preaching, too frequently turns away attention from the great objects of the ministry; nor are such details ever so likely to be well received and improved by the students, as when they come from one who was the child and glory of their own *alma mater*.

For the undiminished ardour of his religion, and the continuance of this success, Mr. Darracott deserves peculiar notice. From the hour of his conversion, to his death, he pursued one rapid course, keeping the goal incessantly in view. Neither science with its mental delights, nor pleasure with its sensual gratifications, nor wealth with its honours, could successfully throw the fatal apple to turn him aside from his course, or even check the rapidity of his progress. Rare felicity! yet much to be desired!

He began divinely. Many, who afterwards prove eminent blessings, come from college with an ambition to shine as popular preachers, or as men of genius and literary eminence, rather than to glorify Christ in the conversion of his chosen. After some time spent under this unhallowed inspiration, they begin to see the vanity of their pursuit, to despair of gaining distinction in this line, or to feel that such eminence leaves the conscience defiled with the guilt of self-seeking,

and the heart devoid of the consolations of usefulness. Afflictions are kindly sent to accelerate, by increasing personal religion, the operation of these reflections ; and thus, the gay hearers at length lose their favourite orator, because the church of God has gained a faithful preacher, who is wise to win souls ! Happy is it when the new wine thus works itself clear.

But, for many reasons, we may regret the necessity of such conversions. For it is not certain, that he who begins as a trifler in the pulpit, may not trifle till he drops into the grave. Or, while in this spirit, he may by righteous judgment be left to fall into some sin, which may blast his reputation, and with it, all hope of future usefulness. But, should he survive this dangerous period, he will look back with bitter regret, upon some of the best years of his life prostituted to a mean ambition. Had Risdon Darracott thus deferred, till thirty, his holy apostolic devotedness to his Master's service, half his twenty years of labour, which were all that heaven allotted him, would have expired before he began to work. It was his happiness, however, to work while it was day, from the morning when he blazed forth in the vicinity of Northampton, till he sunk in the shadows of the night of death, when no man can work.

By this means, Mr. Darracott seized the most valuable portion of his time, and turned it to good account. There is an inexpressible charm in youth, which excites the sympathies of the

young, and the benevolence of the aged. But when youthful simplicity is seen in a pulpit, it only requires the wisdom of eminent piety, to render it at once lovely and mighty, to charm those of the same age, who will always be a most numerous class of hearers, and to surprise the older, who after having been accustomed to look back to former days for all that was valuable, are delighted to see, that provision is made for the edification of the church on earth, when they should be joining in the worship of heaven.

But, unhappily, very young preachers often serve only to amuse their own contemporaries, and to disappoint their seniors. Mistaking the lowest for the highest of the human faculties, and fancying that imagination is a proof of genius; they waste the most precious, sacred moments, in stringing flowers to form May-day garlands, when they should be drawing the bow of victory, and aiming the arrow at the heart. Surprise, therefore, heightens delight, when a preacher is seen, like Spencer, of Liverpool, with the soul of a man in the body of a boy, with almost infantile graces in looks and tones, which serve only to take off the sombre cast from the most serious thoughts, on the most awful themes.

Without acquiring the extensive reputation of the youth just mentioned, Mr. Darracott improved all his early advantages to the noblest purpose, and thus availed himself of the most useful period of life. For as we have more vivacity in youth to devise new schemes, and more vigour for their

execution, so it is the usual course of our gracious Lord, to smile on the first labours of his sincere servants, that he may satisfy them early with his mercy, and cause them to rejoice in his service all their days.

The honours which Mr. Darracott so early acquired, he preserved to the end. Any open departure from the holiness of the Gospel, embitters the Christian's subsequent days, and blasts the genuine honours of the minister, whatever *eclat* he may afterwards acquire with a party; and even a relapse into lukewarmness may exchange the delights of the early part of life, for a disreputable and comfortless old age. This should, indeed, reconcile us to the loss of such men as Mr. Darracott in the prime of life. If they have done their work, it is their privilege to retire to their rest; and if we mourn their loss, we should also rejoice that they lived not to sully their reputation, but left behind them such an example as rouses others to follow in their steps.

The success of Mr. Darracott furnishes the more useful lesson, in consequence of his being below the first class in point of talent. Men of transcendent abilities excite that admiration, which paralyses rather than stimulates. Our self-love excuses the barrenness of our lives, by the plea of incapacity. Here we are taught, however, that not singular abilities, but unusual ardour, produced the extraordinary lives of Luther, Whitefield, and Darracott, while hundreds whose

native powers were superior, have lived useless and died unmissed. The learned trifling of many has added nothing to the treasures of literature, but the plain sense and flaming piety of Darracott, won multitudes to the society of the just. Perhaps the greater part of those who will shine in heaven with distinguished lustre, as having turned many to righteousness, will be found to be men, not of transcendent powers, but of ordinary capacities improved to the utmost by holy zeal.

But, perhaps, this train of thinking is neither safe nor correct. If the divine mind has branded sin with the mark of folly, and declared that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" that "a good understanding have all they that do God's commandments;" if "Jesus Christ was the wisdom of God incarnate;" then the men who aim most directly at the same object for which Christ sacrificed himself, are of the first order of minds; and it is a depraved habit of thinking, which ascribes superiority to those, who may complain with the learned Grotius, *vitam perdidit operose nihil agendo*, "I have thrown away my life, while labouring to do nothing."

If those who are entering on the work of the ministry, may here learn that, with moderate abilities, they may indulge the hope of distinguished usefulness; they see also, that to consecrate themselves to this object, is to secure a life of happiness. While many are fretting at the weight of their labours, the obscurity of their

station, or the smallness of their income ; this good man esteemed it his felicity to have no time to spare ; his honour to hide himself where he might most promote the divine glory ; and his wealth to put others in possession of the durable riches of righteousness.

Far from repining that he was exiled to the narrow sphere of a little country town, his enlarged heart told him that his station demanded more than he had time or strength to accomplish. The pecuniary embarrassments which he felt were but momentary, for his wants were soon supplied ; and while they lasted, the strength of his faith and the ardour of his zeal, prevented them from doing more than proving to his own conscience and to others, that he could willingly make any sacrifice for Christ and his cause. The care of his family, he cheerfully devolved upon him whom he had served in the gospel ; nor was his confidence vain.

He was too busy to be devoured by *ennui*, a worm which can feed only on bodies at rest. If the labourer, who has to support a large family, by the work of his own hands, is secured from this torment of the rich, it is a shame for the ministers of Christ, who having the care of immortal souls, should be labourers indeed, to feel their time hang heavy on their hands. Every faithful pastor finds the day too short ; and this is the grand secret of human happiness, to be employed to the utmost in engagements pleasant to our taste.

Nor was Mr. Darracott ever left to complain of want of society, or to seek in worldly company, what he could not find among his flock. As a good shepherd, he loved the sheep which he had undertaken to feed. What they wanted in wealth or mental culture, they made up to him by affection and veneration, and the peculiar interest which is felt, when the language of the Apostle can be adopted. "Ye have acknowledged that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus. For what is our hope, our joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy."

