

of the day, I went in the evening to the meeting. I had reason to complain of unwatchfulness and wandering thoughts, but found my mind a little warmed by our pastor's prayer at the close of the meeting. On my return home, my temper was not as it ought to have been; the consequence of which was, family and private devotions were but irregularly performed."

" July 4.—In the afternoon the preparation meeting was held, at which I attended. Mr. Crabtree first gave a few words of exhortation. The case of one who was desirous to unite with us again was considered: he had absented himself for a considerable time; but the church, being satisfied with his concessions, and the spirit he now manifested, was willing to receive him again. Our brethren at Halifax sent a letter, which was read, desiring their dismissal, that they might embody themselves together under the pastoral care of Mr. Joshua Wood: their dismissal was granted:—the meeting continued from about one till seven in the evening. Though not very well either in body or mind, it was on the whole an edifying season to me. After I returned home I did not properly improve my time, but neglected to offer my evening oblation, till I was incapable of doing it in a becoming manner.—O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great!"

" Saturday, July 5.—In family worship I read a chapter in Proverbs, and afterwards some passages in Henry's "Life," which were very interesting; I also wrote a little.—Lord! help me to redeem my time, so that I may have a proper portion of it for every good work. In the business of the day I had some pleasing meditations, but in general my heart was not so with God as it ought to have been. At noon, I spent some time in



reading "Theron and Aspasio."—We retired to rest a little before twelve, but had not slept above an hour when my partner was awakened out of sleep, by what appeared to her a real and frightful noise; I rose, though reluctantly at first, but I reflected that nothing could hurt me in the least without my Father's permission, which idea enabled me to overcome my slavish fears.—I thought of the saying of Job, vii. 14: 'Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me with visions.' It was some time before we could sleep again; but I was enabled to look unto the Lord, humbly praying, that, whether it was real or merely imaginary, it might lead us to seek after an actual state of preparation for that more awful midnight cry when the last trumpet shall sound!—O that we may then be found ready!"

"July 6.—This being the ordinance day, though but weak and feeble in my outward man, I endeavoured in the morning, along with my partner in life, who was also indisposed, to pour out my supplications to the Lord, beseeching him to have compassion on me, to heal my wounded soul, and prepare me to come to his table with true brokenness of heart and penitential sorrow. O that we may come thirsting for God as the hart thirsteth for the cooling brooks! The sermons to-day were intended as a funeral discourse, occasioned by the death of J. Shackleton: Psalm xcii. 15: 'He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.'

"At noon, I had some conversation with a brother respecting some rather unfavourable reports as to his character; but from his explanation, I concluded that his conduct had been misrepresented. I can truly say that I was induced to speak to him from love to him, as



well as for the satisfaction of my own mind; but I am afraid what I said was not well received. I found my mind uneasy on the subject in the afternoon service, and at the Lord's table, especially during the former part of the time. Towards the close I was more composed, and was enabled to look to a crucified Saviour, in the exercise of faith, though not without some doubts intermixed. I formed new resolutions to walk in the ways of God: may he give me strength to perform the vows I have made!—If I remember right, this is the twentieth time that I have sat down at the Lord's table with my brethren,—perhaps I have not often to join with them in this world at this sacred feast; this may be the last opportunity. O that I may 'drink the wine new in the kingdom of my Father!'

"In the evening we had a meeting at our house, at which many of our neighbours attended: J. Ross came to our assistance. I read my imperfect notes of the sermons, and found my heart enlarged in prayer."

"July 7.—This day the word of God was precious to my soul, and I loved it, as the Psalmist says, for its *purity*: Psalm cxix. I cannot forbear reflecting upon myself for being so negligent in the improving, though sometimes painful, work of meditation. What do I lose for want of this! I may well be lean and meagre in myself, and of little use to others, so long as I feel so reluctant to this duty."

"In the evening I met with some of my Christian friends; and at their request, went to prayer; I was afterwards pained in my mind with the thought that I had acted the hypocrite, and pretended to be more religious than I really was.—O Lord, search me!"

