

SERMONS OF LEGH RICHMOND

by Legh Richmond

Richmond's sermons including authentic narratives of spiritual transformation, chronicling accounts of individuals' journeys toward faith and Christian commitment through personal instruction and genuine change of life.

6 Chapters

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00 Articles

Legh Richmond Articles

1772-1827 Domestic Portraiture The African Servant The Dairyman's Daughter The Cottage Conversation The Young Cottager Visit to the Infirmary

"In Legh Richmond's writings — you behold the character of the man. His beautiful simplicity, his lively imagination, his tenderness of feeling, his ardent piety — were the characteristics of the man which enshrined him in the affections of all who knew him. No man more excelled as a pattern of domestic virtues, than Legh Richmond."

Courtesy Gracegems.org

S. The African Servant

The African Servant An Authentic Narrative By Legh Richmond, 1815

Not long ago, an officer in the navy called upon me, and stated that he had just taken a lodging in the town for his wife and children; and that he had an African, whom he had kept three years in his service. "The lad is a handy fellow," said the officer, "and he has a great desire to be baptized; I have promised him to ask you to do it for him, if you have no objections."

"Does he know anything," I replied, "of the principles of the Christian religion?"

"O yes, I am sure he does," answered the captain; "for he talks a great deal about it in the kitchen, and often gets laughed at for his pains; but he takes it all very patiently."

"Does he behave well as your servant?"

"Yes, that he does—he is as honest and civil a fellow as ever came aboard a ship, or lived in a house."

"Was he always so well behaved?"

"No!" said the officer; "when I first employed him, he was often very unruly and deceitful; but for the last two years he has been quite like another creature."

"Well, sir, I shall be very glad to see him, and think it probable I shall wish to go through a course of instruction and examination, during which I shall be able to form a judgment how far it will be right to admit him to the ordinance of baptism. Can he read?"

"Yes," replied his master; "he has been taking great pains to learn to read for some time past, and can make out a chapter in the Bible pretty well, as my maidservant informs me. He speaks English better than many of his countrymen, but you will find it a little broken. When will it be convenient that I should send him over to you?"

"Tomorrow afternoon, sir, if you please."

"He shall come to you about four o'clock, and you shall see what you can make of him." With this promise he took his leave. I felt glad of an opportunity of instructing a native of that land, whose wrongs and injuries had often caused me to sigh and mourn. At the appointed hour my African disciple arrived. He was a very young-looking man, with a sensible, lively, and pleasing turn of countenance.

I asked him to sit down, and said, "Your master informs me that you wish to have some conversation with me respecting Christian baptism?"

"Yes, sir—I very much wish to be a Christian."

"Why do you wish so?"

"Because I know that a Christian goes to heaven when he dies."

"How long have you had that wish?" I said.

"Ever since I heard a good minister preach in America, two years ago."

"Where were you born?"

"In Africa. I was very little boy when me was made a slave by the white men."

"How was that?"

"I left father and mother one day at home, to go to get shells by the seashore; and, as I was stooping down to gather them up, some white sailors came out of a boat and took me away. I never saw father nor mother again."

"And what became of you then?"

"I was put into ship and brought to Jamaica, and sold to a master who kept me in his house to serve him some years; when, about three years ago, captain W___, bought me to be his servant on board his ship. And he is good master, and I live with him ever since."

"And what thoughts had you about your soul all that time before you went to America?" I asked him.

"I had no care for my soul at all, before then. No man taught me a word about my soul."

"Well, now tell me farther about what happened to you in America. How did you get there?"

"My master took me there in a ship, and he stopped there one month, and then I heard the good minister."

"And what did that minister say?"

"He said that I was a great sinner."

"What—did he speak to you in particular?"

"Yes; I think so—for there was a great many to hear him—but he said things that were true about me."

"What did he say?"

"He told about all the things that were in my heart."

"What things?"

"My sin, my ignorance, my unbelief. The good minister made me see that I can neither think anything good, nor do anything good."

"And what else did he tell you?"

"He sometime looked me in the face and said that Jesus Christ came to die for sinners, poor black sinners as well as white sinners. I thought this was very good, very good indeed—that Jesus died for wicked sinners."

"And what made you think this was all spoken to you in particular?"

"Because I sure that there was no such wicked sinner as me, in all the place. The good minister must have been talking about me."

"And what did you think about yourself while he preached about Jesus Christ?"

"Sir, I was very much afraid when he said that the wicked must be turned into hell fire. For I felt, that I was very wicked sinner, and that made me cry. And he talked much about the love of Christ to sinners, and that made me cry more. And I thought I must love Jesus Christ; but I not know how, and that made me cry again."

"Did you hear more sermons than one during that month?"

"Yes, sir; master gave me permission to go three times, and all the times I wanted to love Jesus more, and do what Jesus said; but my heart seemed as hard as a stone."

"Have you ever heard any preaching since that time?"

"Never, until I heard a sermon at this church last Sunday, and then I long to be baptized in Jesus' name."

"And what have been your thoughts all the time since you first heard those sermons in America; did you tell anybody then what you felt?"

"No; I spoke to nobody but to God then. The good minister said that God heard the cry of the poor; so I cried to God—and he heard me. And I often think about Jesus Christ, and wish to be like him."

"Can you read?"

"A little."

"Who taught you to read?"

"God taught me to read."

"What do you mean by that?"

"God gave me the desire to read, and that makes reading easy. Master gave me Bible, and one sailor showed me the letters; and so I learned to read by myself, with God's good help."

"And what do you read in the Bible?"

"O I read all about Jesus Christ, and how he loved sinners; and wicked men killed him, and he died and came back from the grave, and all for this poor negro. And it sometime makes me cry—to think that Christ loves so poor a negro as me."

"And what do the people say about your reading and praying, and attention to the things of God?"

"Some wicked people, that do not love Jesus Christ, call me a great fool, and negro dog, and black hypocrite. And that makes me sometime feel angry—but then I remember that a Christian must not be angry for that. Jesus Christ was called ugly black names, and he was quiet as a lamb; and so then I remember Jesus Christ, and I said nothing back to them."

I was much delighted with the simplicity and apparent sincerity of this poor African, and wished to ascertain what measure of light and feeling he possessed on a few leading points. I said, "Tell me what is faith? What is your own faith? What do you believe about Jesus Christ, and your own soul?"

"I believe," said he, "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; and though I am the chief of sinners, Jesus will save me, though I am only poor black negro."

"What is your hope? What do you hope for—both as to this life and that which is to come?"

"I hope Christ Jesus will take good care of me, and keep me from sin and harm, while I live here—and I hope, when I come to die, to go and live with him always."

"What are your thoughts about Christian love or charity? I mean, whom and what do you most love?"

"I love God the Father, because he was so good to send his Son. I love Jesus Christ, because he loved me. I love all men, black men and white men too; for God made them all. I love godly Christian people, because Jesus love them, and they love Jesus."

Such was my first conversation with this young disciple; I rejoiced in the prospect of receiving him into the church, agreeably to his wishes. I wished, however, to converse somewhat further, and inquire more minutely into his conduct; and promised to ride over and see him in a few days at his master's lodgings. When he was gone, I thought within myself, God has indeed redeemed souls, by the blood of his Son, "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." It is a happy thought, that "Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God. Sing unto God, O kingdoms of the earth, O sing praises unto the Lord!" Not many days after the first interview with my African disciple, I went from home on horseback with the design of visiting and conversing with him again at his master's house, which was situated in a part of the parish nearly four miles away from my own. The road which I took, lay over a lofty down or hill, which commands a prospect of scenery seldom equaled for beauty and magnificence. It gave birth to silent but instructive meditation.

I cast my eye downwards a little to the left, towards a small cove, the shore of which consists of fine sand. It is surrounded by fragments of rock, white cliff's, and steep banks of broken earth. Shut out from human dwelling—it seems formed for retirement and contemplation. On one of these rocks I unexpectedly observed a man sitting with a book, which he was reading. The place was nearly two hundred yards from me; but I soon discovered, by his dress, and by the black color of his features, contrasted with the white rocks beside him, that it was no other than my African disciple; with, as I doubted not, a Bible in his hand. I rejoiced at this unlooked for opportunity of meeting him in so solitary and interesting a situation. I descended a steep bank, winding by a kind of crude staircase, formed by fishermen and shepherd's boys, in the side of the cliff down to the shore.

He was intent on his book, and did not perceive me until I approached very near to him.

"William, is that you?"

"Ah! master, I very glad to see you! How did you come to this place? I thought nobody was here—but only God and me."

"I was coming to your master's house to see you, and rode around by this way for the sake of the prospect. I often come here in fine weather, to look at the scenery. Is that your Bible?"

"Yes, sir, this is my dear, good Bible."

"I am glad," said I, "to see you so well employed. It is a good sign, William."

"Yes, master, a sign that God is good to me—but I am never good to God."

"How so?"

"I never thank him enough—I never pray to him enough—I never remember enough who gave me all these good things. Master, I am afraid my heart is very bad. I wish I was like you."

"Like me, William? Why, you are like me—a poor helpless sinner, that must, like yourself, perish in his sins—unless God of his infinite mercy and grace—plucks him as a brand from the burning, and makes him an instance of sovereign love and favor. There is no difference; we have both come short of the glory of God—all have sinned."

"No, I am not like you, master; I think nobody is like me, nobody feels such a wicked heart as mine."

"Yes, William, your feelings, I am persuaded, are like those of every truly convinced soul, who sees the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the greatness of the price which Christ Jesus paid for the sinner's ransom. You can say in the words of the hymn, I the chief of sinners am, But Jesus died for me."

"O yes, sir, I believe that Jesus died for this poor negro. What would become of this poor wicked negro—if Christ did not die for him? But he died for the chief of sinners—and that sometimes makes my heart quite glad."

"What part of the Bible were you reading, William?"

"I am reading how the man on the cross spoke to Christ—and Christ spoke to him. Now that man's prayer will just do for me. 'Lord, remember me!' Lord, remember this poor negro sinner! This is my prayer every morning, and sometime at night too—when I cannot think of many words, then I say the same again, Lord, remember this poor negro sinner!"

"And be assured, William, the Lord hears that prayer. He pardoned and accepted the thief upon the cross—and he will not reject you; he will never cast out any who come to him."

"I believe it sir; but there is so much sin in my heart—that it makes me afraid and sorry. Master, do you see these limpets—how fast they stick to the rocks here? Just so, does my sin stick fast to my heart."

"It may be so, William; but take another comparison—if you cleave to Jesus Christ by faith in his death and righteousness, as those limpets cleave to the rock—neither seas nor storms shall separate you from his love."

"That is just what I want!"

"Tell me, William, is not that very sin which you speak of, a burden to you? You do not love it—you would be glad to obtain strength against it, and to be freed from it, would you not?"

"O yes! I give all this world, if I had it, to be without sin!"

"Come, then, and welcome, to Jesus Christ, my brother; his blood cleanses from all sin. He gave himself as a purchase for sinners. He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. The Lord has laid on him—the iniquity of us all. Come, freely come to Jesus, the Savior of sinners!"

"Yes, master," said the poor fellow weeping, "I will come—but I come very slow, very slow, master; I want to run, I want to fly. Jesus is very good to this poor negro—to send you to tell him this."

"But this is not the first time you have heard these truths."

"No, sir, they have been comfort to my soul many times, since I heard the good minister preach in America, as I told you last week at your house."

"Well, now I hope, William, that since God has been so graciously pleased to open your eyes and affect your mind with such a great sense of his goodness in giving his Son to die for your sake, I hope, that you endeavor to keep his commandments; I hope you strive to behave well to your master and mistress, and fellow-servants. He who is a Christian inwardly—will be a Christian outwardly; he who truly and savingly believes in Christ—will show his faith by his works, as the apostle says. Is it not so, William?"

"Yes, sir, I want to do so. I want to be faithful. I am sorry to think how bad servant I was before the good things of Jesus Christ came to my heart. I wish to do well to my master, when he sees me, and when he does not see me—for I know God always see me. I know that if I sin against my master, I sin against God, and God would be very angry with me. Besides, can I truly love Christ—if I do not do what Christ tells me? I love my fellow-servants, though, as I told you before, they do not much love me—and I pray to God to bless them. And when they say bad things, and try to make me angry—then I think—if Jesus Christ were in this poor negro's place, he would not revile and answer back with bad words and angry temper—but he would say little, and pray much. And so then, I say nothing at all—but pray God to forgive them." The more I conversed with this African convert, the more satisfactory were the evidences of his mind being spiritually enlightened, and his heart effectually wrought upon by the grace of God.