This example of a happy life, was crowned by the delights of a still more extraordinary death. Fruitful as religion has been in victories over the last enemy, it would be difficult to select an instance equal in exquisite delights, amidst the most excruciating pains, and in uninterrupted anticipations of eternal triumph through a protracted struggle with the king of terrors. Many single expressions of dying saints might be mentioned, equal to any that dropped from the lips of Risdon Darracott. His biographer is at this moment, indeed, reminded of a valued friend, George Moir, of Aberdeen, in whose house he once lived, and whose death was, like his life, an eminent display of the power of evangelical truth. After having been worn out by long and painful illness, his wife told him that the change of his countenance indicated the speedy approach of

death. "Does it," he replied, "bring me a glass." On looking at himself in the glass, he was struck with the appearance of a corpse which he saw in his countenance; but giving the glass back, he said, with calm satisfaction, "Ah, Death has set his mark on my body, but Christ has set his mark upon my soul." To record this instance of holy triumph over death, is too grateful to the writer's feelings, to suggest the necessity of an apology, and he is willing to hope that it may prove so welcome to the Christian reader, as to induce him to say that it needs none.

Mr. Darracott's death was a long continued scene of delights, which produced a mighty impression on all around. The wicked who heard, were compelled to say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." But the righteous, exulted to see the happy consequences of a life devoted, as Risdon Darracott's had been, to the true end of living, the divine glory and the interests of eternity. They saw that if he was cut off in the midst of his days, which worldly prudence would have said were shortened by his excessive labours, it was by such a death as was itself the prelibation of the glory to which it conducted him, and was sufficient to induce us, who most fondly cling to life, to exclaim, "to enjoy such an end, I would, this moment, gladly lie down and die."

While, indeed, many shrink from the incessant labours of the Christian ministry, and deem them aggravated by the scorn of the world, the censure

of false professors, and an inadequate income ; all who faithfully consecrate themselves to the work, from pure motives, find it sweetened with pleasures of the most exquisite relish, and, in the end, recompensed with honours and consolations to which the glories of the world are infamy, and its delights bitterness.

The church at Wellington severely felt the loss of its faithful pastor, and found that such men are the peculiar gifts of the chief Shepherd, and are not bestowed every day. But it is pleasant to be able to state, that after many vicissitudes, the flock once so highly favoured, is again flourishing. May the spirit of Elijah, as well as his mantle, descend on Elisha ; that the church may glorify Him, who after the lapse of half a century, has given them another Darracott.

EXTRACTS

FROM

MR. DARRACOTT'S CORRESPONDENCE.



MR. WALKER, OF TRURO, TO MR. DARRACOTT.

My dear and highly respected friend,

You put me under so much obligation, that I will not think of repaying it. You admit me among your friends: as such I shall use you. God be praised, I have not a heart insensible to religious friendship. Yet how short am I of that generous love wherewith you speak. O excuse my coldness. Dr. Doddridge was not my tutor. Gracious man! I love him more, since I have known you. O the living epistle! it is that which speaks.

Thank you, dear sir, for the correspondence you have so kindly begun: may the divine grace direct it to mutual usefulness! But I insist upon one preliminary; that you do not think and speak so highly of me. In truth, I cannot bear it. The bent of my heart, for many years, was after praise; nor dare I trust it now, with approbations so warm, so affectionate as yours.

You have raised my earnest expectations by

the promise made me, of the success of your ministry. Accounts of the work of grace, draw out my soul in praise and love to the great Redeemer, quicken my diligence, and direct me more wisely to correspond with the will of the Spirit, in my ministrations.

With these views, I sit down to make you more particularly acquainted than you are by mine to good Dr. Guise, with what God has done for us here.

It was in the beginning of the year 1748, that a young man, who had been a soldier in the regiment raised by Lord Falmouth, and during that time, had given himself up to the too common vices of that kind of people, was awakened and brought under great terrors, in the hearing of one of my sermons. This was my first, and as such my dearest child. I watched and rejoiced over him. Suffer me to indulge the fondness of a father over my dear departed boy. With thankful consolation, I reflect how God wrought in him and by him. His conduct drew the attention of the whole town. God left him about a year and a half with me: during which time, with an unshaken firmness of faith, and constancy in conduct, amidst perpetual opposition, and the strife of tongues, he lived (I trust) a Christian. About the end of that year, some other young men, convinced by his example, applied to me. And before his death, which was in June, 1750, their number was considerably enlarged; and both women and men (for the most part young persons)

had shewn great concern about salvation. But I think the principal work began immediately upon his death, which begat a visibly anxious distress upon the whole town. I judged a sermon requisite upon such an occasion. The blessings of the Spirit were very remarkably with the providence and the word; for, quickly after, the numbers which applied to me daily, were so large, that I was obliged to rent (for more convenience) two rooms at a distance from my lodging, being a boarder, wherein to see them. For this year past, having a house of my own, I see them at home.

I know nothing particular in this work, except it may be, that the far greater part have been brought to the acknowledgment of the truth, in a very gentle way. Very few have been struck into terrors; though some have. The most have been impressed with a sort of mournful uneasiness; and have been brought to Christ in a sorrowing kind of way. Yet I have reason to believe, that their convictions have been deep, since, of the multitudes which have drawn back, I cannot find above one or two, who have been able to shake them quite off. Possibly it may be added to this, that they are importunately carried out after inward holiness, striving against indwelling sin. Known only to God are all his works; yet in general, we can guess at the reason of such singularities, admiring the wisdom and goodness of God. May not the gentleness of this procedure, and its tendency, be in a corres-

pondence of the Spirit with the manner of preaching? Mine hath been a display of the law and the gospel; holding forth the promises of the one, and the threatenings of the other: and the corruption of nature, and the necessity of a new heart, as the great fruit and evidence of faith in Jesus Christ, have been in the fullest manner explained and insisted on.

Sometimes the pourings out of the Spirit seem to have been suspended, and we have lain under a lamentable coldness; till the falling away of some hath provoked the zeal of others, and we have been blessed with fresh influences. From too probable reasons, I am inclined to charge these declensions upon my own want of fortitude and resoluteness in opposing the torrent of vice, and the influence and faces of some great ones who live among us. In which I am the more confirmed from hence, that such decays we have not suffered in any considerable degree, since we have more boldly made profession of ourselves in the lately erected society. Yours truly,

S. Walker.

Truro, March 5, 1755.

My very dear Sir,

I laboured hard to get an hour or two for you, last week, but it would not be, so I must be content. Yet often was I with you in spirit, for all that, praying for and joying over you. It is not just when I would, I can enjoy the pleasure, which writing my friend gives me. Then I enjoy you most, when I hear or write. Your health is

a great concern of mine. I am pleasing myself with the hope, that your tar-water, and the nursing of good Mrs. D. will establish you. Pray, doth she drive you to bed in good season? I have been so much hurt by the contrary practice, that I fear you may be so too. It is hard to break the neck of that ill custom. Men that think much, and labour hard, must have sleep, their faculties will not do without it, and, on the whole, it is no time lost, to crazy constitutions especially. Good Joseph Allen, and our dear Dr. D. might sleep but five hours. I thought three or four years ago, I could do with six, but it will not be.

You revived and supported me, with the letter Mr. Cruttenden gave you about my affairs. He is a judicious man, indeed, though I see he conceives by far too high notions of us, for which I know I am indebted to the overflowing heart of Mr. Darracott. The favours he designs me, I shall thankfully accept, and will quickly write him, which I hope he will allow me to do. You have his letter returned, with a thousand thanks; after I had taken a copy of all which relates to us; for which, I presume upon your pardon, as also that I have kept it so long.

With it you have also Mr. Hayward's, from whom I have since received one to the same effect, and answered it, and that in the affirmative too, notwithstanding you set me so bad an example, and deterred me with your false modesty. You are certainly in mistake upon that point. Without having high conceit of our talents, we

may use those we have, when Christ calls for them. I am very sensible that many every where, are of ability, and capacity, and grace, fitter for this business than myself; but still, that does not satisfy me, when I am called on, to deny doing what I can.