"Tuesday, July 8.—Read in the morning some of



the Proverbs of Solomon, and was delighted with many of his excellent sayings, but had not so clear an understanding of some of them as I could have wished. Being indisposed to-day, it was with difficulty I struggled through the work I had to do. In the afternoon I spent some time in the study of grammar. O that I may acknowledge God in my searchings after knowledge!"

"Wednesday, July 9.—This morning I rose at half-past five, and went to our morning meeting, appointed to be held for the revival of religion among us. We continued together about two hours, and had some encouraging hopes that the Lord will regard our poor prayers. I have again devoted a portion of my time to grammar, and other branches of science. O that I may be freed from all ambitious aims, and not seek my own praise, but the glory of God!"

"Friday, July 11.—I was unhappy in the morning, under an idea that my present employment contributes to my indisposition, and is unfavourable to my constitution. Be this as it may, I ought to 'commit my way unto the Lord, and trust in him:' Psalm xxxvii. 5. Instead of that, I have been anxiously concerned about to-morrow, so that I am now filled with distress and unbecoming fears. O Lord, help me to look unto thee, and to trust in thy mercy! Thou didst give me my being; I hope thou hast made me a partaker of thy grace; and therefore thou canst not but care for thy feeble dust, the few days he has to remain in this vale of tears. O Lord, give me faith to depend on thy unchangeable promise! Hebrews, xiii. 5: 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content



with such things as you have; for he hath said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'"

"Lord's Day, July 13.—This day Mr. Crabtree preached from Ephesians, iv. 26: 'Be ye angry, and sin not.' This discourse was very seasonable to me. In many things I felt condemned, and especially when the minister was speaking respecting being angry at the *providence of God*. I have for two or three days been troubled with fears respecting temporal things, which have had a very unhappy effect upon me, so as to harden my heart and distress my mind. I have found an evil heart of unbelief, in 'departing from the living God.' Hebrews, iii. 12.

"After the morning service I had an interview with a friend; and found some relief under my burthens in opening my mind to him. He told me that his feelings had often been the same as mine; and mentioned, for my encouragement, those passages in Matthew, vi. 25, &c. I went to prayer, and was a little better."

"Monday, July 14.—The weather is now extremely hot, which occasions some degree of languor, but I am better in health than I expected to be; thanks be to God for it!—He is better to me than all my fears. My prayer is,

"Open my eyes, thou God of love!

And make me know thy mind;

Send thy bless'd Spirit from above,

That I the truth may find!"

The following extract contains the first intimation to be found in any of his papers of his having any views to the ministerial office.

"Wednesday, July 16.—In the afternoon I met



with Mr. Hartley, as he was going to Leeds; I had some conversation with him; and he left me a letter, in answer to a question which I proposed to him respecting my desire to be employed in the work of the ministry.

“The letter contains these observations, in connection with some others.

“Without doubt, a desire to be engaged in this work is not only lawful, but needful to all those who ‘enter into the Lord’s vineyard.’ 1 Tim. iii. 1. ‘We should bear this office willingly.’ 1 Cor. ix. 17: but then it is very necessary that we seriously examine what ends we have in view. If we are influenced by other principles than love to God and love to men, and if we have any other end in view, or at least any more prevailing end in view, than the glory of God, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of man, our hearts are not right in the sight of God. The principle is best tried by the motives by which it is influenced: yet, as through the corruption of nature, we do nothing for God, but some degree of self-pride and vain glory attends us therein; so even in proposing or intending so great a work as this, some motions from such principles may appear to those who will carefully examine their own hearts. What you have therefore to do in this case is, not to see that you are entirely exempt from these improper feelings, (which is scarcely possible in this present imperfect state), but to inquire what is the *predominant* desire of your soul, or what is the highest end you have in view: if the motives I have mentioned, namely, the glory of God, and the benefit of mankind, you may then in his strength undertake the work, not doubting but he who has



called you to it will enable you to encounter and repel the difficulties you will have to meet with."