I continued for a considerable time in conversation with the African, finding that his master was gone from home for the day, and had given him liberty for some hours. I spoke to him on the nature, duty, and privilege of Christian baptism; pointed out to him the principles of the Scriptures upon that head, and found that he was very desirous of conforming to them. He appeared to me to be well qualified for receiving that pledge of his Redeemer's love; and I rejoiced in the prospect of beholding him no longer a "stranger and foreigner—but a fellow-citizen with the saints and household of God."

I was much pleased with the affectionate manner in which he spoke of his parents, from whom he had been stolen in his childhood; and his wishes that God might direct them by some means to the knowledge of the Savior.

"Who knows," I said, "but some of these ships may be carrying a missionary to the country where they live, to declare the good news of salvation to your countrymen, and to your own dear parents in particular, if they are yet alive."

"O! my dear father and mother—my dear, gracious Savior," he exclaimed, leaping from the ground as he spoke, "if God would but save their souls, and tell them what he has done for sinners; but . . ."

He stopped, and seemed much affected.

"My friend," said I, "I will now pray with you for your own soul, and those of your parents also."

"Do, master, that is very good and kind; do pray for poor negro souls here and everywhere." This was a new and solemn "house of prayer." The sea-sand was our floor, the heavens were our roof, the cliffs, the rocks, the hills, and the waves, formed the walls of our chamber. It was not indeed a "place where prayer was accustomed to be made," but for this once—it became a hallowed spot—and will by me ever be remembered as such. The presence of God was there. I prayed. The African wept. His heart was full. I felt with him, and wept likewise. The last day will show whether our tears were the tears of sincerity and Christian love.

It was time for my return; I leaned upon his arm, as we ascended the steep cliff in my way back to my horse, which I had left at the top of the hill. Humility and thankfulness were marked in his countenance. I leaned upon his arm with the feelings of a brother. It was a relationship I was happy to own. I took him by the hand at parting, appointed one more interview previous to the day of baptizing him, and bade him farewell for the present.

"God bless you, my dear master."

"And you, my fellow-Christian, forever and ever. Amen." The interesting and affecting conversation which I had with the African servant produced a sensation not easy to be expressed. As I returned home I was led into meditation on the singular clearness and beauty of those evidences of faith and conversion to God, which I had just seen and heard. How plainly, I thought, it appears, that salvation is freely by grace, through faith; and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. Who but the Holy Spirit—the author and giver of the life of saving grace—could have wrought such a change—from the once dark, perverse, and ignorant heathen—to this now convinced, enlightened, humble, and believing Christian? How manifestly is the uncontrolled sovereignty of the divine will exercised in the calling and translating of sinners from darkness to light? What a lesson may the nominal Christian of a civilized country sometimes learn from the simple, sincere religion of a converted heathen!

I afterwards made particular inquiry into this young man's domestic and general deportment. Everything I heard was satisfactory; nor could I entertain a doubt respecting the consistency of his conduct and character. I had some further conversations with him, in the course of which, I pursued such a plan of scriptural instruction and examination, as I conceived to be the most suitable to his progressive state of mind. He improved much in reading, carried his Bible constantly in his pocket, and took every opportunity which his duty to his master's service, would allow for perusing it. I have frequently had occasion to observe, that among the truly pious poor, who have not had the advantage of learning to read in early youth, a concern about the soul, and desire to

know the word of God, have proved effectual motives for their learning to read with great ease and advantage to themselves and others. It was strikingly so in the present case.

I had for a considerable time, been accustomed to meet some serious people once each week, in a cottage at no great distance from the house where he lived, for the purpose of pious conversation, instruction, and prayer. Having found these occasions remarkably useful to myself and others, I thought it would be very desirable to take the African there, in order that there might be many witnesses to the simplicity and sincerity of real Christianity, as exhibited in the character of this promising young convert. I hoped it might prove an eminent means of grace to excite and quicken a spirit of prayer and praise among some, over whose spiritual progress I was anxiously watching.

I accordingly obtained his master's permission that he should attend me to one of my cottage assemblies. His master, although he did not himself appear to live under the influence of real religion, or to manifest any serious concern respecting his own spiritual state, yet was pleased with my attention to his servant, and always spoke well of his behavior.

I set out on the day appointed for the interview. The cottage in which we were to meet, was situated at the corner of an oak forest, which screened it both from the burning heat of summer suns, and the heavy blasts of winter winter storms. As I approached it, I saw my friend, the African, sitting under a tree and waiting my arrival.

He held in his hand a little Tract which I had given him; his Bible lay on the ground. He rose with much cheerfulness, saying: "Ah! master, I very glad to see you!"

"William, I hope you are well. I am going to take you with me—to a few of my friends, who, I hope, are also the friends of the Lord. We meet every Wednesday evening for conversation about the things that belong to our everlasting peace, and I am sure you will be a welcome visitor."

"Master, I am not good enough to be with such godly people. I am a great sinner. They are good Christians."

"If you were to ask them, William, they would each tell you they were worse than anybody. Many of them were once, and that not very long ago—living in a very openly sinful manner, ignorant of God, and the enemies of Jesus Christ by thought and deed. But divine grace stopped them in their wicked course, and subdued their hearts to the love and obedience of Christ and his Gospel. You will only meet a company of poor fellow-sinners, who love to speak and sing the praises of redeeming love—and I am sure that is a song you will be willing to join them in."

"O! yes, sir, that song will just do for poor William." By this time we had arrived at the cottage garden-gate. Several well-known faces appeared in and near the house, and the smile of affection welcomed us as we entered. It was known that the African was to visit the little society this evening, and satisfaction beamed in every countenance as I took him by the hand and introduced him among them, saying, "I have brought a brother from Africa to see you, my friends. Bid him welcome in the name of the Lord."

"Sir," said a humble and pious laborer, whose heart and tongue always overflowed with Christian kindness, "we are at all times glad to see our dear minister—but especially so today, in such company as you have brought with you. We have heard how gracious the Lord has been to him.

Give me your hand, good friend, (turning to the African,) God be with you here and everywhere—and blessed be his holy name for calling wicked sinners—as I hope he has done you and me—to love and serve him, for his mercy's sake."

Each one greeted him as he came into the house, and some addressed him in very kind language.

"Master," said he, "I don't know what to say to all these good friends—I think this look like little heaven on earth."

He then with tears in his eyes, which, almost before he spoke, brought responsive drops into those of all present, said, "Good friends and brethren in Christ Jesus, God bless you all, and bring you to heaven at last."

It was my usual custom, when I met to converse with those friends, to begin with prayer and reading a portion of the Scriptures. When this was ended, I told the people present that the providence of God had brought this young man for a time under my ministry; and that, finding him very seriously disposed, and believing him to be very sincere in his Christian profession, I had resolved on baptizing him, agreeably to his own wishes. I added, that I had now brought him with me to join in Christian conversation with us; for as in old times, "those who feared the Lord spoke often one to another," as a testimony that they thought upon his name. So I hoped we were fulfilling a Christian and brotherly duty, in thus assembling for mutual edification.

Addressing myself to the African, I said, "William, tell me, who made you?"

"God, the good Father."

"Who redeemed you?"

"Jesus, his dear Son, who died for me."

"Who sanctified you?"

"The Holy Spirit, who teaches me to know the good Father, and his dear Son Jesus."

"What was your state by nature?"

"I am a wicked sinner. I know nothing but sin, I do nothing but sin; my soul is more black than my body."

"Has any change taken place in you since then?"

"I hope so, master—but I sometimes I am afraid not."

"If you are changed, who changed you?"

"God the good Father; Jesus, his dear Son; and God the Holy Spirit."

"How was this change brought about in you?"

"God made me slave when I was young little boy."

"How, William, would you say God made you a slave?"

"No, master, no; I mean, God let me be made slave by white men, to do me good."

"How to do you good?"

"He took me from the land of darkness and brought me to the land of light."

"Which do you call the land of light—the West India Islands?"

"No, master—I mean the land of Providence—but America is the land of light to me, for there I first heard the good minister preach. And now this place where I am now, is the land of more light; for here you teach me more and more how good Jesus is to sinners."

"What does the blood of Christ do?"

"It cleanses from all sin. And as I hope—from my sin."

"Are then all men cleansed from sin by his blood?"

"O no, master."

"Who are cleansed and saved?"

"Those who have faith in him."

"Can you prove that out of the Bible?"

"Yes, sir; He who believes on the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son, shall not see life—but the wrath of God abides on him." John 3:36.

"What is it to have faith?"

"I suppose that it is to think much about Jesus Christ, to love him much, to believe all he says to be true, to pray to him very much; and when I feel very weak and very sinful, to think that he is very strong and very good, and all that for my sake."

"And have you such faith as you describe?"

"O! master, I think sometimes I have no faith at all."

"Why so, William?"

"When I want to think about Jesus Christ—my mind runs about after other things. When I want to love him—my heart seem quite cold. When I want to believe what he says to sinners, all to be true—I then think it is not true for me. When I want to pray—the devil puts bad, very bad thoughts into me, and I never thank Christ enough. Now all this makes me sometimes afraid I have no faith."

I observed a very earnest glow of attention and fellow-feeling in some countenances present, as he spoke these words. I then said, "I think, William, I can prove that you have faith, notwithstanding your fears to the contrary. Answer me a few more questions."

"Did you begin to think yourself a great sinner, and to feel the need of a Savior, of your own self, and by your own thought and doing?"

"Oh! no, it came to me when I thought nothing about it, and sought nothing about it."

"Who sent the good minister in America to awaken your soul by his preaching?"

"God, very certainly."

"Who then began the work of serious thought and feeling in your mind?"

"The good God; I could not do it of myself, I am sure of that."

"Do you think that Jesus Christ and his salvation is the one thing most needful and most desirable?"

"O! yes—I quite sure of that."

"Do you believe that he is able to save you?"

"Yes, he is able to save to the uttermost!"

"Do you think he is willing to save you?"

"I dare not say that. He so good, so merciful, so kind—he will never cast out any who come to him."

"Do you wish, and desire, and strive to keep his commandments?"

"Yes, master, because I love him, and that makes me want to do as he says."

"Are you willing to suffer for his sake, if God should call you to do so?"

"I do think I could die for my love to him; he did not think it too much to die—for wicked sinners; why should this wicked sinner think it much to die—for so good and righteous a Savior?"

"I think and hope I may say to you, William, Your faith has made you whole."

Thus ended my examination for the present. The other friends who were in the house listened with the most affectionate concern to all of this. One of them observed, not without evident emotion,

"I see, sir, that though some men are white, and some are black, true Christianity is all of one color. My own heart has gone with this good man every word he has spoken."

"And so has mine," gently re-echoed from every part of the room.

After some time passed in more general conversation on the subject of the African's history, I said, "Let us now praise God for the rich and unspeakable gift of his grace, and sing the hymn of redeeming love—which was accordingly done. Whatever was the merit of the natural voices, it was plain that there was melody in all their hearts. The African was not much used to our way of singing, yet joined with great earnestness and affection, which showed how truly he felt what was uttered. When the fifth verse was ended, "Nothing brought him from above,

Nothing but redeeming love."

He repeated the words, almost unconscious where he was— "No, nothing, nothing but redeeming love—brings him down to poor William; nothing but redeeming love!" The following verses were added, and sung by way of conclusion:

See, a stranger comes to view,
Though he's black—he's lovely too, [Song of Solomon 1:5]
Come to join the choirs above,
Singing of redeeming love!
Welcome, Negro, welcome here,
Banish doubt, and banish fear;
You, who Christ's salvation prove,
Praise and bless redeeming love!

I concluded with some remarks on the nature of salvation by grace, and exhorted all present to press forward in the heavenly race. It was an evening, the circumstances of which, had they never been recorded on earth, were yet doubtless registered in the book of remembrance above.

I then fixed the day for the baptism of the African, and so took leave of my little affectionate circle. In a few days the African was baptized; and not long after he went on a voyage with his master.

Since that time I have not been able to hear any news of him—whether he yet wanders as a pilgrim in this lower world—or whether he has joined the heavenly choir in the song of redeeming love in glory—I know not. Of this I am persuaded, he was a monument of mercy—to the Lord's praise. He bore the impression of the Savior's image on his heart, and exhibited the marks of converting grace in his life and conversation with singular simplicity and earnest sincerity. O! give to God the glory!

S. The Cottage Conversation

The Cottage Conversation by Legh Richmond As I journeyed late on a summer evening, meditating on the beauties of the prospect around me, while they gradually faded from my sight, through the approach of darkness—it grew suddenly quite gloomy, and a black cloud hanging over my head threatened a heavy shower of rain. The big drops began to fall, and an open shed, adjoining to a laborer's cottage, offering me a seasonable shelter. The circumstance reminded me of the happy privilege of the believing sinner, who finds a refuge from the storm, and the blast of the terrible ones, in the love of his Redeemer, which prepares him "a covert from storm and from rain." I went in unperceived; the door of the cottage was half open, and I heard the voices of a poor man, his wife, and some children within.