Give me leave to transcribe what I wrote Mr. Hayward on this head. "I am peculiarly delighted that we are forgetting our prejudices, on the one part and the other; and that God hath put it into the hearts of many, of various denominations, to join their hands together for the support of the only cause, which should be maintained with warmth, and can never be yielded without the most ruinous consequences. The scheme you have in hand, hath been mentioned in my prayers, Mr. Darracott having communicated it to me. I have great confidence in the success of it, both from the evident simplicity of the design, and upon that account, from the hope that the members will be kept from difference. You would have me one. I will tell you plainly, I dont think myself qualified for it, being one of lower attainments than you think of, and yet, since you lay it upon me, and the design is so excellent, I dont know that with good conscience I can decline. Whatever I have and am, all belong to Christ; and if he shall be pleased to make use of my little, I dare not refuse. The safest way, therefore, for the work and me will be this, that I transmit to you my Essay in good season, laying it on you to determine, if it be fit

to be made use of or not ; and insisting that you use so much freedom with it, as not to publish it, if it be not likely to do service : which I should be a strange creature indeed, if I should take amiss ; and I beg you to believe, I shall not. I would not that the success of your undertaking should be stopt by compliments of any kind."

Indeed, I have much hope the thing will do good, and only fear lest any notions may thrust in and disturb it. To prevent which, I have proposed to Mr. Heyward, that a material scheme be first drawn up, which may make a sort of practical body in the whole of it, and determine the points upon which every member is to write. And now, Sir, I desire to know what you have to say for yourself ; and to assign me one little reason why you should decline that, which you press me to.

Your little tracts are well collected, and will make a valuable addition to what I commonly distribute. The *Compassionate Address, &c.* is the very thing I have needed ; familiar, earnest, awakening : just fit to be put into the hands of a careless world. I esteem greatly all the rest in their kind, but they are not so much needed. I have seen none of them before, except *Doddridge on Family Prayer*. Pray, who wrote the *Life of Faith?* I never saw any thing equal to it. The *Guide to Heaven*, and *Example of Heavenly Contemplation*, are of your preparing. Both of them, I think, are suited to do much good.

I am peculiarly obliged, for the trouble you

have given yourself about my sermons ; and for your speedy transmitting them to the good Doctor, I fear it will give too much pain to him to read them, which yet, as I have not heard from him, I suspect he is doing.—So far I had written six days ago : but could go no farther, so continually am I taken up.

Since the above, I have a letter from my dear old Doctor. He gives me a character of my sermons, which makes me hope they will be of some service, by the blessing of God, and determines me to print them without delay. You mentioned a Printer to me, and I thanked you for your recommendation ; but I believe did not mention a condition, upon which only I could accept it, which was, in case Mr. Cruden was so disordered, as not to be able to engage in it ; for to him, application had been made a great while before. I have, last week, a letter from him, and Dr. Guise tells me, he is as capable as ever. I am quite ignorant of every step to be taken upon this occasion, and have requested my honoured friend, the Doctor, (to whose kindness I am above measure indebted) to give me directions, and to take order about it. When I hear from him again, I shall be able to inform you in what manner, and when they will be printed. Meantime, my dear friend, help them with your prayers, that they may be made instrumental to do some little service in these evil days.

I have a strong desire, and some kind of hope, that my brethren in the establishment, may have

the curiosity to see, what so strange a man, as I am commonly accounted, may have to say. O may God bring the doctrines, which I trust they contain, home to their hearts ! I would that all were even as I am ; but *these* peculiarly, because they have opportunities of usefulness beyond any other. ‘ As I am,’ did I say ? I am ashamed of the expression. I would wish them, zealous, self-denied ministers of Christ, a character which ill suits me. Alas, my friend, what shall I do with this wretched heart ? Surely I am without hope but in Christ, being in myself vile beyond imagination ; too, too apt to be vain of what is but given me, and which I ought to use with fear and trembling to God’s honour ; apt to complain under many dispensations ; slothful, and ready to fear where no fear is. Yet I find, *his* grace is sufficient for me, and daily cause he gives me to wonder, upon the review of what he is doing for my soul. My dear friend, the more I know my heart, the less I like it. Fallen man is a monster indeed ; if, at least, others are like me. Be at a little pains to lay bare my corrupted heart. Let me have a share of your experience in self-knowledge. It will be peculiarly agreeable and profitable ; and I assure you, very needful at this time, when such men as Dr. Guise approve my labours.

You expect always to know how we stand *Here*, much as usual. But elsewhere, we seem to get ground. My dear Mitchel writes me, that his company is advanced to thirty. You would love that dear man, could you see him. Penrose too,

hath a larger number about him, and I am full of hope from that side. But, my friend, don't say much of this at present. Only pray for us, and for the Divine Blessing on our meeting, the 18th instant, which will be our first club.

I had thought of writing you a more particular letter; but must defer that, till I have more leisure to do it. Meantime, let us not be forgetful of each other, nor of the work of the Lord, praying always for the building up of Jerusalem.

Believe me, yours in all sincerity,

S. Walker.

P. S. Favour me with an account what the Preaching Bible is, Mr. Cruttenden mentions: and what it may cost.

Truro, January 24, 1757.

Very dear Sir,

Be assured I am not pleased, when I am delaying to write my dear friend; especially, when the Father of mercies and consolations has put it in my power to revive your spirit with glad tidings, and to stir up your supplications on our behalf. I doubt not you will have received from London, a copy of my letter to Mr. Sheafe, and through him to the Society, thanking them for a generous supply of books, and in which, I had opportunity of acquainting them with their providential arrival, and the desirable use made of them.

Soon after that date, the route came, and they left us the 19th instant, after nine weeks stay. You would have been moved at our parting. I called them together the evening before, with a

good number of our people, in the society-room. We recommended them to God, and the power of his grace, and made a parting exhortation for this world. Had you seen their countenances, what thankfulness, love, sorrow, and joy, sat upon them ! They hoped they might bring forth some fruit ; they hoped to meet us again at the right hand of Jesus in his illustrious day ! Amen, Amen. Some of them could not speak, their hearts were full, and we parted without a word. I have never seen such a distressing, comfortable scene. They went off, next morning, praising God for us ; and, when just losing sight of the town, they looked back, and said again and again, " God bless Truro." " Desire Mr. Walker to raise some recruits for us among the soldiers," was the last message by some of our young men, who brought them some miles on their way.

Well, sir, the same evening, a party came from Falmouth, to stay the night. Six of these voluntarily came to me ; were much impressed ; and I gave them a letter to the others. But I was not satisfied I had not endeavoured to see more of them that evening, the thought of which had escaped me. I was determined to attempt it, next night, when another party from Hilstone, about twenty miles off, were to quarter with us. I sent out the *press-gang*, as they call our people of the society ; because when I have any particular exercises, either at the society-room, or my own house, they go out, and bring in all they meet. Our new guests were glad of the news, and in

half an hour, my boys had collected not less than threescore of them. I was to speak but once to them, and see them no more. The most had never heard of Christ. It is no wonder, if even my cold heart was a little stirred on such an occasion. Indeed, it was very striking. I could have spoke and prayed all night. There were many tears among them. I never saw any thing more promising. They went away to the others, with a pamphlet or two each. So they are all at Dock together, where I am sure you will pray for them. Some are still with us, the present objects of my care and prayers. They are but few; and so, much on duty. However, I saw more than a dozen of them last night about me; who seemed to receive the word, with a sort of readiness; and have promised to be with me often,—I have inclosed a letter from one of them, written since they went to Dock, which I believe will rejoice you; and which I beg you to return. The writer, I think, when he came hither, knew little more of Christ, than if he had lived in China. Indeed, he is a man of excellent natural parts, and the deep distress of soul he has been under, particularly the first month, led him to the most attentive application. Lochyan told me, he would soon write his father. Your letter to him was very seasonable. I read it to all the soldiers. That young man was in a promising way when he left us. I have great confidence in him and joy over him.