"Friday, July 18.—[The diary for this day and the preceding contains two beautiful passages from Hervey's "Meditations," and Milton's "Paradise Lost," Book VIII.] In the evening (he subjoins), I attended the funeral of Mrs. Pickard. Mr. Crabtree gave an exhortation from Rev. xiv. 13: 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord,' &c. It was a very affecting season. During the solemnity, I was impressed with the idea that perhaps I was the next that might be taken out of our little community. My constitution is extremely weak; and, as far as I can judge, I am in a declining state. O that I may be every moment in actual readiness for that great change which has now passed upon our deceased sister! Four or five days ago she was in a better state of health than I am at present, and now she is gone. Her body is committed to the dust, and her spirit ascended to God that gave it."

"Monday, July 21, four o'clock, p. m.—I have just read over the second epistle of Timothy, which is an excellent form of sound words, both with respect to faith and practice. I desire to attend to it with application to myself, and endeavour to improve by it. O that I may walk in the steps of young Timothy!

"In the evening, after family prayer, I spent some time with my friend, John Pratt, and found considerable advantage from reading Henry's "Exposition" on the 14th chap. of Hosea, and from the conversation I had with him."

"July 22.—I had this day an interview with



Mr. Smith, of Wainsgate. I opened to him the state of my mind. The advice he gave me was to apply with diligence to the study of the Scriptures, to attend to my secular employment as far as my health would permit, and to wait till the Lord, by his providence, should show me more clearly what he would have me do. I told him it was my desire to take his advice, in order that I might be useful in the work of the ministry; but I found such a mixture of improper feelings of mind, and particularly of pride, in the thoughts of it, that I was afraid it could not be of God: he, however, still advised me to take that course. O Lord, thou knowest my weakness, the pride of my heart, and my utter inability for so awful a work."

"Wednesday, July 23.—This day my mind has been closely engaged in meditating upon God's Word, in which I was very comfortable, and also in my devotional exercises. I felt a humble submission and reconciliation to the Lord's will, whatever it might be. My prayer to the Almighty was, that he would qualify me for whatsoever he might be pleased to call me to.

"O Lord, I know not what to do, but 'my eyes are upon thee.' 'Thy thoughts are not as our thoughts;' but, if in thy wise counsel thou hast fixed upon me to be a chosen vessel to bear thy name to Gentile sinners, I earnestly implore that thou wouldst give me a right spirit, and bestow upon me every needful qualification for that most difficult and important work. If thou dost not call me to it, O Father, 'not my will, but thine be done!' Here I desire to rest, and beg that my unruly passions may never get the ascendancy, so as to draw me aside from thee and from the path of duty."



"Friday, July 25.—In the forenoon I was happy in my mind, though but poorly in body. I had some sweet meditations when engaged in business.

"In the evening we had a meeting in the vestry. I delivered my thoughts on Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5: 'If thou criest after knowledge,' &c.; but was much contracted in my ideas, and had not freedom of utterance. I have learnt that *utterance*, as well as knowledge, is the gift of God: 1 Cor. i. 5."

"Saturday, July 27.—I was in the morning weak and poorly in body; but, blessed be God, not destitute of comfort. In reading Job i. in Clarke's Bible, I was much interested, and found much matter for useful meditation. Mr. Crabtree preached a funeral sermon for Mrs. Sarah Pickard, with which I was deeply affected. The text was, Ezek. xxiv. 16: 'Son of man,' &c."

"Tuesday, July 29.—This morning I rose early; I found my heart drawn towards the Lord, though still poorly in body. I have an inward persuasion that the Lord will at some period impart to me abilities for public work; and yet I am conscious that there must be a great change wrought in me, before I can be a proper person to labour in the *word* and *doctrine*. The Lord gave David encouragement that he would make him king of his people Israel; and yet how much had he to press through before he attained that honour! Thus it was with Joseph, and with the children of Israel; and so I am inclined to think it may be with me. May the Lord give me strength, and help me on so that I may see that all things are working together for my good!"

"August 1. *Ætatis* 21.—O Lord God, I desire



this day to avouch thee for my only Lord and everlasting portion. I confess I have sinned and dishonoured thy name; but I now supplicate forgiveness at thy hand, through a precious Saviour's blood. According to thy promise, do thou heal my backslidings, and cleanse me from pollution. My whole soul and body I this day devote to thee, and subscribe with my hand that I am thine. Jonah, ii. 8: 'They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies.'