I was hesitating whether to go into the house and make myself known, or to enjoy in solitude a meditation on the foregoing comparison, which my situation had brought to my mind, when these words, spoken in a calm and affectionate tone, struck me with mingled pleasure and surprise, and determined not to interrupt the conversation, which was as follows:

"Indeed, wife, you are in the wrong. Riches would never make us happier—so long as the Lord sees it good that we should be poor."

"Well," replied the wife, "I can see no harm in wishing for more money and better living, than we have at present. Other people have risen in the world; and why should not we? There's neighbor Sharp, who has done well for his family, and, for anything I can see, will be one of the richest farmers in the parish, if he lives. And every body knows, he was once as poor as we are—while you and I are laboring and toiling from morning to night, and can but just get enough to fill our children's mouths, and keep ourselves coarsely clothed, and hardly that."

"Wife," answered the man, "having food and clothing—let us therewith be content. And, if it pleases God that even these things should fall short, let us submit ourselves to God in patience and well-doing, for he gives us more than we deserve."

"There, now you have begun preaching again," said the woman; "you never give me an answer, but you must always go to your Bible to help you out!"

"And where can I go so well?" replied the husband. "Is it not God's own Word for our instruction?"

"Well, that may be, but I do not like so much of it," answered she.

"And I do not like so little of it, as I see and hear from you," returned the man.

"Why that book has taught me, that it is an honor and comfort to be a poor man; and by the blessing of the Spirit of God, I believe and feel it to be true. I have, through mercy, always been enabled to get the bread of honest industry, and so have you; and though our children feed upon brown bread, and we cannot afford to buy them fine clothes, like some of our vain neighbors, to pamper their pride with; yet, bless the Lord, they are as healthy and clean as any in the parish.

Why then should you complain? Godliness with contentment is great gain."

"An honor and a comfort to be a poor man, indeed! What nonsense you talk! What sort of honor and comfort can that be? I am out of patience with you, man!" the wife sharply cried out.

"I can prove it," replied he.

"How?" returned his partner, in no very pleasant tone of voice.

"My dear," said the good man, "hear me quietly, and I will tell you. I think it an honor, and I feel it a comfort—to be in that very station of life which my Savior Jesus Christ was in before me. He did not come into the world as one who was rich and great—but as a poor man, who had nowhere to lay his head. I feel a blessing in my poverty, because Jesus, like me, was poor. Had I been a rich man, perhaps I would never have known nor loved him. 'For not many mighty, not many noble are called.' God's people are chiefly found among the poor ones of the world, and those who are despised. This makes my poverty—to be my comfort.

"Besides, has not God chosen the poor of this world—to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him? This thought makes my poverty also to be my honor.

"Moreover, to the poor the gospel was and is preached, and to my heart's delight I find it to be true, every Sunday of my life. And is it not plain, all the neighborhood through, that while so many of our rich tradesmen and nobles are quite careless of their soul's salvation, or set their faces against the ways of God, and are dead to everything that is gracious and holy—that a great number of the poorest people are converted and live forever in heaven? I honor the rich for their station, but I do not envy them for their possessions. I cannot forget what Christ once said, 'How hard it is for those who have riches—to enter into the kingdom of God!'

"Oh! my dear wife, if you did but know how to set a right value upon the precious promises which God has made to the poor—how thankful would I be!

"The expectation of the poor shall not perish. He delivers the poor and needy. He has prepared of his goodness for the poor. The poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One. For he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich—not in gold, but in grace.

"These promises comfort my soul, and would make me happy—even if I were deprived of that which I now enjoy. I can trust my Savior for this world, as well as for the next. He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all—how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

"May the Lord in his mercy bless you, my dear Sarah, with the grace of a contented mind!"

Here the gracious man stopped—and whether affected by her husband's discourse, or by any other cause, I know not—but she made no reply. He then said, "Come, children, it is our time for rest; shut the door, and let us go to prayer."

"Forgive me," said I, laying hold of the door, as the child was obeying her father's orders, "if I ask permission to make one in your family devotions, before I travel homeward. I have heard you, my friend, when you knew it not, and bless God for the sermon which you have this night preached to

my heart." The honest laborer blushed for a moment at this unexpected intrusion and declaration, but immediately said, "Sir, you are welcome to a poor man's dwelling, if you come in the name of the Lord."

I just looked around at the wife, who seemed to be startled at my sudden appearance, and the six fine children who sat near her, and then said, "You were going to pray; I must beg of you, without regarding me, to go on, as if I were not here." The man, whom I could not but love and reverence with a simple, unaffected, modest, and devout demeanor, did as I requested him. His prayer was full of tender affection and sincerity, expressed with great scriptural propriety, and was in all respects such as suited the preacher of those sentiments which I had overheard him deliver to his wife just before. When he had finished, each of his children, according to the good old patriarchal custom of better days, kneeled down before him in turn to receive a father's blessing.

It was now late, and the rain was over. I gave the poor man my blessing, and received his in return. I wished them good night, and went onward to my own home, reflecting with much self-abasement of heart, what an honor and comfort it is, to be a poor man—and rich in the faith!

S. The Dairyman's Daughter

The Dairyman's Daughter By Pastor Legh Richmond

PREFACE: The Dairyman's Daughter is the true account of the life of Betsey Wallbridge, a young woman who lived on the Isle of Wight, in the English Channel. She died there at the age of 31, in 1801. Her name, her surroundings, her conversion and death were related with such power, that literally millions of copies were sold prior to 1853 to satisfy the demand, and numbers of men, women, and children were brought to the Lord by this humble means. This small booklet was translated into many languages during the 19th century. It seems to have been signally honored by the Holy Spirit as an instrument to communicate God's truth, with humility and love. An Authentic Narrative

It is a delightful employment to trace and discover the operations of divine grace, as they are manifested in the dispositions and lives of God's real children. It is peculiarly gratifying to observe how frequently, among the poorer classes of mankind, the sunshine of mercy beams upon the heart, and bears witness to the image of Christ, which the Spirit of God has impressed thereupon. Among such, the sincerity and simplicity of the Christian character appear unencumbered, by those fetters to spirituality of mind and conversation which too often prove a great hindrance to those who live in the higher ranks. Many are the difficulties which riches, polished society, worldly importance, and high connections throw in the way of religious profession. Happy indeed it is—and some such happy instances I know—where grace has so strikingly supported its conflict with natural pride, self-importance, the allurements of luxury, ease, and worldly opinions—that the noble and mighty appear adorned with genuine poverty of spirit, self denial, humble-mindedness, and deep spirituality of heart. But in general, if we want to see religion in its purest character—we must look for it among the poor of this world, who are rich in faith. How often is the poor man's cottage—the palace of God! Many of us can truly declare that we have there learned our most valuable lessons of faith and hope, and there witnessed the most striking demonstrations of the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of God. The character which the present narrative is designed to introduce to the notice of my readers, is given from real life and circumstance. I first became acquainted with the dairyman's daughter by the reception of a letter, a part of which I transcribe from the original, now before me.

"Dear Sir,

I take the liberty to write to you. Please excuse me, for I have never spoken to you. But I once heard you preach at Arreton church. I believe you are a faithful preacher, to warn sinners to flee from the wrath that will be revealed against all those who live in sin and die impenitent.

"I was much rejoiced to hear of those marks of love and affection which you showed to that poor soldier of the S. D. militia. Surely the love of Christ sent you to that poor man; may that love ever dwell richly in you by faith. May it constrain you to seek the wandering souls of men, with the fervent desire to spend and be spent for His glory. Sir, be fervent in prayer with God for the

conviction and conversion of sinners.

"Sir, I began to write this on Sunday, being detained from attending on public worship. My dear and only sister, living as a servant with Mrs.—, was so ill that I came here to attend in her place, and on her. But now she is no more.

"She expressed a desire to receive the Lord's supper, and commemorate His precious death and sufferings. I told her, as well as I was able, what it was to worthily receive it, what it was to receive Christ into her heart; but as her weakness of body increased, she did not mention it again. She seemed quite resigned before she died. I do hope she has gone from a world of death and sin—to be with God forever.

"My sister expressed a wish that you might bury her. The minister of our parish, where she will be carried, cannot come. She died on Tuesday morning, and will be buried on Friday or Saturday, whichever is most convenient to you, at three o'clock in the afternoon. Please send an answer by the bearer, to let me know whether you can comply with this request.

From your unworthy servant,

Betsey Wallbridge.

I was much struck with the simple and earnest strain of devotion which the letter breathed. It was but plainly written; but this the rather tended to endear the hitherto unknown writer, as it seemed characteristic of the union of humbleness of station with eminence of piety. I felt quite thankful that I was favored with a correspondent of this description; the more so, as such characters were, at that time, very rare in the neighborhood. As soon as it was read, I inquired who was the bearer of it.

"He is waiting at the outside of the gate, sir," was the reply.

I went out to speak to him and saw a venerable old man, whose long hoary hair and deeply wrinkled countenance commanded more than common respect. He was resting his arm and head upon the gate; the tears were streaming down his cheeks. On my approach he made a low bow, and said:

"Sir, I have brought you a letter from my daughter; but I fear you will think us very bold in asking you to take so much trouble."

"By no means," I replied; "I shall be truly glad to oblige you and any of your family in this matter."

I asked him to come into the house, and then said: "What is your occupation?"

"Sir, I have lived most of my days in a little cottage at —, six miles from here. I have rented a few acres of ground, and kept a few cows, which, in addition to my day labor, has been my means of supporting and bringing up my family."

"What family have you?"

"A wife, now getting very aged and helpless, two sons, and one daughter; for my other poor dear child has just departed out of this wicked world. I hope, for a better world."

"I hope so, too. Poor thing, she did not use to take to such good ways as her sister; but I do believe that her sister's manner of talking with her before she died was the means of saving her soul. What a mercy it is to have such a child as mine is! I never thought about my own soul seriously until she, poor girl, begged me to flee from the wrath to come."

"How old are you?"

"Turned seventy, and my wife is older; we are getting old and almost past our labor; but our daughter has left a good place, where she lived in service, on purpose to come home, and take care of us and our little dairy. And a dear, dutiful, affectionate girl she is."

"Was she always so?"

"No, sir! When she was very young, she was all for the world, and pleasure and dress and company. Indeed, we were all very ignorant, and thought, if we took care for this life, and wronged nobody—that we would be sure to go to heaven at last. My daughters were both willful, and, like ourselves, were strangers to the ways of God and the Word of His grace. But the eldest of them went out to service; and some years ago she heard a sermon preached at ——church, and from that time she became quite an altered creature. She began to read the Bible, and became quite sober and steady. The first time she came home afterwards to see us, she brought us a guinea which she had saved from her wages, and said, as we were getting old, she was sure we would need help; adding, that she did not wish to spend it on fine clothes, as she used to do, only to feed pride and vanity. She would rather show gratitude to her dear father and mother; and this, she said, because Christ had shown such mercy to her.

"We wondered to hear her talk, and took great delight in her company, for her temper and behavior were so humble and kind, she seemed so desirous to do us good both in soul and body, and was so different from what we had ever seen her before, that, careless and ignorant as we had been—we began to think there must be something real in religion, or it never could alter a person so much in a little time.

"Her younger sister, poor soul, used to laugh and ridicule her at that time, and said her head was crazed with her new ways. 'No, sister,' she would say, 'not my head—but I hope my heart is turned from the love of sin to the love of God. I wish you may one day see, as I do, the danger and vanity of your present condition.'

"Her poor sister would reply, 'I do not want to hear any of your preaching; I am no worse than other people, and that is enough for me.' 'Well, sister,' Betsey would say, 'if you will not hear me, you cannot hinder me from praying for you, which I do with all my heart.'

"And now, sir, I believe those prayers are answered. For when her sister was taken ill, Betsey went to serve in her place and take care of her. She said a great deal to her about her soul; and the poor girl began to be so deeply affected and sensible of her past sin, and so thankful for her sister's kind behavior, that it gave her great hopes indeed for her sake. When my wife and I went to see her as she lay sick, she told us how grieved and ashamed she was of her past life; but said she had a hope, through grace, that her dear sister's Savior would be her Savior too; for she saw her own sinfulness, felt her own helplessness, and only wished to cast herself upon Christ as her hope and salvation.

"And now, sir, she is gone, and I hope and think her sister's prayers for her conversion to God have been answered. The Lord grant the same for her poor father's and mother's sake likewise." This conversation was a very pleasing commentary upon the letter which I had received, and made me anxious both to comply with the request and to become acquainted with the writer. I promised the good old dairyman I would attend the funeral on Friday, at the appointed hour; and after some more conversation respecting his own state of mind under the present trial, he went away.