I could say a great deal more: but am just

going to meet some of our society, in a private exercise. The Lord be with you in your soul and ministry. Forget not at the throne of grace,
 Your very affectionate brother in the best bonds,
 S. Walker.

FROM THE REV. MR. JONES, OF ST. SAVIOUR'S,
 SOUTHWARK, TO MR. DARRACOTT.

Castle-street, in the Park, Southwark,
 March 21, 1758.

Reverend and honoured Sir,

I am ashamed to own I received your letter, because the very acknowledgment will accuse me of ill manners and ingratitude : to plead my multiplicity of business, and very frequent illness, would be but a poor excuse, and betray a very bad cause. Shall I then, relying on dear Mr. Darracott's indulgence, honestly own the truth? Two things have conspired to make me act thus rudely by my honoured correspondent. They are indolence and pride. The former of these makes me very averse to writing to any one, and the latter has hitherto prevented my answering yours. Indeed, dear sir, your letter quite disconcerted me ; and finding how high (much too high) an opinion Mr. Darracott had entertained of me, I was really afraid to deceive him, and was very unwilling to convince him, by my letters, how much he was mistaken. A consciousness of my insufficiency made me wish to preserve Mr. Darracott's esteem, and at the same time not expose myself to so dis-

cerning a mind as his ; but I have since found that my heart (as usual) has greatly deceived me ; what I vainly thought was the effect of modesty, I now perceive to be rank, sinful pride. A desire to keep self unexposed has made me behave thus unhandsomely to an honoured father in Christ ; and when I consider how many useful and instructive letters of dear Mr. Darracott's I may have lost, I cannot but repent of my past misconduct. Having now confessed my crime, I already anticipate my honoured friend's forgiveness, and think myself assured of a reconciliation ; in this confidence I will proceed, without farther apology for inability.

I think myself happy, dear sir, in the notice you take of me in your letter, and can only say, that if you would have me *go forward*, and wish to see me become an useful minister of the church of Christ, yourself, dear sir, (under God) must contribute to it, by favouring me with your advice, from time to time, by giving me such instruction as you must be sensible I want,—such as I humbly hope, I shall receive with thankfulness, and follow with pleasure. You see, sir, how I am drawing you into a frequent correspondence ; let me hope to see it begun by a speedy answer to this, which, God willing, shall meet with as speedy and punctual a reply. O, how do I honour (I had almost said envy) Mr. Darracott his warmth of heart and glow of zeal, who can thus rejoice at the enlargement of the Mediator's kingdom, and with pleasure own his

Master's image, though he finds it stamped on the coarsest subject! I can say that I have much to be thankful for to rich, sovereign grace : but, alas ! so cold, so frozen, so lifeless, is my heart, that the vital heavenly flame which our dear Immanuel has kindled there, is too, too often, almost extinguished. I want more zeal for God's glory ; more love for precious souls. Another complaint I have to make is, that this cursed self will put in its claim for the honour of what the Mediator works in and by me.

These, dear sir, I can truly say, are weights and clogs upon my mind. Think for me, pray for me, and give me some directions how to keep this fire alive, how to revive a dying zeal, how to lie low in my own esteem ; in short, how to fly from *self*. I need not tell you what a real benefit you will be the instrument of conveying to me. Thus, sir, you see I have cut out work for your next letter—let me expect it soon ! You desire in yours to have the particulars of my success in the ministry. This, God willing, shall be the subject of my next. Accept, dear sir, of my sincerest thanks for the favour of your books. May our dear Master accompany them with his blessing. Mr. Mason, a tradesman, is the author of the " Plain Sermon for Little Children ;" have you any of them ? if not, please to let me know. I am, dear sir, your affectionate brother and servant in Christ,

T. Jones.

The following is thought to be from the clergyman, who was won to the Redeemer by Mr. Williams's conversation, as mentioned in his Diary. A new and enlarged edition of which is just published, by his descendant, Mr. Hanbury.

Very dear Sir,

I received your kind letter, and am greatly obliged to you for those overtures of your friendship and correspondence ; I embrace it with the utmost pleasure. Your letter, indeed, brought me melancholy tidings ; the death of dear Williams affected me very nearly, and many tears of deep concern have I shed on that account, for he was my dearest friend, nay, father : he was related to me in the nearest manner, and, I trust, our hearts were united in the indissoluble bonds of Christian love. He is no more to instruct me in person ; yet, though dead, he speaketh, and his words come to me attended with a peculiar power ; for since the receipt of yours, I have read over some of his valuable letters to me, and every thing he says comes home to my heart ; the awfulness of that reflection of his being now with God adds weight to his words. Oh ! what reason have I to be thankful to the Almighty for my acquaintance with that dear man ! Oh ! that I may retain a grateful sense of it, and feel my heart glow with love to God for his immense favours to so worthless and insensible a creature ! O Lord, who can fathom the depth of thy mercy to a wretch who has merited thine everlasting indignation ; and, had not thy grace been abundant, whose

crimes would have called down, before now, thine avenging hand to have destroyed such a daring worm from off the face of the earth! But thou, O merciful Lord, hast delivered, and I trust will yet deliver me.

But I beg, dear sir, as I have lost the prayers of one wrestling Jacob, you would be so good as to supply his place, and remember me when you approach the throne of grace, particularly that I may walk in the light of God's countenance, and that my corruptions, which darken my sight, may be destroyed. I have, indeed, a wicked heart, may God cleanse it, and break down every idol that pretends to rival his reign there: it is my constant prayer that the Redeemer's kingdom may be established in my soul. If I know myself; I think that I desire, above all things, to live to God only, and to be dead to self, to the world, to its censures, to its applauses; but, oh, 'tis hard! yet we have this comfort, that we can do all things through Christ strengthening us.

You speak of a parcel, sir, that Mr. Rawlings has sent you for me, it will indeed come to me very acceptable; and, dear sir, whatever you will be pleased to send, will be most gratefully received. You know the extensive benefit your kind services that way may be of, in assisting a mere novice with supplies to feed many hungry and thirsting souls; for I can say of my congregations, they hear with the utmost attention, and seem to be conscious it is for their souls; and, thank God, they have no prejudice,

but on the contrary, a tender love for me, and honour me for my work's sake. I hope I shall be kept faithful, and deliver them the whole counsel of God; and whatever helps my dear friends will contribute to the execution of my desire, I shall most thankfully acknowledge. We are to meet at Bath to-morrow; I believe that there will be seven or eight of us. I hope that God will abundantly prosper it. At the last meeting, business prevented me from attending. Of our method of proceeding, I will take an opportunity to give an account.

I had the pleasure of breakfasting with Lady Huntingdon last Wednesday, and took the liberty of shewing her your account of Mr. Williams' death.

With thanks for your prayers, and kind wishes on my behalf, I beg leave to subscribe myself, dear and reverend sir, your affectionate friend, and unworthy brother,

J. BROWN.

Chewton, Jan. 11, 1757.

DR. GIBBONS TO MR. DARRACOTT.