"Lord's Day, August 10.—Rising early this morning, I took a walk into the fields to meditate. I read a few pages in the Night Thoughts with pleasure, and, I trust, profit. I was also much edified by reading "Theron and Aspasio," Dial. xiii. Aspasio, enlarging upon the doctrine of original sin, explains and proves it in a striking manner. Mr. Crabtree's text to-day was Psalm xxxiv. 13."

"Monday, April 20, 1761.—I had been for some time much indisposed, but was something better on Saturday. Yesterday, being Lord's Day, I went to the public meeting, not without some apprehension of taking cold, which I believe was the case; for in the afternoon I felt extremely ill, and was overwhelmed with sickness. The sorrows, and, as I thought, the pains of death, appeared to take hold upon me. I was ready to conclude that my useless life was drawing towards an end, and that the Lord was about to cut me off in the midst of my days. I had a deep sense of my past sins, which are many and grievous. I saw myself deserving of the Divine displeasure, and that if I am ever saved, it must be through the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ. Many of my Christian friends discovered great sympathy with me. I could not for-



bear shedding tears at the sight of them. Having taken something to drink, after one of my brethren had offered up to God a fervent and suitable prayer, I attempted to walk home, and reached, after a little time, by the assistance of some kind friends. Having perspired a little during the night, I found myself this morning much relieved, for which I desire to bless God with all my heart, and would earnestly implore that he would sanctify this affliction to the benefit of my soul. Psalm cxix. 74: 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.'

"I think it is good for me,

"1st.—Because I now see more into the emptiness and vanity of all earthly enjoyments, and into the frailty and uncertainty of life.

"2dly.—Because I have had a discovery of, and I hope some genuine sorrow for, my unfruitfulness, unwatchfulness, and many other sins of which I never repented as I ought to have done before. 'Before I was afflicted I went astray;' but now *may I* keep thy word! Psalm cxix. 67.

"3dly.—I see great reason to be importunate with the Lord for the pardon of my sins, and strength and grace to enable me to keep the way of the Lord more perfectly."

"April 21.—I had a comfortable night's rest, and found myself much better this morning; I have reason to be thankful that I have been kept, during my indisposition, from murmuring and discontented thoughts. I have been reading several useful authors, and particularly Mr. T. Rowe's life, and some passages in "Caryl on Job," which has unexpectedly been put into my hands. I hope it will be of great service to me,



“ ‘O Lord, I will praise thee ; for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away and thou comfortest me.’ ”

“ Friday, April 23.—I read this morning the prophecies of Amos, and had much satisfaction and comfort in meditation ; but have reason to complain on account of the pride of my heart, and backwardness to prayer. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to thy loving-kindness ! ”

“ Saturday, April 24.—Being extremely weak and sickly, I was much refreshed about noon with the good creatures of God, of which I have known no want. Blessed be the Lord for this mercy ! Thou hast remembered thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou didst cause me to hope : ‘ They that seek the Lord shall want no good thing.’ ”

“ In the afternoon I thought I had not sufficiently felt and lamented the discouraging situation of our society. O Lord, I confess my sin to thee ; for though thy hand has been lifted up, I have not seen nor considered it so as to grieve, as I ought to have done, for the afflictions of our church.”

“ April 25, Lord’s Day.—The sermon this morning from Psalm xc. 12, was peculiarly adapted to my case, and deeply affected my mind. Grant, O Lord, that it may have a lasting effect, that hereafter I may ‘ truly apply my heart unto wisdom.’ ”

“ Cleanse me, O Lord, from all my sin,  
And purify my soul within ;  
That I may now begin anew  
The paths of wisdom to pursue ! ”

“ Lord’s Day, June 14.—This day we were prevented



sitting down at the Lord's table by our pastor's indisposition. If the Lord should take him from us by this affliction, what a stroke would it be! During the public service, I had reason to complain of wandering thoughts. The text was, 'A wise son heareth his father's instruction.' To *hear* instruction includes in it an earnest desire to profit by what we hear; diligent attention to it, and a desire to reduce it to practice. Blessed are they that hear the word of God so as to keep it!"