He was a sincere old man; his furrowed cheeks, white locks, weeping eyes, bent shoulders, and feeble gait were characteristic of the aged pilgrim; and as he slowly departed, supported by a stick which seemed to have been the companion of many a long year, a train of reflections occurred which I retrace with emotion and pleasure. At the appointed hour I arrived at the church; and after a little while was summoned to meet, at the churchyard gate, a very decent funeral procession. The aged parents, the elder brother and the sister, with other relatives, formed an affecting group. I was struck with the humble, pious, and pleasing countenance of the young woman from whom I received the letter; it bore the marks of great seriousness without affectation, and of much serenity mingled with a glow of devotion. A circumstance occurred during the burial service which I think it right to mention. A man of the village, who had hitherto been of a very careless and even profligate character, came into the church through mere curiosity, and with no better purpose than that of a vacant gazing at the ceremony. He came likewise to the grave, and during the burial service his mind received a deep, serious conviction of his sin and danger through some of the expressions contained therein. It was an impression that never wore off, but gradually ripened into the most satisfactory evidence of an entire change, of which I had many and long continued proofs. He always referred to the burial service, and to some particular sentences of it, as the clearly ascertained instrument of bringing him, through grace; to the knowledge of the truth. The day was therefore one to be remembered. Remembered let it be, by those who love to hear "the short and simple annals of the poor." Was there not a manifest and happy connection between the circumstance that providentially brought the serious and the careless to the same grave on that day together? How much do they lose, who neglect to trace the leadings of God in providence as links in the chain of His eternal purpose of redemption and grace!

"While infidels may scoff, let us adore."

After the service was concluded, I had a short conversation with the good old couple and their daughter. Her expression and address were highly interesting. I promised to visit their cottage; and from that time became well acquainted with them. Let us bless the Lord of the poor, and pray continually that the poor may become rich in faith—and the rich be made poor in spirit. A sweet solemnity often possesses the mind while retracing past fellowship with departed friends. How much is this increased when they were such as lived and died in the Lord! The remembrance of former scenes and conversations with those who, we believe, are now enjoying the uninterrupted happiness of a better world, fills the heart with pleasing sadness, and animates the soul with the hopeful anticipation of a day when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed in the assembling of all his children together, never more to be separated. Whether they were rich or poor, while on earth, it is a matter of trifling consequence; the valuable part of their character is, that they are now kings and priests unto God. In the number of departed believers, with whom I once loved to converse on the grace and glory of the kingdom of God, was the dairyman's daughter. I purpose now to give

some further account of her, and hope it may be useful to every reader. A few days after the funeral of the younger sister, I rode over to visit the family in their own cottage. The principal part of the road lay through old, narrow lanes, beautifully overarched with groves of nut and other trees, which screened the traveler from the rays of the sun, and afforded many interesting objects for admiration in the beautiful flowers, shrubs, and young trees which grew upon the high banks on each side of the road. Many curious rocks, with little streams of water occasionally breaking out of them, varied the recluse scenery, and produced a new, romantic, and pleasing effect.

Here and there, the more distant and rich prospect beyond appeared through gaps and hollow places on the road-side. Lofty hills, with navy signal-posts, and light-houses on their summits, appeared at these intervals; rich cornfields were also visible through some of the open places; and now and then, when the road ascended any hill, the sea, with ships at various distances, opened delightfully upon me. But for the most part, shady seclusion and beauties of a more minute and confined nature gave a character to the journey, and invited contemplation.

They lose much—who are strangers to serious meditation on the wonder and beauties of created nature! How gloriously the God of creation shines in His works! Not a tree, or a leaf or flower; not a bird, or insect, but proclaims in glowing language, "God made me!" As I approached the village where the good old dairyman dwelt, I observed him in a little field, driving a few cows before him toward a hovel which adjoined his cottage. I advanced very near him without his observing me, for his sight was dim. On my calling out to him, he startled at the sound of my voice, but with much gladness of countenance welcomed me, saying, "Bless your heart, sir, I am very glad you have come; we have looked for you every day this week!" The cottage-door opened, and the daughter came out, followed by her aged and infirm mother. The sight of me naturally brought to recollection the grave at which we had before met. Tears of affection, mingled with the smile of satisfaction with which I was received by these worthy cottagers. I dismounted, and was conducted through a very neat little garden, part of which was shaded by two large, overspreading elm-trees, to the house. Simplicity and cleanliness were manifest within and without.

This, thought I, is a fit residence for piety, peace, and contentment. May I learn a fresh lesson in each, through the blessing of God, on this visit.

"Sir," said the daughter, "we are not worthy that you should come under our roof. We take it very kind that you should come so far to see us."

"My Master," I replied, "came a great deal further to visit us poor sinners. He left the bosom of His Father, laid aside His glory, and came down to this lower world on a visit of mercy and love; and ought not we, if we profess to follow Him, to bear each other's infirmities, and go about doing good as He did?" The old man now came in, and joined his wife and daughter in giving me a cordial welcome. Our conversation soon turned to the late loss they had sustained; and the pious and sensible disposition of the daughter was peculiarly manifested—as well in what she said to her parents as in what she said to me. I was struck with the good sense and agreeable manner which accompanied her expressions of devotedness to God, and love to Christ for the great mercies which He had bestowed upon her. She seemed anxious to improve the opportunity of my visit to the best purpose, for her own and her parents' sake; yet there was nothing of unfitting forwardness, or conceitedness in her behavior. She united the sincerity and earnestness of the Christian—with the modesty of the female and the dutifulness of the daughter. It was impossible to

be in her company—and not observe how truly her temper and conversation adorned the evangelical principles which she professed.

I soon discovered how eager and how successful also she had been in her endeavors to bring her father and mother to the knowledge and experience of the truth. This is a lovely circumstance in the character of a young Christian. If it has pleased God, in the free dispensations of His mercy, to call the child by His grace, while the parents remain still in ignorance and sin, how great is the duty of that child to do what is possible for the conversion of those to whom it owes its birth! Happy is it—when the ties of grace sanctify those of nature. This aged couple evidently looked upon and spoke of their daughter, as their teacher and admonisher in divine things, while they received from her every token of filial submission and obedience, testified by continual endeavors to serve and assist them to the utmost in the little concerns of the household. The religion of this young woman was of a highly spiritual character, and of no ordinary attainment. Her views of the divine plan in saving the sinner were clear and scriptural. She spoke much of the joys and sorrows which, in the course of her Christian progress, she had experienced; but she was fully sensible that there is far more in real religion, than mere occasional transition from one frame of mind to another. She believed that the experimental acquaintance of the heart with God, principally consisted in so living upon Christ by faith, as to seek to live like Him by love. She knew that the love of God towards the sinner, and the path of duty prescribed to the sinner, are both of an unchangeable nature. In a believing dependence on the one, and an affectionate walk in the other—she sought and found "the peace of God which passes all understanding" (Php 4:7), for so He gives His beloved spiritual rest.

She had read but few books besides her Bible; but these few were excellent in their kind, and she spoke of their contents as one who knew their value. In addition to a Bible and Common Prayer-Book, Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress', Romaine's 'Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith', Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress', Alleine's 'Alarm', Baxter's 'Saints' Everlasting Rest', a hymn-book, and a few tracts, composed her library.

I observed in her countenance a pale and delicate look, which I afterwards found to be a presage of fatal consumption; and the idea then occurred to me—that she would not live many years. In fact, it pleased God to take her hence about a year and a half after I first saw her.

Time passed on swiftly with this little interesting family; and after having partaken of some plain and wholesome refreshments, and enjoyed a few hours' conversation with them, I found it was necessary for me to return homewards.

"I thank you, sir," said the daughter, "for your Christian kindness to me and my family. I believe the blessing of the Lord has attended your visit, and I hope I have experienced it to be so. My dear father and mother will, I am sure, remember it, and I rejoice in an opportunity, which we have never before enjoyed, of seeing a serious minister under this roof. My Savior has been abundantly good to me in plucking me 'as a brand from the burning,' and showing me the way of life and peace; and I hope it is my heart's desire to live to His glory. But I long to see my dear parents enjoy the comfort and power of religion also."

"I think it evident," I replied, "that the promise is fulfilling in their case; 'It shall come to pass that at evening time—it shall be light'" (Zechariah 14:7).

"I believe it," she said, "and praise God for the blessed hope."

"Thank Him, too, that you have been the happy instrument of bringing them to the light."

"I do, sir; yet when I think of my own unworthiness and insufficiency, I rejoice with trembling."

"Sir," said the good old man, "I am sure the Lord will reward you for this kindness. Pray for us that, old as we are, and sinners as we have been—yet He would have mercy upon us at the eleventh hour. Poor Betsey strives hard for our sakes, both in body and soul; she works hard all day to save us trouble and I fear has not strength to support all she does; and then she talks to us, and reads to us, and prays for us, that we may be saved from the wrath to come. Indeed, sir, she's a special child to us!"

"Peace be to you, and all that belong to you."

"Amen, and thank you, dear sir," was echoed from each tongue.

Thus we parted for that time. My returning meditations were sweet, and, I hope, profitable. Many other visits were afterwards made by me to this peaceful cottage, and I always found increasing reason to thank God for the fellowship I enjoyed.

I soon perceived that the health of the daughter was rapidly on the decline. The pale, wasting consumption, which is the Lord's instrument for removing so many thousands every year from the land of the living, made hasty strides on her constitution. The hollow eye, the distressing cough, and the complexion of her face, foretold the approach of death.

I have often thought what a field for usefulness and affectionate attention on the part of ministers and Christian friends, is opened by the frequent attacks and lingering progress of consumptive illness. How many such precious opportunities are daily lost, where Providence seems in so marked a way to afford time and space for serious and godly instruction. Of how many may it be said, "The way of peace have they not known;" for not one friend came near, to warn them to "flee from the wrath to come." But the dairyman's daughter was happily made acquainted with the things which belonged to her everlasting peace, before the present disease had taken root in her constitution. In my visit to her, I might be said to receive blessing, rather than to impart it. Her mind was abundantly stored with divine truths and her conversation was truly edifying. The recollection of it still produces a thankful sensation in my heart.

I one day received a short note to the following effect:

"Dear Sir,

I would be very glad, if your convenience will allow, that you would come and see a poor unworthy sinner; my hour-glass is nearly run out, but I hope I can ask Christ to be precious to my soul. Your conversation has often been blessed to me, and I now feel the need of it more than ever.

From your obedient and unworthy servant,

Betsey Wallbridge."

I obeyed the summons that same afternoon. On my arrival at the dairyman's cottage, his wife opened the door. The tears streamed down her cheeks, as she silently shook her head. Her heart

was full. She tried to speak, but could not. I took her by the hand, and said:

"My good friend, all is right—and as the Lord of wisdom and mercy directs."

"Oh, my Betsey, my dear girl, is so sick, sir; what shall I do without her? I thought I would have gone first to the grave, but—"

"But the Lord sees good that, before you died yourself, you should behold your child safe home to glory. Is there no mercy in this?"

"Oh, sir, I am very old and weak, and she is a dear child, the staff and prop of a poor old creature, as I am." As I advanced, I saw Betsey sitting by the fireside, supported in an arm-chair by pillows, with every mark of rapid decline and approaching death. She appeared to me within three or four weeks at the farthest, from her death. A sweet smile of friendly delight enlightened her pale countenance, as she said:

"This is very kind indeed, sir, to come so soon after I sent to you. You find me daily wasting away, and I cannot have long to continue here. My flesh and my heart fail—but God is the strength of my weak heart, and I trust will be my portion forever." The conversation which follows was occasionally interrupted by her cough and shortness of breath. Her tone of voice was clear, though feeble; her manner solemn and collected; and her eye, though more dim than formerly, by no means lacking in liveliness as she spoke. I had frequently admired the superior language in which she expressed her ideas, as well as the scriptural consistency with which she communicated her thoughts. She had a good natural understanding, and grace, as is generally the case—and had much improved it. On the present occasion, I could not help thinking she was specially favored. The whole strength of grace seemed to be in full exercise.

After taking my seat between the daughter and the mother—the latter fixing her fond eyes upon her child with great anxiety while we were conversing, I said to Betsey:

"I hope you enjoy a sense of the divine presence, and can rest all upon Him who has 'been with you' (1 Chronicles 17:8), and has kept 'you in all places where you have gone' (Genesis 28:15), and will bring you into the land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign."

"Sir, I think I can. My mind has lately been sometimes clouded, but I believe it has been partly owing to the great weakness and suffering of my bodily frame, and partly to the envy of my spiritual enemy, who wants to persuade me that Christ has no love for me, and that I have been a self-deceiver."