Reverend and dear Sir,

Though I have delayed answering your letter, yet the delay has not arisen from any thing like an intention first to interrupt, and then to conclude our correspondence. Your correspondence is such as breathes of heaven; and how much do I want of heavenly breath, that my poor dying spark may be quickened and inflamed! Believe me, sir, that I am a strange composition; something, I trust, like the divine life I do feel, but

how is it damped, clouded, and depressed, by creature-attachments, and violent tendencies to mortal, if not to sinful objects ! Of late, I have been greatly afflicted. My pulpit, where I trust I have found some divine enlargement and pleasure, has been a place of terror and distress to me. Foreign, impertinent, and even worse thoughts than these, have broke in upon my mind while I have been praying, and preaching, and have seemed as if they would be uttered, and thus has my mind been thrown into confusion and horror, when it should have been all divine attention and devotion. Through mercy, last Lord's-day, I was something better, but I need help ; help me then, my friend, with your prayers. I believe a nervous complaint in my head may contribute its part towards this affliction ; but I have been ready to think that the enemy of souls, and of all righteousness, has a concern in this disorder, and that he may possibly make weak nerves the place where he erects his gloomy banners, and whence he shoots off his fiery darts. I design to go into the country in a little time, and to make use of the cold bath. Oh ! that I may be able to derive a spiritual benefit from this affliction.

Yours truly,

T. Gibbons.

MR. BENJAMIN FORFITT TO MR. DARRACOTT.

Dear and reverend sir,

I received your kind letter, and rejoice in that superiority of mind which you express above the transitory events of a fading world, and the felicity

city you enjoy in the sense of the divine love and goodness. I cannot but think that spirits born of God, and preparing for his glory, may well be contented with any state of being here, which the wisdom and love of their heavenly Father sees fit for them ; especially if he so far honours them as to make them the instruments of his praise. I confess when I see Christians, who profess their hopes of a heavenly happiness, repining and complaining under the tolerable inconveniences of life, or pursuing the wealth or pleasures of the world with eager and unsatisfied desires, it gives me a narrow idea of their knowledge either of God or themselves : a little portion of the world will satisfy the real wants of nature ; and I am sure nothing but the infinite, eternal good, can be a suitable happiness to the immortal spirit of man. Through the divine grace, I trust the language of my heart is,

I envy not the rich man's wealth,
Or pine to see his store ;
With what I have, I'm pleased much,
With what I hope for, more.

I am not for a voluntary poverty, because the bounties of Providence may be so beneficially applied to the relief of others ; but I have often thought a low estate honourable, as it is the nearest conformity to the condition of our blessed Lord and Master here upon earth ; and who would not rejoice in any degree of similitude to a pattern so divine, and a person so dear ! But

I must forbear, lest I should contradict by my practice, what I profess by my pen. If my long silence needs an apology, my good friend will please to accept this, that he would have been troubled with an epistle sooner, had I any opportunity of tendering him any service therein, and any religious reflections which my correspondence could produce, are doubtless rendered needless by the superior possessions of his own mind.

As to the books for the poor you mentioned, I find myself prevented at present in that piece of service, by our friend Mr. Cruttenden. Permit me, sir, to subscribe myself, with cordial and Christian affection,

Your friend and servant,
Benjamin Forfitt.

MR. HERVEY TO MR. DARRACOTT.

Dear Mr. Darracott,

I have received your charitable present, and have blessed God for giving you a willing mind, not only to promise, but to perform. I thank you very sincerely, for your animating and instructive letter. So far am I from being offended at your affectionate plainness, that I wish for and beg a continuation of it. Yes, indeed, I wish that you would continue the correspondence, and communicate to me, whatever you think may awaken my too sleepy soul, and direct my raw and inexperienced youth. You have many valuable opportunities of getting, what I find to be very

necessary for a promoter of piety, the wisdom of the serpent. The worthy Doctor, who is so well acquainted with books and men, can tell you what are the most likely baits to catch souls. What pious and successful fraud the Apostle meant, when he said, "I caught you with guile."

The preceding was written a considerable time ago. But I was prevented once, and again, from finishing and sending it. Can you pardon, dear sir, my seemingly disrespectful delay? I know that you both can, and will pardon it. Nevertheless, I shall be heartily glad to have my pardon signed and sealed by your own hand. I hope God, the merciful and gracious God, who put it into your mind to give me advice, will enable me to take it.

Now, that you admonish me of what is right, I remember that I have done wrong. The books which I had lately to dispose of, were not distributed, till the day before my departure. So that my poor friends could have no time to read, neither could I have any, to remind them of the solemn and strict account they must, one day, make of their use of this talent. This I own (oh! may the consideration humble me!) was not the part of a good and faithful steward; who ought to make the best of all that belongs to his Lord, and (after his own excellent example) "see that nothing be lost." I hope I shall look upon the practice of the careful husbandman, as my direction in this particular. Of whom it is said, after he had cast seed into the ground, "that he

rose, night and day." I suppose, to look to his crop, and to mark how it came up. That he might have joy of it, if kindly and plenteous; or take some proper methods with it, if thin and choked up with weeds.

I wish you would suggest to me, what I must do, to further the gospel of God my Saviour. I employ every day an hour or more (which I think is as much time as I can spare from my studies) with some well-inclined people of the poorer sort. We read Mr. Henry on the Holy Scriptures, and pray together. There is one set in one part of the city, and another in another. I meet at a neighbour's house. Oh! that I could also open my mouth as he did; so boldly, so powerfully! Who will give me a little portion of that knowledge, which he had in the mysteries of the gospel? that I may declare them to the people, clearly and convincingly. Above all, who will give me some of that humble zeal, that sacred and illustrious fervour, which animated him who laboured more abundantly than all the apostles?

I am preparing to enter into holy orders, and to take upon me the work of the ministry. That great, wonderful, and important work! So that now I have the utmost reason to cry out, as the distressed fishermen did to their partners, "come and help me." Help me with your prayers to the Lord God my Saviour, that I "may receive the Holy Ghost, not many days hence," by the laying on of hands; even "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and

might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." That he may be in me, rest upon me, and abide with me for ever. Making me fit, every way qualified, and thoroughly furnished for this sacred function. That I may fully discharge the duties of my great vocation, to the glory and immortal honour of God, and to the endless felicity of many of the sons of men.

Dear sir, pray give my humble service, and best thanks to the Doctor. And beg of him, when he is in the acceptable time, to remember me, who am in the time of need. If he has any word of exhortation ; but, especially if he has any treasures of instruction, proper for a candidate of the ministerial office, how glad should I be, if he would please to impart them ! and how gratefully should such a favour be always acknowledged, by his, and your affectionate servant and brother in Jesus Christ,

J. Hervey.

Lincoln College, Oxon. Sept. 1, 1736.

MR. DARRACOTT TO MRS. TRISTRAM.

Wellington, Jan. 24.

Dearest Madam,

God is adding fresh seals to my ministry continually, which are my exceeding great joy, amidst all the discouragement, and all the opposition I meet with. Thus, indeed, the Lord is gracious to me, and I look upon it, intended as a support to me, under what I am suffering for his sake ; which is a little, having every evil thing

falsely said of me, and seeing many, that were once my friends, become shy of me, for no other reason, but because I profess a little more, though not a thousandth part enough, zeal for Christ. So I find it daily in these parts, and so I found it, when I was last at Barnstaple, where several, that once seemed warm friends, appeared cool towards me. But be it so. Hard as it is to flesh and blood, I hope I have so learned the worth of Christ, as to be able to give up the dearest friends and relations for him, and to count myself happy too, if I had not a friend upon earth, if Christ were my friend.