" June 15.—The Lord supplies my wants, and fills my heart with joy and gladness. There is, indeed, every prospect of plenty. We have reason to apply to our present circumstances, Psalm lxxv. verse 9, to the end. For beauty of comparison and harmony, as well as grandeur of expression, it is inimitable."

" Tuesday, June 16.—I have been this day deficient in the work of solemn prayer. It ought to be performed frequently; by occasional ejaculations, and at stated and appointed seasons. It should be attended to with fervency and earnestness in faith, humility, and with watchfulness: agreeably to the Divine direction, 'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same.'"

" June 18.—In the afternoon I was present at the funeral of a child. Mr. Crabtree, being a little recovered, spoke something very suitable to the occasion from Mark vii. 37: 'He hath done all things well.' He first showed, that whatever God does must, from his nature and character, be right in itself; and then instanced, in several particulars, some of the Divine dispensations towards us; in which we are brought to see, however contrary they may be to carnal reason, that the Lord hath done well. One instance I remember



was this, 'It is well done of the Lord when he denies us some things that we passionately breathe for.' I think I have had some experience of this, and I wish I may often keep it in mind."

"Lord's Day, June 25.—Our dear pastor being recovered, I have this day had the privilege to hear him, and to sit down with my brethren at the Lord's table. I have been entertained at that 'feast of fat things which the Lord hath prepared in his holy mountain.' Ps. xxv. 6. In this mountain his hand shall rest, namely, the hand of his power to protect and preserve us, and his goodness to provide for us. The Lord blessed the provision of his table to me. I was led to see more of my unworthiness, so that I could esteem any one of my brethren better than myself. 'O Lord, hold thou me up, and I shall be safe!'"

"Monday, June 29.—This morning I lost some precious time in sleep.

"Dull sleep, alas! confines my powers,  
And robs me of my morning hours;  
The saints of old, before 'twas day,  
Would often meditate and pray:  
Assist me, Lord! like them to rise,  
And pay my morning sacrifice.

"In the holy exercise of meditation, I have this day found great delight. I hope I can say as David did, Ps. cxix. 103: 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.' The company of religious friends also afforded me much satisfaction. I am happy in possessing many companions who fear God and keep his precepts. But a particular detail of all God's benefits towards me in providence and grace



is impossible: it will be my delightful employ to recount them through the endless ages of eternity. 'Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus!'

"Tuesday, June 30.—I indulged too much in murmurings and discontent about noon. But it is only the meek, as the Divine Word says, that shall inherit the earth, that is, so much as is really good for them; and they enjoy that sweetness and satisfaction in the little that Providence allows them, with which others are unacquainted. A discontented, uneasy man inherits nothing, because he is never satisfied with it; but the meek person has such a conviction of his own unworthiness, that he thinks any thing that he enjoys better than he deserves."

"Friday, July 10.—I have been much edified in reading a page or two of Mr. Henry's life. O that I may follow him as he followed Christ!"

"Monday, July 13.—

"All bountiful King,  
Thy name I adore;  
And joyfully sing  
Thy wisdom and power.

"Thy sovereign mercy  
Through Jesus thy Son,  
To one that's unworthy  
Is daily made known."

"Wednesday, July 15.—This day I have had the opportunity of hearing a sermon preached at Bradford by Mr. John Wesley, from Rom. xiii. 11, 12: 'It is high time to awake,' &c. He spoke many important truths. He described that sleep which often overtakes the Christian, into which I have reason to lament that



I have fallen many times. When I went to hear, my mind was in a drowsy state; but I trust the Lord blessed what I heard to revive me a little. May my conduct for time to come show that this is really the case!"

"Tuesday, July 21.—I have been deeply affected in considering myself as a creature possessed of an immortal soul that must exist for ever, either in happiness or misery. May I be diligent in 'making my calling and election sure,' and solicitous every day to make some advances in knowledge and holiness!"