"And do you give way to his suggestions? Can you doubt, amidst such numerous tokens of past and present mercy?"

"No, sir, I mostly am enabled to preserve a clear evidence of His love. I do not wish to add to my other sins, that of denying His manifest goodness to my soul. I would acknowledge it to His praise and glory."

"What is your view of the state which you were in—before God called you by His grace?"

"Sir, I was a proud, thoughtless girl, fond of dress and finery; I loved the world and the things that are in the world; I worked among worldly people, and never had the happiness of being in a family

where godly worship was regarded, and the souls of the children cared for, either by master or mistress. I went once on a Sunday to church, more to see and be seen—than to pray, or hear the Word of God. I thought I was quite good enough to be saved, and disliked and often laughed at pious people. I was in great darkness; I knew nothing of the way of salvation; I never prayed, nor was sensible of the dreadful danger of a prayerless state. I wished to maintain the character of a good worker—and was much lifted up in pride, whenever I met with applause. I was tolerably moral and decent in my conduct, from motives of carnal and worldly policy; but I was a stranger to God and Christ. I neglected my soul; and had I died in such a state, hell must, and would justly, have been my portion!"

"How long is it since you heard the sermon which you hope, through God's blessing, affected your conversion?"

"About five years ago."

"How was it brought about?"

"It was reported that a Mr.—, who was detained by contrary winds from embarking on board ship, as chaplain, to a distant part of the world, was to preach at— church. Many advised me not to go, for fear he should turn my head; as they said he held strange notions. But curiosity, and an opportunity of appearing in a new gown, which I was very proud of, induced me to go. Indeed, sir, I has no better motives than vanity and curiosity. Yet, thus, it pleased the Lord to order it for His own glory.

"I accordingly went to church and saw a great crowd of people collected together. I often think of the contrary states of my mind during the former an latter part of the service. For a while, heedless of the worship of God, I looked around me, and was anxious to attract notice to myself. My dress, like that of too many mirthful, vain, and silly girls—was much above my station, and very different from that which becomes a humble sinner who has a modest sense of propriety and decency. The state of my mind was visible enough from the foolish finery of my apparel.

"At length the clergyman gave out his text: 'Be clothed with humility' (1 Peter 5:5). He drew a comparison between the clothing of the body and that of the soul. At a very early part of his discourse I began to feel ashamed of my passion for fine dressing and apparel; but when he came to describe the garment of salvation with which a Christian is clothed, I felt a powerful discovery of the nakedness of my own soul. I saw that I had neither the humility mentioned in the text, nor any one part of the true Christian character. I looked at my mirthful dress, and blushed for shame on account of my pride. I looked at the minister, and he seemed to be as a messenger sent from heaven to open my eyes. I looked at the congregation, and wondered whether anyone else felt as I did. I looked at my heart, and it appeared full of iniquity. I trembled as he spoke, and yet I felt a great drawing of heart to the words he uttered.

"He opened the riches of divine grace in God's method of saving the sinner. I was astonished at what I had been doing all the days of my life. He described the meek, lowly, and humble example of Christ; I felt proud, lofty, vain and self-absorbed. He represented Christ as 'Wisdom;' I felt my ignorance. He held Him forth as 'Righteousness;' I was convinced of my own guilt. He proved Him to be 'Sanctification;' I saw my corruption. He proclaimed Him as 'Redemption;' I felt my slavery to sin and my captivity to Satan (1 Corinthians 1:31). He concluded with an animated address to

sinner, in which he exhorted them to flee from the wrath to come, to cast off the love of outward ornaments, to put on Christ, and be clothed with true humility (Matthew 3:7, Colossians 3:8-10, 1 Peter 5:5).

"From that hour I never lost sight of the value of my soul and the danger of a sinful state. I inwardly blessed God for the sermon, although my mind was in a state of great confusion.

"The preacher had brought forward the ruling passion of my heart, which was pride in outward dress; and by the grace of God it was made instrumental to the awakening of my soul. Happy, sir, would I be if many a poor girl like myself were turned from the love of outward adorning and putting on of fine apparel—to seek that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is of great price in the sight of God."

"The greater part of the congregation, unused to such faithful and scriptural sermons, disliked and complained of the severity of the preacher; while a few, as I afterwards found, like myself, were deeply affected, and earnestly wished to hear him again. But he preached there no more."

"From that time I was led, through a course of private prayer, reading, and meditation, to see my lost estate as a sinner, and the great mercy of God, through Jesus Christ in raising sinful dust and ashes—to a share in the glorious happiness of heaven! And oh, sir, what a Savior have I found! He is more than I could ask or desire. In His fullness—I have found all that my poverty could need; in His bosom—I have found a resting place from all sin and sorrow; in His Word—I have found strength against doubt and unbelief."

"Were you not soon convinced," said I, "that your salvation must be an act of entire grace on the part of God, wholly independent of your own previous works or deservings?"

"Dear sir, what were my works before I heard that sermon—but evil, carnal, selfish, and ungodly? The thoughts of my heart, from my youth upward—were only evil, and that continually. And my deservings, what were they but the deservings of a fallen, depraved, careless soul that regards neither law nor gospel? Yes, sir, I immediately saw that—if ever I was saved, it must be by the free mercy of God, and that the whole praise and honor of the work would be His, from first to last."

"What change did you perceive in yourself with respect to the world?"

"It appeared all vanity and vexation of spirit. I found it necessary to my peace of mind, to 'come out from among them, and be separate.' I gave myself to prayer; and many a precious hour of secret delight I enjoyed in communion with God. Often I mourned over my sins, and sometime had a great conflict through unbelief, fear, and temptation—to return back again to my old ways, and a variety of difficulties which lay in my way. But He who loved me with an everlasting love drew me by His loving kindness, showed me the way of peace, gradually strengthened me in my resolutions of leading a new life, and taught me that, while without Him I could do nothing—yet I might do all things through His strength."

"Did you not find many difficulties in your situation, owing to your change of principle and practice?"

"Yes, sir, every day of my life. I was laughed at by some, scolded at by others, scorned by enemies, and pitied by friends! I was called hypocrite, saint, false deceiver, and many more

names, which were meant to render me hateful in the sight of the world. But I esteemed the reproach of the cross an honor. I forgave and prayed for my persecutors, and remembered how very recently, I myself had acted the same towards others. I thought also that Christ endured the hostility of sinners; and as the disciple is not above his Master, I was glad to be in any way conformed to His sufferings."

"Did you not then feel for your relatives at home?"

"Yes, that I did indeed, sir; they were never out of my thoughts. I prayed continually for them, and had a longing desire to do them good. In particular, I felt for my father and mother, as they were getting into old age, and were very ignorant and dark in matters of piety."

"Yes," interrupted her mother, sobbing, "ignorant and dark, sinful and miserable we were—until this dear Betsey—this dear Betsey—this dear child, sir—brought Christ Jesus home to her poor father and mother's house."

"No, dearest mother, say rather Christ Jesus brought your poor daughter home to tell you what He had done for her soul; and, I hope, to do the same for yours." At this moment the dairyman came in with two pails of milk hanging from the yoke on his shoulders. He had stood behind the half-opened door for a few minutes, and heard the last sentences spoken by his wife and daughter.

"Blessing and mercy upon her," said he, "it is very true; she would leave a good place of service on purpose to live with us, that she might help us both in soul and body. Sir, don't she look very ill? I think, sir, we shall not have her here long."

"Leave that to the Lord," said Betsey. "All our times are in His hand, and happy it is, that they are. I am willing to go; are not you willing, my father, to part with me into His hands—who gave me to you at first?"

"Ask me any question in the world but that," said the weeping father.

"I know," said she, "you wish me to be happy."

"I do, I do," answered he: "let the Lord do with you and us—as best pleases Him."

I then asked her on what her present consolations chiefly depended, in the prospect of approaching death.

"Entirely, sir, on my view of Christ. When I look at myself—many sins, infirmities, and imperfections cloud the image of Christ which I want to see in my own heart. But when I look at the Savior Himself—He is altogether lovely—there is not one spot in His countenance, nor one cloud over all His perfections."

"I think of His coming in the flesh, and it reconciles me to my bodily sufferings—for He had them as well as I. I think of His temptations, and believe that He is able to support me when I am tempted. Then I think of His cross, and learn to bear my own. I reflect on His death, and long to die unto sin, so that it may no longer have dominion over me. I sometimes think on His resurrection, and trust that He has given me a part in it; for I feel that my affections are set upon things above. Chiefly I take comfort in thinking of Him as at the right hand of the Father—pleading my cause, and

rendering acceptable even my feeble prayers, both for myself and, I hope, for my dear friends."

"These are the views which, through mercy, I have of my Savior's goodness; and they have made me wish and strive in my poor way to serve Him, to give myself up to Him and to labor to do my duty in that state of life into which it has pleased Him to call me."

"A thousand times I would have fallen and fainted—if He had not upheld me. I feel that I am nothing without Him—He is all in all."

"Just so far as I can cast my cares upon Him—I find strength to do His will. May He give me grace to trust Him to the last moment. I do not fear death, because I believe He has taken away its sting. And oh, what happiness beyond! Tell me, sir, whether you think I am right. I hope I am under no delusion. I dare not look, for my hope—at anything short of the entire fullness of Christ. When I ask my own heart a question—I am afraid to trust it, for it is treacherous, and has often deceived me. But when I ask Christ—He answers me with promises which strengthen and refresh me, and leaves me no room to doubt His power and will to save me. I am in His hands, and would remain there; and I do believe that He will never leave me nor forsake me. I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in me—will carry it on to completion. He loved me and gave Himself for me—and I believe that His gifts and calling are irrevocable. In this hope I live—in this I wish to die."

I looked around me as she was speaking, and thought, "Surely this is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven!" Everything appeared neat, clean, and simple. The afternoon had been rather overcast with dark clouds; but just now the setting sun shone brightly and rather suddenly into the room. It was reflected from three or four rows of bright pewter plates and white earthenware arranged on shelves against the wall; it also gave brilliance to a few prints of sacred subjects which hung there also, and served for monitors of the birth, baptism, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ. A large map of Jerusalem, and an emblem of "the old and new man," completed the decorations on that side of the room. Clean as was the whitewashed wall, it was not cleaner than the rest of the place and its furniture. Seldom had the sun enlightened a house where order and general neatness—those sure attendants of pious and decent poverty—were more conspicuous. This gleam of setting sunshine was emblematic of the bright and serene close of this young Christian's departing season. One ray happened to be reflected from a little looking-glass upon the face of the young woman. Amidst her pallid and decaying features, there appeared a calm resignation, triumphant confidence, sincere humility, and tender concern, which fully declared the feelings of her heart.

Some further affectionate conversation and a short prayer, closed this interview. As I rode home by departing daylight, a solemn tranquility reigned throughout the scene. The gentle lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep just penned in their folds, the humming of the insects of the night, the distant murmur of the sea, the last notes of the birds of day, and the first warblings of the nightingale, broke upon the ear, and served rather to increase than lessen the peaceful serenity of the evening and its corresponding effects of my own mind. It invited and nourished just such meditations as my visit had already inspired. Natural scenery, when viewed in a Christian mirror, frequently affords very beautiful illustrations of divine truth. We are highly favored when we can enjoy them, and at the same time draw near to God in them.

Soon after this I received a hasty summons, to inform me that my young friend was dying. It was brought by a soldier, whose countenance bespoke seriousness, good sense, and piety.

"I am sent, sir, by the father and mother of Betsey Wallbridge, at her own particular request, to say how much they all wish to see you. She is going home, sir—very fast indeed!"

"Have you known her long?" I replied.

"About a month, sir; I love to visit the sick, and hearing of her case from a godly person who lives close by our camp, I went to see her. I bless God that ever I did go. Her conversation has been very profitable to me."

"I rejoice," said I, "to see in you, as I trust, a fellow Christian soldier. Though we differ in our outward regimentals, I hope we serve under the same spiritual Captain. I will go with you." My horse was soon ready. My military companion walked by my side, and gratified me with very serious and pious conversation. He related some remarkable testimonies of the excellent disposition of the dairyman's daughter, as they appeared from some recent fellowship which he had with her.

"She is a bright diamond, sir," said the soldier, "and will soon shine brighter than any diamond upon earth!"