But he is not so far trying me yet, I have many friends, and such as are his; among whom I think myself particularly honoured, and would be very thankful, in having such valuable ones as Madam Tristram, Mr. Welman and his lady. Nor do I doubt I shall ever lose such friendship for my warmest regards for Christ, when I have reason to believe, he is so precious to their souls. As for you, dear madam, you have long shewn, and oh, may you yet much longer, a becoming zeal for Christ; and may your spirit breathe in your latest posterity. May none of the dear family of Poundisford be ever ashamed of Christ, or ever backward to bear their testimony to his glorious, though in the eyes of the world, despised interest. But may the line of Welman, as well as that of Hanmer and Tristram, make a bright figure at the right hand of Christ, in the great day, for their

warm and zealous attachment to him, and his interest, here below.

But it is time for me to conclude : which I cannot, without saying one word of my dear wife, who is much out of order, and very low spirited, and concludes within herself she shall not survive this time. You may easily think how this impresses us both. Pray for her, dear madam, especially that her faith may not fail, and that God may be better than her fears. I wish for her sake, as well as my own, you and the dear family were returned. Such company has the greatest tendency to revive the spirits. We both join in the most respectful and most cordial services to you and dear Mr. Welman and his lady, with remembrances to the dear little ones, whom may God long preserve. You have all my warmest prayers, and oh, remember in yours, dear madam, your most unworthy, most affectionate, and most obliged, humble servant,

Risdon Darracott.

P. S. Mr. Fawcett is now here, in order to preach for me to-morrow. He presents his tender of services to the good family. There are some great revolutions in Taunton with respect to him, which he intends to give you a letter of next week ; he has had an invitation to Kidderminster.

MRS. ANN DUTTON TO MR. DARRACOTT.

*Great Gransden, near Caxton,
Huntingdonshire, September 6, 1744.*

Reverend and dear sir,

The most acceptable favour of your last kind letter, I received with joy, and return humble thanks. The account you gave me of the Lord's loving kindness towards you, rejoices my heart, excites my praises, and animates my prayers. Such grace as *you* are favoured with the displays of, is every way worthy of an infinite God! You justly wonder at its distinguishing nature; that while others of the Lord's servants mournfully say, "who hath believed our report?" you have the joy to see sinners the chief, converted by your ministry! Indeed, sir, this is a wide stretch of the exceeding riches of boundless grace! Of that grace, which hath saved your soul, which hath chosen you to ministerial service, and which delights to honour you with eminent usefulness; to your exceeding joy, and to the eternal praise of its immense glory!

Think it not strange that I style it a display of that *same grace* which *saveth you*. For though your soul might have been saved eternally, if you had been one of the least, and last of the members of Christ's body, and if you had not been called to the work of the ministry; yet, as God, from the beginning, had chosen you to salvation, through faith in his Son, he held a counsel in himself, before the world was, how he might display

towards you, the exceeding riches of his salvation-grace ; and infinite wisdom pitched upon *this way* ; and infinite grace made a resolve concerning it. As if the Lord should say, “ I will commend my free, sovereign love, the exceeding riches of my boundless grace, towards that dear object of my heart ; not only in saving his soul from the misery of sin, death, and hell, unto the joy and liberty of faith and holiness, and unto heaven’s glory at last ; but I will save him unto eminent service to win many souls unto my Son Jesus, who shall be his exceeding joy, and as jewels to enrich his crown of glory, and make it massy to a blest eternity. He shall be a minister, a successful minister of the gospel of the blessed God. I will shew him such wonders of special grace, that shall overcome his heart with my infinite kindness, and shine in his salvation with a distinguished brightness, to his ineffable bliss, and my eternal praise. He shall see how freely and greatly an infinite God can love ; what miracles of grace and mercy Jehovah, Jehovah El, the strong God, as merciful and gracious, can work, while I do for him therein, exceeding abundantly more than he can ask or think.”

This, this, sir, was the language of God’s heart concerning you, before time began, which hath opened, and opens, with glorious evidence in your call to the work of the ministry, and in your past and present usefulness. For you know well, that the Lord God of your salvation *worketh all things* in special, gracious Providence,

according to the *counsel of his own will*. Dr. Goodwin says, "It is mercy enough to be a minister; God had but one Son, and he made him a minister!" And not only a minister, sir, for that you might have been, and have been a sweet savour of Christ unto God in your ministerial work, if your preaching the gospel of grace had been only a savour of death unto death in them that perish. But, O! that you should be a minister owned of God for the salvation of men; that your gospel ministry should prove the savour of life unto life to so many! Favourite of heaven! Indulged favourite! *Angels* wonder at it! Well may *we*! "We bless you out of Zion!" Congratulate your happiness, and seek your increasing bliss! Truly you are *heavy* with *glory*! And what that exceeding, that more exceeding, that far more exceeding *weight* of glory will be which is reserved for you to a boundless eternity: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard!"

Blessed man! Love and bless the Lord as you can; and tell him, that by and for his grace you will give him glory, incessantly and perfectly, through the circling ages of your blest eternity! And when all is done that can be done, that ever will be done, God's free grace, his great grace, towards you in Christ, will forever be exalted, in its own immense display, far above all your blessing and praise! Yea, exalted for ever will this free, great grace be, above all blessing and praise which, on your account, shall be given unto God in Christ, by the innumerable hosts

of saved men and glorious angels, unto endless ages! Grace, in its immensity, none can know fully, nor praise adequately; that have not in them a wisdom, a strength of infinity! Put the work of praise, then, into your great Mediator's hands. He *knows* his Father's heart, and his marvellous works, *right well*! And will *praise* him as the head of the church, for all his grace displayed and conferred on all its members. Who, in their several places, and for their various services, were made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth; while the Father's eyes beheld Christ's *substance*, the substance of his body mystical, and in his book, all his *members* were written, for place and service, which in continuance, were fashioned for both, by grace to its eternal praise! Countless, to Christ as man, were the numerous thoughts, the infinite thoughts, of his Father's grace unto him and his! But Christ, as God, knows them all full well; and being an infinite person, will render infinite praise to a God of infinite grace!

If you think not with me in this, sir, pardon me. I hint it, as it just occurred to thought. And will it not be an exceedingly great privilege to us, who are so greatly indebted to free grace, and so greatly insolvent, to give it an adequate praise; that our great Lord will pay the mighty debt we owe, and give to a God of infinite grace the glory due? Yea, that, as the head of the church, for all that infinite grace displayed towards his body, he will, being an infinite person,

give it an infinite glory ! *Here*, in God's incarnate Son, in our Immanuel, God with us, the Father's soul will find an infinite complacence, in an infinite praise for all his infinite grace ! However, insolvent as we are, let us offer a mite of duty, in the name of Jesus, in love to the glory of the God of grace ! until our feeble time-praises rise to the strength of eternity's loudest hallelujahs. When our great Lord and Head, our glorious elder Brother, our everlasting Father, will present all his and their perfect praises, and our services, to the highest acceptance in his most acceptable person, and all-transcending praise unto his and our God and Father, with " Behold *I* and the *children* which God hath given me !" In that *view*, what an august, majestic work will the praise of heaven be ! " As the voice of a *great multitude*, as the voice of *many waters*, as the voice of *mighty thunderings* ! yea, as the voice of the Lord God *Omnipotent* !"