"July 25.—I have spent the greatest part of my vacant time this week in reading the seventh volume of the Spectator; it is a very ingenious work, though it does not contain much Scriptural divinity. The authors have 'sought out and set in order' (as the wise man says) many excellent moral instructions.

"I was much affected this day in conversing with my brother in the ties of nature, and no less so in the bonds of Christian love. I have some hope that my youngest sister is also begun to be serious."

"Lord's Day, Oct. 11.—This day some of our dear friends from Rawdon came to worship with us. At sight of them my soul was much revived, and my heart warmed. My delight is in the saints that are in the earth, for they truly are excellent. I spent the evening with them in religious conversation. Christian society is one of the greatest privileges I enjoy from the hand of God: but who can recount all his mercies?"

"O for a heart to praise his name  
Who such kind favour shows!"

"Oct. 16.—'Mercy and goodness have followed me'"



this day, as well as all other days. Of all persons, I have surely reason to say, 'The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.' When I think of my daily conduct on the one hand, and of the goodness and tender mercy of God on the other, I am lost in wonder and surprise. It is with great propriety that we are called 'vessels of mercy' in whom the Lord makes known the 'riches of his glory:' Rom. ix. 23. Upon such a reflection as this, who can forbear crying out with the excellent Mr. Hervey, who once, like us, did but drink of the streams of this mercy, but is now solacing himself at the fountain head, 'O goodness infinite! goodness immense, and love that passeth knowledge,' &c."

"Wednesday, Oct. 21.—This morning I had reason to complain of hardness of heart, and to lament an absent God; but I was enabled to look again towards his holy temple. I see great need of Divine strength to preserve me from falling into those nets and snares which I meet with by the way. Alas! how prone am I to be led away by the corrupt inclinations of my own vicious heart! Lead thou me, O God, by thy Spirit, and let me not wander from thy commandments!"

"November, 1761.—I now make a fresh dedication of myself to the Lord, to serve him in the work of the ministry, if it be his will to engage me and furnish me with qualifications for it. I have for a considerable time found my heart inclined to serve the Lord under this character; but have questioned much with myself, whether such a desire in so mean and unworthy a person as I am be lawful, and whether I ought to labour after the attainment of those gifts which are necessary



to one employed in that great work ; but of late I have been in some measure satisfied as to these two things, and have devoted the little time I can spare to reading and meditation, crying after wisdom, and lifting up my voice for understanding, ' seeking for her as silver, and searching for her as for hid treasure.' I have been, among other things, studying the languages in which the Holy Scriptures were originally written. I have been taught, according to the Greek proverb, that ' there is nothing impossible to industry,' especially when it is attended by the blessing of Heaven, which is what I desire to seek at all times. The Lord has favoured me with three things which afford me matter of encouragement :—a good degree of bodily health ; more leisure than usual ; and the choice of necessary books."

" Lord's Day, Jan. 17, 1762.—My birth day.

" Once more I've lived to see the day  
When first I drew this mortal breath ;  
Another year has roll'd away,  
And yet I'm saved from threatening death.

" Great God, into my heart convey  
Thy grace which can my soul renew ;  
Now take my loads of guilt away,  
Now make me yield obedience new.

" A fruitless branch I long have been,  
O purge me now, and make me thrive,  
That I may flourish fresh and green  
The days which yet I have to live !"

" Feb. 10.—I think the Lord has been bringing me lately to a more humble, lowly frame of spirit. I some-



times fear I have been presumptuous in aspiring after things for which I am not at all fit."

" March 28.—By desire of a few friends, I addressed those who were present at a meeting at Little Horton, from Rom. xiii. 11. I had some degree of freedom and courage. Several persons expressed their satisfaction in what they heard."

" July 7.—This day the Lord has caused a refreshing shower to water the earth, after about ten weeks' drought; I found my heart filled with gratitude for so great a mercy. The bloody sword has cut off multitudes, and we have been threatened with a scarcity of provisions; but few have been seen in these dispensations the hand of God lifted up. Oh! that Divine goodness may shame us out of our ingratitude and forgetfulness, and lead us to repentance."