Conversation charmed the travel, and shortened the apparent time of our journey until we were nearly arrived at the dairyman's cottage. As we approached it, we became silent. Thoughts of death, eternity, and salvation, inspired by the sight of a house where a dying believer lay—filled my own mind, and, I doubt not, that of my companion also. No living object yet appeared, except the dairyman's dog, keeping a kind of mute watch at the door; for he did not, as formerly, bark at my approach. He seemed to partake so far of the feelings appropriate to the circumstance of the family, as not to wish to give a harsh alarm. He came forward to the little wicket-gate, then looked back at the house door, as if conscious there was sorrow within. It was as if he wanted to say, "Tread softly over the threshold, as you enter the house of mourning; for my master's heart is full of grief." A solemn serenity appeared to surround the whole place. It was only interrupted by the breeze passing through the large elm trees which stood near the house, which my imagination indulged itself in thinking were plaintive sighs of sorrow. I gently opened the door; no one appeared, and all was still silent. The soldier followed, and we came to the foot of the stairs.

"They are here!" said a voice which I knew to be the father's; "they are here!"

I gave him my hand, and said nothing. On entering the room above, I saw the aged mother and her son supporting the much-loved daughter and sister; the son's wife sat weeping in a window-seat, with a child on her lap. I sat down by the bedside. The mother could not weep, but now and then sighed deeply, as she alternately looked at Betsey and at me. A big tear rolled down the brother's cheek, and testified an affectionate regard. The godly old father stood at the foot of the bed, leaning upon the post, and unable to take His eyes off the child, from whom he was so soon to part.

Betsey's eyes were closed, and as yet she perceived me not. But over her face, though pale, sunk, and hollow—the peace of God, which passes all understanding, had cast a triumphant calm. The soldier, after a short pause, silently reached out his Bible towards me, pointing with his finger

at 1 Corinthians 15:55-57. I then broke the silence by reading the passage, "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" At the sound of these words, her eyes opened, and something like a ray of divine light beamed on her countenance, as she said, "Victory, victory! through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

She relapsed again, taking no further notice of anyone present.

"God be praised for the triumph of faith," I said.

"Amen," replied the soldier. The dairyman's uplifted eye, showed that the Amen was in his heart, though his tongue failed to utter it. A short struggling for breath took place in the dying young woman, which was soon over, and then I said to her:

"My dear friend, do you not feel that you are supported?"

"The Lord deals very gently with me," she replied.

"Are not His promises now very precious to you?"

"They are all yes and amen in Christ Jesus."

"Are you in much bodily pain?"

"So little that I almost forget it."

"How good the Lord is!"

"And how unworthy am I!"

"You are going to see Him as He is."

"I think—I hope—I believe that I am."

She again fell into a short slumber.

Looking at her mother, I said, "What a mercy to have a child so near heaven—as yours is!"

"And what a mercy," she replied in broken accents, "if her poor old mother might but follow her there! But, sir, it is so hard to part—"

"I hope through grace, by faith—you will soon meet, to part no more. It will be but a little while."

"Sir," said the dairyman, "that thought supports me, and the Lord's goodness makes me feel more reconciled than I was."

"Father—mother," said the reviving daughter, "He is good to me; trust Him, praise Him evermore."

"Sir," added she in a faint voice, "I want to thank you for your kindness to me...I want to ask a favor;...you buried my sister...will you do the same for me?"

"All shall be as you wish—if God permits," I replied.

"Thank you, sir, thank you. I have another favor to ask—When I am gone, remember my father and mother. They are old, but I hope the good work is begun in their souls. My prayers are heard.

Please come and see them—I cannot speak much, but I want to speak for their sakes. Sir, remember them." The aged parents now sighed and sobbed aloud, uttering broken sentences, and gained some relief by such an expression of their feelings. At length I said to Betsey, "Do you experience any doubts or temptations on the subject of your eternal safety?"

"No, sir; the Lord deals very gently with me, and gives me peace."

"What are your views of the dark valley of death, now that you are passing through it?"

"It is not dark."

"Why so?"

"My Lord is there—and He is my light and my salvation."

"Have you any fears of more bodily suffering?"

"The Lord deals so gently with me, I can trust Him."

Something of a convulsion came on. When it was past, she said again and again, "The Lord deals very gently with me. Lord, I am yours, save me...Blessed Jesus...Blessed Savior...His blood cleanses from all sin...Who shall separate?...His name is Wonderful...Thanks be to God...He gives us the victory...I, even I, am saved...O grace, mercy, and wonder—Lord, receive my spirit!

"Dear sir...dear father, mother, friends, I am going... but all is well, well, well—"

She relapsed again. We knelt down to prayer: the Lord was in the midst of us, and blessed us. She did not again revive while I remained, nor did she ever speak any more words which could be understood. She slumbered for about ten hours, and at last sweetly fell asleep in the arms of the Lord who had dealt so gently with her.

I left the house an hour after she had ceased to speak. I pressed her hand as I was taking leave and said, "Christ is the resurrection and the life!" (John 11:25).

She gently returned the pressure, but could neither open her eyes nor utter a reply. I never had witnessed a scene so impressive as this before. It completely filled my imagination as I returned home.

"Farewell," thought I, "dear friend, until the morning of an eternal day shall renew our personal fellowship. You were a brand plucked from the burning, that you might become a star shining in the sky of glory. I have seen your good works, and I will therefore glorify our Father who is in heaven. I have seen in your example, what it is to be a sinner freely saved by grace. I have learned from you, as in a living mirror, who it is that begins, continues, and ends the work of faith and love. Jesus is all in all—He will and shall be glorified. He won the crown, and alone deserves to wear it. May no one attempt to rob Him of His glory! He saves, and saves to the uttermost! Farewell, dear sister in the Lord. Your flesh and your heart may fail—but God is the strength of your heart, and shall be your portion forever."

I was soon called to attend the funeral of my friend, who breathed her last shortly after my visit. Many pleasing yet melancholy thoughts were connected with the fulfillment of this task. I retraced the numerous and important conversations which I had held with her. But these could now no

longer be held on earth. I reflected on the interesting and improving nature of Christian friendships, whether formed in palaces or in cottages; and felt thankful that I had so long enjoyed that privilege with the subject of this memorial. I indulged a sigh, for a moment, on thinking that I could no longer hear the great truths of Christianity uttered by one who had drunk so deep of the waters of life. But the rising murmur was checked by the animating thought, "She is gone to eternal rest—could I wish to bring her back to this valley of tears?" As I traveled onward to the house where her remains lay in solemn preparation for the grave, the first sound of a tolling bell struck my ear. It proceeded from a village church in the valley directly beneath the ridge of a high hill, over which I had traveled—it was Betsey's funeral knell. It was a solemn sound, but it seemed to proclaim at once the blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord, and the necessity of the living, pondering these things and laying them to heart. On entering the cottage, I found that several Christian friends, from different parts of the neighborhood, had assembled together to show their last tribute of esteem and regard, to the memory of the dairyman's daughter.

I was requested to go into the chamber, where the relatives and a few other friends were gone to take a last look at the remains of Betsey.

If there is a moment when Christ and salvation, death, judgment, heaven and hell appear more than ever to be momentous subjects of meditation—it is that which brings us to the side of a coffin containing the body of a departed believer.

Betsey's features were altered, but much of her likeness remained. Her father and mother sat at the head, her brother at the foot of the coffin, manifesting their deep and sincere sorrow. The weakness and infirmity of old age, added a character to the parents' grief, which called for much tenderness and compassion. A kind-looking woman, who had the management of the few simple though solemn ceremonies which the case required, advanced toward me, saying: "Sir, this is rather a sight of joy than of sorrow. Our dear friend Betsey finds it to be so, I have no doubt. She is beyond all sorrow. Do you not think she is, sir?"

"After what I have known and seen and heard," I replied, "I feel the fullest assurance that, while her body remains here, her soul is with her Savior in paradise! She loved Him here, and there she enjoys the pleasures which are at His right hand forevermore!"

"Mercy, mercy upon a poor old creature almost broken down with old age and grief; what shall I do? Betsey's gone—my daughter's dead. Oh, my child, I shall never more see you! God be merciful to me a sinner!" sobbed out the poor mother.

"That last prayer, my dear good woman," said I, "will bring you together again. It is a cry that has brought thousands to glory. It brought your daughter there, and I hope it will bring you there likewise. He will never cast out, any who sincerely come to Him."

"My dear," said the dairyman, breaking the long silence he had maintained, "let us trust God with our child, and let us trust Him with our own selves. The Lord gave—and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord! We are old, and can have but a little farther to travel in our journey, and then—"

He could say no more. The before mentioned soldier, reached a Bible into my hand, and said, "Perhaps, sir, you would not object to reading a chapter before we go to the church."

I did so; it was the fourteenth chapter of the Book of John. A sweet tranquility prevailed while I read it. Each minute that was spent in this funeral-chamber seemed to be valuable. I gave a few observations on the chapter, and connected them with the case of our departed sister.

"I am but a poor soldier," said our military friend, "and have nothing of this world's goods beyond my daily subsistence; but I would not exchange my hope of salvation in the next world—for all that this world could bestow without it. What is wealth without grace? Blessed be God, as I march about from one quarter to another, I still find the Lord wherever I go. And thanks be to His holy name, He is here today in the midst of this company of the living and the dead. I feel that it is good to be here."

Some other people present began to take a part in the conversation, in the course of which, the life and experience of the dairyman's daughter were brought forward in a very interesting manner; each friend had something to relate in testimony of her gracious disposition. One distant relative, a young woman under twenty, who had hitherto been a very light and trifling character, appeared to be remarkably impressed by the conversation of that day; and I have since had ground to believe that divine grace then began to influence her, in the choice of that better part which shall not be taken from her.

What a contrast does such a scene as this exhibit, when compared with the dull, formal, unedifying, and often indecent manner in which funeral parties assemble in the house of death! But the time for departure to the church was now at hand. I went to take my last look at the deceased. There was much written on her countenance: she had evidently departed with a smile. It still remained, and spoke the tranquility of her departing soul. According to the custom of the place, she was decorated with leaves and flowers in the coffin; these indeed were fading flowers—but they remind me of that paradise whose flowers are immortal, and where her never-dying soul is at rest.

I remembered the last words which I had heard her speak, and was instantly struck with the happy thought, that "death was indeed swallowed up in victory!" (1 Corinthians 15:54). As I slowly retired, I said inwardly, "Peace, my honored sister, to your memory—and to my soul, until we meet in a better world." In a little time the procession formed; it was rendered the more interesting by the consideration of so many who followed the coffin, being people of truly serious and godly character.

After we had advanced about a hundred yards, my meditation was unexpectedly and most agreeably interrupted by the friends who followed the family, beginning to sing a funeral psalm. Nothing could be more sweet or solemn. The well-known effect of the open air in softening and blending the sounds of music, was here peculiarly felt. The road through which we passed was beautiful and romantic; it lay at the foot of a hill, which occasionally echoed the voices of the singers, and seemed to give faint replies to the notes of the mourners. The funeral knell was distinctly heard from the church tower, and greatly increased the effect which this simple and befitting service produced.

I cannot describe the state of my own mind as peculiarly connected with the solemn singing. I never witnessed a similar instance before or since. I was reminded of older times and ancient piety. I wished the practice more frequent. It seems well calculated to excite and nourish devotion

and religious affections.

We at length arrived at the church. The service was heard with deep and affectionate attention. When we came to the grave, the hymn which Betsey had selected was sung. All was devout, simple, decent, inspiring. We committed our dear friend's body to the grave—in full hope of a joyful resurrection from the dead.

Thus the veil of separation was drawn for a season. She is departed, and no more seen! But she will be seen at the right hand of her Redeemer at the last day, and will again appear to His glory, a miracle of grace and a monument of mercy! To the Reader:

My reader, rich or poor, shall you and I appear there likewise? Are we "clothed with humility" (1 Peter 5:5), and arrayed in the wedding-garment of a Redeemer's righteousness? Are we turned from idols—to serve the living God? Are we sensible of our own emptiness, flying to a Savior's fullness to obtain grace and strength? Do we live in Him, and on Him, and by Him, and with Him? Is He our all in all? Are we "lost—and found," "dead—and alive again" (Luke 15:24, Luke 15:32)? My poor reader—the dairyman's daughter was a poor girl, and the child of a poor man. Herein you resemble her—but do you resemble her—as she resembled Christ? Are you made rich by faith? Have you a crown laid up for you? Is your heart set upon heavenly riches? If not, read this story once more, and then pray earnestly for like precious faith.

If, through grace, you do love and serve the Redeemer that saved the dairyman's daughter, grace, peace, and mercy be with you. The lines have fallen for you in pleasant places; surely you have a delightful inheritance. Press forward in duty, and wait upon the Lord, possessing your soul in holy patience. You have just been with me to the grave of a departed believer. Now, "as for you, go your way until the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance." (Daniel 12:13).