I rejoice, sir, that you are so greatly strengthened by grace, for such abundant services, and for harvest labours, unto harvest pleasures : may " the power of Christ, still rest upon you, and his strength be made perfect in your weakness !" How great was the love of your three-one God, in reserving for you, and conferring upon you, such a new and great favour, together, as it were, with your newly-restored life from threatened death ! Life to you, with respect to the glory of Christ by you, in eminent service to his praise, was desirable to your heart in these views. And

not the single blessing of life only, but the double, in a life of usefulness ; to God's glory, and your joy, is conferred upon you, by infinite bounty, by infinite love, and immensely great mercy !” “ Your iniquities forgiven ; your life redeemed from destruction ; crowned thus you are with loving kindness and tender mercies !” For eminent service, upon your resurrection from a sick-bed, the Lord has designed you ; for this work, by his grace upon your heart in drawing out your desires after it, he eminently prepared you ; and to satisfy your longing soul with eminent service, he hath blessed you !

“ This is the Lord's doing : it is marvellous in our eyes !” It is all of grace, free, rich, reigning grace, through the redeemer's righteousness, from first to last. But this we may observe, that where God draws out the heart into eager desires after eminent service (as he did yours, when you could say, “ you knew no delight but serving the Lord,”) that soul is designed of God to be an eminent servant of his, and shall have its ardent desires turned into ineffable delights ! For though our Lord's love is every way a preventing love, and “ we love him, because he first loved us ;” yet where he draws out the principle of love in the hearts of his servants into eminent exercise, it is to be answered, it is to be rewarded, with glorious displays of infinite kindness !

“ If any man love me (saith our Lord) he shall be loved of my Father ; and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.” “ If any man serve

me (if he earnestly desires, and endeavours to serve me) let him follow me : (*let him* serve me ;) I make a *grant* of my service to him, he *shall* serve me ; and let him therein take me for his example ; let him *follow* me. And where I am (in the displays of my glory) there shall my servant be ;" to his unspeakable joy. " If any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

Well Dr. Goodwin observes, on Mary's standing, weeping at the sepulchre for her absent Lord, when his disciples only came to it, looked in, and went their way again, " that Christ manifested himself to her, as he did not to a whole college of apostles." That "*faith* carries it, above all the graces, in point of justification ; but *love* above all, in point of Christ's manifestation." And most sweetly he adds, " Christ knows what it is to *love* ; and no soul shall *die* for the *love* of him."

Of this, dear sir, you have had blessed experience. And what you have yet seen is nothing, as it were, unto that which is still before you ; or rather, it is like God's laying the foundation of a vast, an endless superstructure ! For "*raised* up from the depths of death unto the heights of life, *in and with Christ*, mystically and influentially ; it is, " that God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loveth you, may shew, in the ages to come (make a *shew* unto endless ages of), the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards you, through Christ Jesus !"

" O man, greatly beloved!" *tell* them, continue

to tell, the excellent loving-kindness of God our Saviour towards unlovely sinners. "Preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ!" and for success in winning souls to Jesus! May you yet see "greater things than these!" *Little*, O little can you think, how kindly the Prince of Grace *accepts* your services! How *much* he will *say*, before men and angels, when he appears, in commendation of those performances, which *you* call *poor doings*! which you are ashamed of, before him, and bewail their weakness and imperfection, with great lamentation! Nor yet can you think, what a *rich* crown of immortal glory he will confer upon you, as a god-like reward of all your *mites of duty*, according to his *infinite bounty*! "The Lord baptise you, with the Holy Ghost and with fire!" and hereafter bless you with the ineffable joy, the glorious honour, "of presenting the happy souls, you have espoused unto one Husband, and nourished up in faith, unto eternal life, as a chaste virgin unto Christ!"

Indeed, sir, highly-favoured of God is our honoured and beloved brother, Mr. Hervey, in that he is made such a bright witness for Christ, and the great truths of his glorious gospel in the earth! Excellent and precious is his last performance.

You refresh my bowels in the Lord, while my reverend brother tells me, "that my poor books are of use to his dear people." May your joy be full, that seek to advance mine! And a full

reward be given you of the Lord God of Israel, who suffer a little child to cry "Hosanna to the Son of David!" May all your prayers for me be heard, and returned an hundred fold into your own bosom! I beg the continuance of your interest at the throne of grace for the most unworthy; and as enabled, shall remember you most heartily! I commit you to the all-sufficient grace of your own dear Lord Jesus; to be carried honourably and joyfully through all your appointed service, until you have finished your course; and then to be blest with a rich, immortal crown of life and righteousness; unto his eternal glory, and your everlasting felicity! And with great affection, esteem, and gratitude for all favours, permit me to be,

Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

Anne Dutton.

P. S. Pardon me, dear sir, that I could not get time to write sooner. I embraced the very first leisure. It gives me pleasure to hear that the Countess of Huntingdon appears on the side of Christ, and is eminent for God. May her life be continued, and her usefulness great!

FROM THE REV. MR. HAYWARD TO MR. DARRACOTT.

Bristol, April 22, 1757.

Reverend and dear Sir,

I received your kind and affectionate letter, and rejoice to find that God is so remarkably blessing your labours. How comfortable! How

animating ! to see sinners melted, prodigals returning, blasphemers fearing. Oh ! happy sight ! Blessed be God, your eyes see it, and your soul cannot but exult in the Lord. I need not say how pleasant it is to study and preach, when God thus sets to his seal. You are favoured beyond many, my dear friend. God is owning you, whilst many are crying out, Lord, who hath believed our report ? May the Lord continue your zeal, continue your life, and continue your success, and make you a burning and a shining light. Your letter found me at Bristol, where I have been now, these five weeks, and yet but little alteration. I hope, upon the whole, I am better, I have had a strong hectic, and a bad cough. I shall have been laid aside from my work, three quarters of a year : a long time to be silent ! a long affliction, but little improvement. Gladly would I again labour in my Lord's vineyard, and be an instrument of good to souls. The ministry never appeared to me in so amiable a light.

Oh, my brother, how highly God is honouring you, to continue your capacity for service, and make you useful. I am ready to say, Oh, that it was thus with me ! What God will do with me, he only knows. I desire to be waiting for his will. All that he has laid upon me, I have deserved, and infinitely more. It is rich mercy that I am out of hell. I doubt not your remembrance of me at a throne of grace. Pray recommend me to your people, as

a proper object of their prayers. I am a living object of the power and excellency of prayer. And God can as easily perfect the mercy as he began it. However, I would desire to say, Father, thy will be done. Lady Huntingdon was extremely kind. I find her to be a humble, sweet Christian, and ready to support the cause of Christ in any place. I hope you and your family enjoy health. The Lord confirm and continue it. I cannot enlarge. I am ordered not to write, but I must a little. I shall be glad to hear from you. My kind respects to yours, Mrs. Darracott, Kitty, and all your family,

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate friend and brother,
Samuel Hayward.

FROM LADY HUNTINGDON TO MR. DARRACOTT.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

The affairs of my family called me home, but I am again brought back in safety, and much happiness of heart ; and that to a sweet little family, who live but to devote every hour more and more to the love and knowledge of the Lord Jesus. We had agreed upon this retreat, and taken a larger house among us for this purpose, and we all wish your prayers. To become the Lord's in body, soul and spirit, is the one cry and desire of our hearts ; and we know he will not reject us, nor cast us out ; and though we

can do nothing, yet we can receive of his fulness grace for grace ; and in this world suffer reproach and persecution for his name's sake, which is sweet and honourable to us ; when, though we can do nothing, we glory in this, that, to his praise, he hath redeemed, and will make us priests unto God. We should rejoice to see you among us ; and I hope nothing will prevent it, if convenient to you. All gospel ministers, it is our highest honour and happiness to serve, and no denomination do we ever reject. If their bowels are straitened, ours are not. All glory to his free spirit that is never bound. Such a general stir I have never known.

FROM THE REV. DR. HAWEIS TO MR. DARRACOTT.