" Sept. 5.—We had a meeting at Little Horton at six in the evening. I attempted to speak a little from Ps. iv. 3. Before I entered upon the work I was dark and confused, but had more liberty than I expected."

" Sept. 6.—In reading Henry's life, and an account of two other eminent saints, I felt quite condemned. I am ready to think I have yet to begin to live to God's glory. O Lord, quicken me, and grant that I may not be slothful, but 'a follower of them who do now through faith and patience inherit the promises!'"

" Sept. 8.—To my great joy, I have this day procured a neat Hebrew Bible; this acquisition has stimulated me to greater diligence in my studies."

" March 15, 1763.—During the last winter, I have been exercised with various afflictions, yet I need not say with one of old, 'Wherefore contendest thou with me?' for I am sensible of many things in which I offend.



In particular my conscience accuses me of much deadness, coldness, and hypocrisy, in my religious duties. O that the fire of affliction may be the means of enkindling the flame of devotion !”

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Perhaps it may appear to some, and especially to such whose views were not congenial with those of the deceased, that the preceding extracts are too copious; and it may be further objected, that there is no particular display of talent in them; but it must add to their importance, as constituting part of a biographical account, when we consider that here we have the genuine, undisguised feelings of the mind, unbiassed by external influence.—To those, therefore, for whose use this work is principally intended, they cannot fail to be interesting. The man of God here speaks for himself; we are admitted into the inmost recesses of the soul; we see his “hold on heaven,” while

“He bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.”

The true character is developed without any of those glosses which conjecture might cast upon it. We see, as it were, in embryo, those views which afterwards expanded in his own mind, and diffused their happy influence through the circle in which he moved. It is evident from these extracts that in a private and humble situation, when he had no prospect of entering upon the ministry, religion was the principal business of his life, and would have been so, had he never engaged in that work. It was the growing influence of Divine truth upon his own mind that excited the wish to proclaim to



others 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' What he had by happy experience seen and tasted of the Word of life he longed to declare to others. When the closing part of this diary was written, he was on the eve of commencing a course of public labours, which continued with little interruption, and increasing activity, for more than fifty years; and it is edifying to observe the progress of his mind—bright, encouraging glimpses of hope, soon succeeded by gloominess and despondency. Amidst many indications of the modesty of his character, not wishing to push himself on the scene of action, yet willing to go if called upon, we meet with many expressions of a soul grasping after higher attainments and extended usefulness, at some period which faith and hope alone could realize.

'The hidden life of a Christian' is here set forth unto us, different in almost every respect from what the world can conceive. His hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, are peculiar to himself. He finds a perpetual struggle between holiness and sin; between carnal and spiritual affections,—and this keeps the mind in constant exercise. As a 'stranger and pilgrim on the earth,' he is often in 'heaviness through manifold temptations;' yet, amidst all, he derives consolation from the stability of the Divine promises and the prospects before him.—How different this from the disposition of the formalist, resting merely on external duties; or of the hypocrite, attempting to deceive others, and, what is worst of all, attempting to deceive himself; flattering himself in a way that is not good, and thinking he is something while he is nothing!

We may likewise learn from these private memorials the importance of being *in earnest* about religion, and



fervent in spirit, aspiring after elevated piety, dissatisfied with present attainments, and yet maintaining a humble sense of inability to perform that which is good, without Divine assistance. Thus it was with the great Apostle Paul; for while on some occasions we find him saying, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I press towards the mark for the prize of my high calling:' on others he acknowledges himself insufficient for 'every good work:' 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' Such feelings and sentiments have formed a leading trait in the characters of the most eminent saints in all ages. This holy zeal often shows itself in those short, yet emphatic ejaculations, which we so often meet with in Sacred Writ, particularly in the Psalms of David, the writings of the prophets, and in many parts of the New Testament. How much is comprehended in such sentences as these: 'Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word!' 'Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe!' The sententious, earnest petitions of the poor publican; of the blind man who followed Christ; of the thief upon the cross; and the language of the Philippian jailor, might here be referred to, with others which frequently occur in the preceding extracts. We have in them the experience of one who was following hard after God, whose great objects were to enjoy communion with him, and to gain a proper knowledge and government of his own heart.