Note:

The mother died about six months after her daughter, and I have good reason to believe that God was merciful to her, and took her to Himself. May every converted child thus labor and pray for the salvation of their unconverted parents. The father continued for some time after her, and adorned his old age with a walk and conversation befitting the gospel. I cannot doubt that the daughter and both her parents are now met together in "the land of pure delights—where saints immortal reign!" The grave of the dairyman's daughter is very modest—a mere mound, with a plain slab of stone erected over it. The inscription on the monument reads, In memory of Betsey Wallbridge "the dairyman's daughter" who died May 30, 1801, 31 years of age. "She being dead—yet speaks."

"Let me die the death of the righteous—and let my last end be like his!" Numbers 23:10

Addendum: The following short narrative by Elizabeth, seems to have been intended for her own private use. It was apparently left unfinished.

November 30, 1800.

I feel my mind more composed when writing, and more free from wandering thoughts, than at any other time; for I have little retirement, and when I have, it is seldom free from disturbances, so that I am almost continually conversant with the world. The Lord knows what a burden it is to my mind,

and how impatient I have been. May the Lord pardon his unfaithful, unprofitable servant, and sanctify me throughout, soul, spirit, and body, and plunge me in the Godhead's deepest sea, that I may be lost in his immensity. Glorious hope of perfect love! may it ever fill and lift my ravished spirit up to things above; there I shall forever love!

I thought I would just write down, as the Lord is pleased to give me time and strength—a few of his particular mercies and favors as I can recollect. He has abounded in love and mercy to me—O that I had made him all the returns that love could make by giving myself a sacrifice daily unto him! But now I have to lament my shortcomings, and to apply to the "blood of sprinkling" which speaks my sins forgiven, and purifies my soul and makes it meet for heaven. O what a precious Savior have I found! O that I could make him known to all mankind, that all may turn and taste the riches of his grace! At present I am so very weak in body and mind, that I can recollect but very little. My mind has been decaying near four years—but in the Lord Jehovah is my everlasting strength, and whoever relies on him shall never be ashamed, and shall be freed from all slavish fears.

I seemed to have some fear of God, and love to him from my childhood. His restraining grace kept me from falling into great and open sin, and gave me such a love to truth and uprightness, that I seemed to hate every false way, word, and work—in myself and others. I remember, when I went to school, one of my playmates that I was very fond of, used to take every opportunity to steal money from her mother, and buy all kinds of little toys, and then freely give me and others, some of her booty. But how did the Spirit of the Lord strive with me at that time and convince me of the evil, so that I had no peace of mind while I partook of the sin, and yet I had not strength to resist it. It was so on my mind that I ought to make her fault known, not to conceal it and partake of part. I could see it a great evil in the person who sold her the little toys, and, I believe, knew as well as I did how she came by it; but I never revealed it, though I always bore it on my mind with abhorrence. What a sad thing to yield to sin against such clear convictions! As a child, I was early taught a form of prayer, which I continued to repeat in a careless manner when I was laid down in bed—but very often I fell asleep before I said half of them. But, blessed be God, he still spared me, and often drew me to himself by the cords of love; for at an early age he drew me to secret prayer, where I often felt the kindlings of his love; but had none to help me, so that I often neglected this duty. But when alone I have often felt great sweetness in it. I believe if I had heard the gospel preached, I would have been very early devoted to that God whom I now love and adore. But I do not yet love him as he has promised I shall—with all my loving heart, when sin is all destroyed. Happy moment, how I long for it!

S. The Young Cottager

The Young Cottager by Legh Richmond

PREFACE: The following true narrative, from the pen of Legh Richmond, gives a clear and sweet account of the Lord's mercy manifested in rescuing one of His tender lambs out of the "paw of the lion." "Direct its course, Oh my God. May the eye that reads, and the ear that hears the record of little Jane, through the power of the Spirit of the Most High God, each become a witness for the truth as it is in Jesus," was his prayer. May the Lord fulfill this petition, and use this reprint for the good of many, and for the glory of His Name.

When a serious Christian turns his attention to the barren state of the wilderness through which he is traveling, frequently must he heave a sigh for the sins and sorrows of his fellow-mortals. The renewed heart thirsts with holy desire, that the Paradise which was lost through Adam, may be fully regained in Christ. But the overflowings of sin within and without, the carelessness of soul, the pride of unbelief, the eagerness of sensual appetite, the ambition for worldly greatness, and the deep-rooted enmity of the carnal heart against God; these things are as "the fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought," which distress his soul, as he journeys through "that great and dreadful wilderness."

Sometimes, like a solitary pilgrim, he "weeps in secret places," and "rivers of waters run down his eyes, because men keep not the law of God." Occasionally he meets with a few fellow-travelers, whose spirit is congenial with his own, and with whom he can take "sweet counsel together." They comfort and strengthen each other by the way. Each can relate something of the mercies of his God, and how kindly they have been dealt with, as they traveled onwards. The dreariness of the path is thus beguiled, and now and then, for a while, happy experiences of the divine consolations cheer their souls: "the wilderness and the solitary place is glad for them; the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose." But even at the very time when the Christian is taught to feel the peace of God which passes all understanding, to trust that he is personally interested in the blessings of salvation, and to believe that God will promote his own glory by glorifying the penitent sinner; yet sorrows will mingle with his comforts, and he will not rejoice without trembling, when he reflects on the state of other men. The concerns connected with earthly relations are all alive in his soul, and, through the operation of the Spirit of God, become sanctified principles and motives for action. As the husband and father of a family, as the neighbor of the poor, the ignorant, the wicked, and the wretched; above all, as the spiritual overseer of the flock, if such is his holy calling--the heart which has been taught to feel for its own case, will abundantly feel for others. But when he attempts to devise means in order to stem the torrent of iniquity, to instruct the ignorant, and to convert the sinner from the error of his way--he cannot help crying out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Unbelief pauses over the question, and trembles. But faith quickly revives the inquirer with the cheering assurance, that "our sufficiency is of God," and says, "Commit your way unto the Lord--and he shall bring it to pass." When he is thus affectionately engaged for the good of mankind, he will become seriously impressed with the necessity of early attentions to the young, in

particular. Many around him are grown gray-headed in sin--and give but little prospect of amendment. Many of the parents and heads of families are so eagerly busied in the profits, pleasures, and occupations of the world, that they heed not the warning voice of their instructor. Many of their elder children are launching out into life, headstrong, unruly, "earthly, sensual, devilish;" they likewise treat the wisdom of God, as if it were foolishness. But, under these discouragements, we may often turn with hope to the very young, to the little ones of the flock--and endeavor to teach them to sing Hosannas to the Son of David, before their minds are wholly absorbed in the world and its allurements. We may trust that a blessing shall attend such labors, if undertaken in faith and simplicity, and that some at least, of our youthful disciples, like Josiah, while they are yet young, may begin to seek after the God of their fathers.

Such an employment, especially when blessed by any actual instances of real spiritual good produced, enlivens the mind with hope, and fills it with gratitude. We are thence led to trust that the next generation may become more fruitful unto God than the present, and the church of Christ be replenished with many such as have been called into the vineyard "early in the morning." And should our endeavors for a length of time apparently fail of success--yet we ought not to despair. Early impressions and convictions of conscience, have sometimes lain dormant for years, and at last revived into gracious existence and maturity. It was not said in vain, "Train up a child in the way he should go--and when he is old he will not depart from it."

What a gratifying occupation is it to an affectionate mind, even in a way of nature, to walk through the fields, and lead a little child by the hand, enjoying his infantile prattle, and striving to improve the time by some kind word of instruction! I wish that every Christian pilgrim in the way of grace, as he walks through the Lord's pastures, would try to lead at least one little child by the hand; and perhaps while he is endeavoring to guide and preserve his young and feeble companion, the Lord will recompense him double for all his cares--by comforting his own heart in the attempt. The experiment is worth the trial. It is supported by this recollection, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

I shall plead no further apology for introducing to the notice of my readers a few particulars relative to a young female Cottager, whose memory is particularly endeared to me, from the circumstance of her being, so far as I can trace or discover, my firstborn spiritual child in the ministry of the gospel. She was certainly the first, of whose conversion to God under my own pastoral instruction, I can speak with precision and assurance.

Every parent of a family knows that there is a very interesting emotion of heart connected with the birth of his firstborn child. Energies and affections to which the mind has hitherto been almost a stranger, begin to unfold themselves and expand into active existence, when he first is hailed as a father! But may not the spiritual parent be allowed the possession and indulgence of a similar sensation in his connection with the children whom the Lord gives him, as begotten through the ministry of the Word of life? If the firstborn child in nature be received as a new and acceptable blessing; how much more so the firstborn child in grace! I claim this privilege; and crave permission, in writing what follows--to erect a monumental record, sacred to the memory of a dear little child, who, I trust, will at the last day prove my crown of rejoicing!

Some, who have perhaps been accustomed to undervalue the character of very youthful religion, may hereby see that the Lord of grace and glory is not limited in the exercise of his power by age or circumstance. It sometimes appears in the displays of God's love to sinners, as it does in the manifestation of his works in the heavens, that the least of the planets moves in the nearest course to the sun; and there enjoys the most powerful influence of his light, heat, and attraction. The story of this Young Cottager involves a clear evidence of the freeness of the operations of divine grace on the heart of man; of the inseparable connection between true faith and holiness of disposition; and of the simplicity of character which a real love of Christ transfuses into the soul.

How many of the household of faith, in every age--alike unknown to fortune and to fame--have journeyed and are now traveling to their "city of habitation," through the paths of modest obscurity and almost unheeded piety! It is one of the most interesting employments of the Christian Minister, to search out these spiritual lilies of the valley, whose beauty and fragrance are nearly concealed in their shady retreats. To cultivate the flower, to assist in unfolding its excellencies, and bring forth its fruit in due season--is a work that delightfully recompenses the toil of the cultivator.

JANE S. was the daughter of poor parents in the village where it pleased God first to cast my lot in the ministry. My acquaintance with her commenced, when she was twelve years of age, by her weekly attendance at my house among a number of children whom I invited and regularly instructed every Saturday afternoon.

They used to read, repeat catechisms, psalms, hymns and portions of Scripture. I accustomed them also to pass a kind of free conversational examination, according to their age and ability, in those subjects by which I hoped to see them made wise unto salvation. On the summer evenings I frequently used to assemble this little group out of doors in my garden, sitting under the shade of some trees which protected us from the heat of the sun; from hence a scene appeared which rendered my occupation the more interesting. For adjoining the spot where we sat, and only separated from us by a fence, was the churchyard, surrounded with beautiful prospects in every direction. There lay the mortal remains of thousands, who from age to age, in their different generations, had been successively committed to the grave—earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Here the once famed ancestors of the rich and the less known forefathers of the poor, lay mingling their dust together—alike waiting the resurrection from the dead.

I had not far to look for subjects of warning and exhortation suitable to my little flock of lambs that I was feeding. I could point to the heaving sods that marked the different graves and separated them from each other and tell my pupils that, young as they were, none of them were too young to die; and that probably more than half of the bodies which were buried there were those of little children. I hence took occasion to speak of the nature and value of a soul, and to ask them where they expected their souls to go when they departed hence and were no more seen upon earth.

I told them Who was "the resurrection and the life" and Who alone could take away the sting of death. I used to remind them that the hour was "coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth—those who have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." I often availed myself of these opportunities to call to their recollection the more recent deaths of their own relatives that lay buried so near us. Some had lost a parent, others a brother or sister, some perhaps had lost all these and were committed to the mercy of their neighbors, as fatherless or motherless orphans.

Such circumstances were occasionally useful to excite tender emotions, favorable to serious impressions.

Sometimes I sent the children to the various stones which stood at the head of the graves, and bid them learn the epitaphs inscribed upon them. I took pleasure in seeing the little ones thus dispersed in the churchyard, each committing to memory a few verses written in commemoration of the departed. They would soon accomplish the desired object and eagerly return to me, ambitious to repeat their task. Thus my churchyard became a book of instruction, and every grave-stone a leaf of education for my young disciples. The church itself stood in the midst of the ground. It was a spacious antique structure. Within those very walls, I first proclaimed the message of God to sinners. As these children surrounded me I sometimes pointed to the church, spoke to them of the nature of public worship, the duty of regular attendance on its services, and urged their serious attention to the means of grace. I showed them the sad state of many countries, where neither churches nor Bibles were known, and the no less melancholy condition of multitudes at home, who sinfully neglect worship and slight the Word of God, and thus tried to make them sensible of their own blessings and privileges.