January 28, 1755.

Reverend and very dear sir,

Since it hath pleased the great God, and him who hath the keys of death, and in whose hands the issues of it are, to restore you again to our importunate supplications, we shall, with delight, consent to your request in aiding your praises, and gratefully join with you in thanksgiving to the God that heareth prayer. Next to my joy for your returning health, I must add that of the sweet experience of God's favour and acceptance which, in your distress, he was pleased to manifest to you. I trust the bonds it leaves on you, sir, will appear, and that, like the great apostle Peter, many years after, you will have a

delightful remembrance of this manifestation of the Lord to you : such things comfort the living in expectation of them, and almost make us say, "it is good for us to be here too."

Your reviving, cheering, and spurring exhortation, accompanied with your prayers, shall not, I trust, through the assistance of the Spirit of God, fail to have its intended use, it is what, amidst all the blessed means I enjoy, and kindness of the Lord I experience, I abundantly need. For, sir, I have a sad heart, loath to leave the present glitter, to dig for hidden gold ; and frequently leaning, with perverse attachment, to earth and its transitory trifles, which, with all the vanity I discover in them, too often would impose on my affections, and, like objects seen through a wrong medium, appear what they are not.

You describe a glorious hope, and my heart cannot but bound on the expectation. Yes, sir, I trust these eyes shall see the salvation of the Lord, with all the imperfection and unprofitableness I find in myself. I dare not, would not, for a thousand worlds, cast away the hope of my confidence, nor, having so often tasted that the Lord is gracious, ungratefully distrust his kindness, or suspect his love ; whilst, with fear and trembling, I fain would work out my salvation, casting myself entirely on him that worketh in me to will and to do. I hope, I desire to wait for the blessedness of the man that trusteth in

the Lord, and am persuaded that he hath not forgotten to be gracious.

It just now strikes my mind, that it is very probable I shall never see you, sir, this side heaven; and what think you my heart says? Why, suppose we do not, we shall spend eternity together; and Mr. Darracott will own his quondam friend, among the meanest of that happy throng, though himself shines in a more distinguished station. I lately visited my sisters, and found them vastly pleased with the entertainment you gave them. The good work manifestly grows. But I have exhausted my stock of time, when I have assured my dear Mr. Darracott how affectionately and humbly I am his friend and servant,

T. Haweis.

MISS MARY TREGENNA TO MR. DARRACOTT.

Reverend and worthy sir,

Ill health has prevented me from complying sooner with your request. The Almighty is now pleased to grant me a relaxation from my pain; and for this, his great goodness to me, surely I ought to dedicate those hours of ease entirely to his service. The present, I think, I cannot better improve, than in setting forth the praise of the Lord, by telling you what great things he hath done for my soul. Oh, that my whole life had been spent in conformity to his will! What comfort would the reflection give me, if the love

of Jesus had had an earlier possession of my heart ! But I rejected his kind invitations, and cast his words behind me, that I might, without any restraint, follow the dictates of my own perverse will, which led me into a life of sin and vanity, that erased every impression the good spirit made on my heart.

With sorrow and confusion, I confess to you, that thus I lived, without God in the world, until I arrived at twenty years of age. About that time, I had a brother going to the university; my papa went with him (to take care he was well settled,) and as he had but indifferent health, took me with him. This greatly pleased my corrupted heart ; hoping that I should find abroad some new enjoyment, that would give me more delight than any I had hitherto met with could afford. But how greatly was I mistaken ! Nothing but disappointments attended me, every pleasure I partook of left an uneasiness on my mind, and I returned home more dissatisfied than ever. Then, I began to reflect on the vanity of earthly enjoyments, and plainly saw, that nothing here below was capable of giving true satisfaction to the mind of a reasonable being.

I continued in this thoughtful way, till the week came on that is observed among us more strictly, in order to take off the attention from earthly things ; to prepare the heart to commemorate the death of our Blessed Redeemer ; and, as my parents were always careful for me to at-

tend on all the means of grace, I was never suffered to omit being at the sacrament. Blessed Jesus, how often have I approached thy holy table, with an unsanctified heart! My mamma often watched me, to see if I neglected my private devotions, and many a reproof has she given me on this occasion; for whenever I thought I was not observed by her, I wholly neglected my retirements, and when I entered my closet, good Lord, what did it avail me, to say over a few formal words, with my thoughts, at the same time, taken up with the vanities of the world!

But now, I began to consider more seriously my way of life, and how did every period of it reproach me! When I reflected how I had, from day to day, been mocking my kind Creator and Preserver, how great was my confusion! Surely, said I, I have been most wretchedly deceived in pursuing those transitory delights, I have neglected my greatest interest, and despised the Lord that bought me. My heart was immediately impressed with great sorrow, and I humbly fell down before the throne of grace, to implore for pardon. I continued for some time very much dejected, and spent all my leisure time in reading and prayer; my melancholy countenance was visible to every one, but none could guess what was the true cause of it, for I had not boldness enough to speak of it, and no one suspected it; as I always kept up a decency of behaviour, and past, in the eyes of

my acquaintance, for what the world calls a good christian.

It was soon reported abroad, that love was the occasion of my melancholy ; and stories were told of me to my parents, that made them very uneasy. But at last, the Lord gave me courage to confess the cause of my sorrows ; and my tongue was loosed to give him the praise, and to acknowledge myself a most miserable, sinful creature. I was soon beset, on all sides, with my old companions in folly, who would persuade me that there was no occasion for so much strictness, and, that I should bring myself into despair ; however, the Lord enabled me to withstand all their temptations, and their persecutions were a spur to me, in the performance of my duty : at length, they left me pretty quiet.

But, how dangerous is a life of much ease, to them who are endeavouring to take up the cross after their blessed Master ! I soon found that it was sometimes good to be afflicted ; for slothfulness took hold of me, and my zeal began to abate, but it pleased the Lord to send me a heavy affliction, by taking from me my eldest sister. In about a year after, I lost my brother, and another sister, and since that, my father. Surely, if, after these great afflictions, I should still set my affection on this world, and revolt from God, great must be my condemnation. These troubles have also been the means of inducing three more of my sisters (that are grown up to years of maturity) to engage more vigorously in the service of

their Redeemer. I have, also, four younger, that I hope the Almighty will enable us to train up in his fear and love.

One of them I cannot forbear speaking of, in a particular manner. She is about twelve years old, but few of twenty are so provident of their time; the hours allowed for her play, she generally spends in reading or writing; the latter, she applied to of herself, unknown to us, and can now write a very pretty hand, without being ever taught. Her temper is quite even and cheerful; nothing delights her more than to hear of the love of Jesus to us, and to be told of the joys of heaven; she will leave any company, or amusement, to hear a religious conversation: to see the joy that sparkles in her countenance, on those occasions, would delight you; her readiness to obey any commands laid upon her, is remarkable; and the meekness with which she bears ill-treatment from any of her companions, has often made me blush. I have found a secret as safe with her, as in my own breast.

Oh, sir, what great mercies has the Lord conferred on me and mine! How can I choose but say, "Lord who art thou thus mindful of me, or any of my father's! Oh, that I could praise the Lord as I ought, for this his great goodness to us! Oh, that I might be telling of his salvation from day to day." My sister enjoys the thoughts of seeing you and good Mrs. Darracott. She joins in thanks to you, for your kind, in-

structing letter, and also, in sincerest compliments, to you and your good lady, with,

Worthy sir,

Your obliged, humble servant,

And most sincere friend,

Mary Tregenna.

Bath, Dec. 17, 1754.

END.