We see here also what improvement an observant mind may make of the common incidents of life, whether prosperous or adverse: like the bee sucking honey from every opening flower, and in a confined sphere



collecting food for the mind, where others would never suspect it could be found.

The difference in common life between a close observer of the beauties of nature and one who has no eyes to see them, is daily remarked; and it is no less perceptible in the Christian's life, with respect to those objects which faith realizes, and those prospects which open before him in passing through this world. The great means of improvement are *closet devotions, meditation, reading the Scriptures, Christian communion, and the ordinances of public worship*. It is unnecessary to say, even after a slight perusal of the diary, how much the writer was engaged in these exercises.— It was his regular practice, after the example of the Psalmist David, to retire three times a day for the purpose of private prayer, besides conducting the devotions of his family. His life at that period was eminently a life of prayer, and there certainly can be no better preparative for future and important services; if we consider the source whence all supplies of grace and strength flow, and if our Saviour himself continued *whole nights* together, praying to his Father in the prospect of his great work, how much more incumbent is it on his followers to be 'instant in prayer.' The preceding pages evidence that some of the most painful sensations and bitter complaints which the deceased experienced and expressed, were occasioned by the want of more fervency and earnestness in this holy exercise.

*Meditation and self-examination* appear to have formed prominent features in his character at that early period. These two exercises of the mind are most intimately connected together. In attending to them (to



which there is indeed a strong aversion in the human heart) the mind turns inward; and what otherwise would be mere speculation, is appropriated by the soul, and becomes its richest food. To a due performance of these important duties retirement seems indispensably necessary. The glare of the world, the busy scenes and gaieties of life, fascinate and delude the mind; but when these objects are withdrawn, and while walking through the silent and solitary valley of humiliation, contemplation has her fill; troubles and reliefs, inward joys and despondencies, are experienced, which 'a stranger intermeddleth not with.'

There have been many intervals in the lives of those who have afterwards distinguished themselves, of which little is known. Superficial observers may look upon these parts of their existence as mere blanks; whereas they *might be*, and in all probability *were*, essential to the formation of the man, as he afterwards appeared to the world. The blossom was then budding, from which the fruit was afterwards to proceed; the seeds were then sowing and beginning to vegetate, which afterwards grew up to full maturity.

Eager curiosity may lead us to inquire how Moses spent his time while an exile, for forty long years, in the land of Midian; at a great distance from that people who so much needed his presence, and whose deliverer he was afterwards to be. To an eye of sense the sequestered life of a shepherd must appear a singular kind of preparation for the arduous station which he was afterwards called to occupy—but 'God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways.'

Among the other advantages which Moses must have derived from this long state of exile, one of the great-



est undoubtedly was, its tendency to wean him from courtly attachments, and to promote the disposition of which we are now speaking. Indeed of such importance is a contemplative mind, in forming the Christian character, that without it the greatest external advantages will be of little avail; and in the exercise of it many, though surrounded with difficulties, have attained to the highest excellence in the Christian life.—Thus it is that more steady and fixed principles of action are acquired; the mind is not liable to be carried about with ‘every wind of doctrine,’ as is the case with the superficial observer; and the truths of Christianity become the life and support of the soul.

These general observations were strikingly exemplified in the subject of these pages. While many, it is to be feared, attempt to teach others what they know but imperfectly, either in theory or from experience, his Divine Master, by a course of discipline, often severe but salutary, taught him out of his law. By remaining for some time in retirement as a private Christian he was enabled to enter more into the views and feelings of Christians in common, and to speak a ‘word in season to him that was weary; to comfort the feeble-minded; to support the weak;’ and to administer consolation to the fainting soul.

He was in the habitual practice of noticing in a particular manner not only the yearly and monthly, but the *daily* lapse of time:—this is of great importance to the due improvement of it. He who in examining the transactions of the day, seriously inquiring what report they have borne to heaven; comparing time past with what may be yet to come, and lamenting his past fol-