Little Jane always came to these weekly seasons of instruction. I made no very particular observations concerning her during the first twelve months or more after her commencement of attendance. She was not then remarkable for any peculiar attainment. On the whole I used to think her rather more slow of apprehension than most of her companions. She usually repeated her tasks correctly but was seldom able to make answers to questions for which she was not previously prepared with replies. Her countenance was not engaging; her eye discovered no remarkable liveliness. She read tolerably well, took pains, and improved in it. Mildness and quietness marked her general demeanor. She was very constant in her attendance on public worship at the church as well as on my Saturday instruction at home. But generally speaking, she was little noticed—except for her regular and orderly conduct. Had I then been asked of which of my young scholars I had formed the most favorable opinion, poor Jane might have been altogether omitted in the list.

How little do we oftentimes know what God is doing in other people's hearts! What poor calculators and judges we frequently prove, until He opens our eyes! His thoughts are not our thoughts; neither our ways His ways.

I knew nothing of her mind; I had comparatively overlooked her. I have often been sorry for it since. Conscience seemed to rebuke me when I afterwards discovered what the Lord had been doing for her soul—as if I had neglected her; yet it was not done designedly. She was unknown to us all, except that, as I have since found out, her regularity and abstinence from the sins and follies of her young peers, brought upon her many taunts and jeers from others—which she bore very meekly.

It was about fifteen months from the first period of Jane's attendance on my Saturday school, when I missed her from her customary place. Two or three weeks had gone by without my making any particular enquiry respecting her. I was at length informed that she was ill; but apprehending no peculiar cause for alarm nearly two months passed away without any further mention of her name being made. At length a poor old woman in the village, of whose religious disposition I had formed a good opinion, came and said to me: "Sir, have you not missed Jane S. at your house on

Saturday afternoons?"

"Yes," I replied, "I believe she is ill."

"And very ill, I fear," said the woman.

"What! do you apprehend any danger in the case?"

"Sir, she is very poorly indeed, and I think is in a decline. She wants to see you, Sir, but is afraid you would not come to see such a poor young child as she is."

"Not go where poverty and sickness may call me? How can she imagine so! At which house does she live?"

"Sir, it is a poor place and she is ashamed to ask you to come there. Her near neighbors are noisy, wicked people, and her own father and mother are strange folks. They all make fun of poor Jane, because she reads her Bible so much."

"Do not tell me about poor places and wicked people—that is the very situation where a minister of the gospel is called to do the most good. I shall go to see her; you may let her know my intention."

"I will, Sir; I go in most days to speak to her and it does one's heart good to hear her talk."

"Indeed!" said I, "what does she talk about?"

"Talk about, poor thing! Why, nothing but holy things, such as the Bible, and Jesus Christ, and life and death, and her soul, and heaven and hell, and your discourses, and the books you used to teach her, Sir. Her father says he'll have no such godly things in his house; and her own mother scoffs at her and says she supposes Jane counts herself better than other folks. But she does not mind all that. She will read her books, and then talk so pretty to her mother, and plead with her to think about her soul."

"The Lord forgive me," thought I, "for not being more attentive to this poor child's case." I seemed to feel the importance of infantile instruction more than ever I had done before, and felt a rising hope that this girl might prove a kind of first-fruits of my labors.

"I hope, I really hope," said I, "that this dear child will prove to be a true child of God. And if so, what a mercy to her—and what a mercy for me!" The next morning I went to see the child. Her cottage was of the humblest kind. It stood against a high bank of earth which formed a sort of garden behind it. The front aspect of the cottage was chiefly rendered pleasing by a honeysuckle which luxuriantly climbed up the wall. As I entered the house, its flowers put forth a very sweet and refreshing smell. Intent on the object of my visit, I at the same moment offered up silent prayer to God and entertained a hope that the welcome fragrance of the shrub might be illustrative of that all-prevailing intercession of a Redeemer, which I trusted was, in the case of this little child, as "a sweet-smelling savor" to her heavenly Father. The very flowers and leaves of the garden and field, are emblematic of higher things when grace teaches us to make them so.

Jane was in bed upstairs. I found no one in the house with her, except the woman who had brought me the message on the evening before. The instant I looked on the girl I perceived a very marked change in her countenance! It had acquired the consumptive hue, both white and red. She

received me first with a very sweet smile and then instantly burst into a flood of tears, just sobbing out: "I am so glad to see you, Sir!"

"I am very much concerned at your being so ill my child, and grieved that I was not sooner aware of your state. But I hope the Lord designs it for your good." Her eye, not her tongue, powerfully expressed: "I hope and think He does."

"Well, my poor child, since you can no longer come to see me, I will come and see you, and we will talk over the subjects which I used to explain to you."

"Indeed, Sir, I shall be so glad!"

"That I believe she will," said the woman, "for she loves to talk of nothing so much as what she has heard you say in your sermons and in the books you have given her."

"Are you really desirous, my dear child, to be a true Christian?"

"Oh yes, yes Sir; I am sure that I desire that above all things!"

I was astonished and delighted at the earnestness and simplicity with which she spoke these words.

"Sir," added she, "I have been thinking as I lay on my bed for many weeks past, how good you are to instruct us poor children—what would become of us without it?"

"I am truly glad that my instructions have not been lost upon you, and pray God that this your present sickness may be an instrument of blessing in His hands—to prove, humble, and sanctify you. My dear child, you have a soul, an immortal soul to think of. You remember what I have often said to you about the value of a soul: What shall it profit a man—if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul."

"Yes, Sir, I well remember that you told us that when our bodies are put into the grave—that our souls will then go either to the good or the bad place."

"And to which of these places do you think that, as a sinner in the sight of God, you deserve to go."

"To the bad one, Sir."

"What! to everlasting destruction?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Why so?"

"Because I am a great sinner."

"And must all great sinners go to hell?"

"They all deserve it—and I am sure I do."

"But is there no way of escape? Is there no way for a great sinner to be saved?"

"Yes, Sir, Christ is the Savior."

"And whom does He save?"

"All believers."

"And do you believe in Christ yourself?"

"I do not know, Sir. I wish I did; but I feel that I love Him."

"What do you love Him for?"

"Because He is good to poor children's souls like mine."

"What has He done for you?"

"He died for me, Sir; and what could he do more?"

"And what do you hope to gain by His death?"

"A good place when I die—if I believe in Him and love Him."

"Have you felt any uneasiness, on account of your soul?"

"Oh yes, Sir, a great deal. When you used to talk to us children on Saturdays, I often felt as if I could hardly bear it and wondered that others could seem careless. I thought I was not fit to die. I thought of all the bad things I had ever done and said—and believed God must be very angry with me, for you often told us that God would not be mocked and that Christ said if we were not converted, we could not go to heaven. Sometimes I thought I was so young it did not matter—and then again it seemed to me a great sin to think so. I could see that my heart was not right—and how could such a heart be fit for heaven? Indeed, Sir, I used to feel very uneasy."

"My dear Jane, I wish I had known all this before. Why did you never tell me about it?"

"Sir, I dared not. Indeed I could not well say what was the matter with me, and I thought you would look upon me as very bold if I had spoken about myself to such a gentleman as you—yet I often wished that you knew what I felt and feared. Sometimes as we went away from your house, I could not help crying and then the other children laughed and jeered at me.

Sometimes, Sir, I thought that you did not think so well of me as of the rest of the children—and that hurt me, yet I knew I deserved no particular favor because I was the chief of sinners."

"My dear, what made Paul say that he was the chief of sinners? Can you repeat the verse?"

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—is not that right, Sir?"

"Yes, my child, it is right; remember now and for evermore, that Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners."

"Sir, I am so glad He did. It makes me hope that He will save me—though I am a poor sinful girl. Sir, I am very ill and I do not think I shall ever get well again. I want to go to Christ if I die."

"Go to Christ while you live, my dear child, and He will not cast you away when you die. He who said 'Let the little children come to Me,' waits to be gracious to them, and forbids them not."

"What made you first think so seriously about the state of your soul?"

"Your talking about the graves in the churchyard, and telling us how many young children were buried there. I remember you said, one day, nearly twelve months ago, "Children, where will you be a hundred years hence? Children! Where do you think you shall go when you die? Children! If you were to die tonight, are you sure you would go to Christ and be happy?" Sir, I never shall forget your saying, 'Children,' three times together in that solemn way."

"Did you never before that day, feel any desire about your soul?"

"Yes, Sir. I think I first had that desire almost as soon as you began to teach us on Saturday afternoons; but on that day I felt as I never did before. I shall never forget it. All the way as I went home, and all that night, these words were in my thoughts: 'Children! where do you think you shall go when you die?' I thought I must leave off all my bad ways—or where should I go when I died?"

"And what effect did these thoughts produce in your mind?"

"Sir, I tried to live better and I did leave off many bad ways, but the more I strove—the more difficult I found it! My heart seemed so hard, and then I could not tell anyone my case."

"Could you not tell it to the Lord who hears and answers prayers?"

"My prayers" (here she blushed and sighed) "are very poor at the best, and at that time I scarcely knew how to pray at all as I ought. But I did sometimes ask the Lord for a better heart."

There was a character in all this conversation which marked a truly sincere and enlightened state of mind. She spoke with all the simplicity of a child—and yet the seriousness of a Christian. I could scarcely persuade myself that she was the same girl. Her countenance was filled with interesting affections, and always spoke much more than her tongue could utter. She now possessed an ease and liberty in speaking, to which she had formerly been a stranger. Nevertheless she was modest, humble, and sincere. Her readiness to converse was the result of spiritual concern, not childish curiosity.

"Sir," continued little Jane, "I had one day been thinking that I was neither fit to live nor die, for I could find no comfort in this world—and I was sure I deserved none in the next world. One day you sent me to learn the verse on Mrs. B.'s grave stone, and there were two lines which abode with me."

"Which were they?"

Hail glorious Gospel, heavenly light, whereby We live with comfort, and with comfort die.

"I wished that glorious gospel was mine—that I might live and die with comfort, and it seemed as if I thought it might be so. I never felt so happy in all my life before. The words were often in my thoughts, Live with comfort, and with comfort die."

"Glorious gospel, indeed! My dear child, what is the meaning of the word Gospel?"

"Good news."

"Good news for whom?"

"For wicked sinners, Sir."

"Who sends this good news for wicked sinners?"

"The Lord Almighty."

"And who brings this good news?"

"Sir, you brought it to me."

Here my soul melted in an instant and I could not repress the tears. The last answer was equally unexpected and affecting. I felt a father's tenderness and gratitude for a new and first-born child. Jane wept likewise. After a little pause she said:

"Oh Sir, I wish you would speak to my father and mother and little brother, for I am afraid they are going on very badly."

"How so?"

"Sir, they drink, and swear, and quarrel, and do not like what is godly; and it does grieve me so, I cannot bear it. If I speak a word to them about it, they are very angry, and laugh, and bid me be quiet, and not try to be their teacher. Sir, I am ashamed to tell you this of them, but I hope it is not wrong; I mean it for their good."

I then prayed with the child, and promised to visit her constantly.

Little Jane's illness was of a lingering nature, I often visited her. The soul of this young Christian was gradually, but effectually, preparing for heaven. I have seldom witnessed in any older person, under similar circumstances, stronger marks of earnest inquiry, continual seriousness, and holy affection. One morning as I was walking through the churchyard, on my way to visit her, I stopped to look at the epitaph which had made such an impression on her mind. I was struck with the reflection of the important consequences which might result from a more frequent and judicious attention to the inscriptions placed in our burying-grounds, as memorials of the departed. At one visit to Jane's cottage, I found her in bed reading Isaac Watts' Hymns for Children, in which she took great pleasure.

"What are you reading this morning, Jane?"

"Sir, I have been thinking very much about some verses in my book. Here they are:

There is an hour when I must die

Nor do I know how soon twill come;

A thousand children young as I

Are called by death to hear their doom.

Let me improve the hours I have

Before the day of grace is fled;

There's no repentance in the grave

Nor pardon offered to the dead.

Sir, I feel all that to be very true and I am afraid I do not improve the hours as I ought to do. I think I shall not live very long, and when I remember my sins, I say:

Lord, at Your feet, ashamed I lie

Upward I dare not look;

Pardon my sins before I die

And blot them from Your book. Do you think He will pardon me, Sir."

"My dear child, I have great hopes that He has pardoned you, that He has heard your prayers, and has put you into the number of His true children already. You have strong proofs of His mercy to your soul."

"Yes, Sir, I have, and I wish to love and bless Him for it. He is good, very good. Sir, I do so love to hear of these things. And I think, Sir, I would not love them so much if I had no part in them. Sir, there is one thing I want to ask you. It is a great thing and I may be wrong. I am so young."

Here she hesitated and paused.

"What is it? do not be fearful of mentioning it." A tear rolled down her cheek—a slight blush colored her countenance. She lifted up her eyes to heaven for a moment, and then fixing them on me with a solemn, affecting look, said "May so young a poor child as I am be admitted to the Lord's Supper? I have for some time wished it—but dared not to mention it, for fear you should think it wrong."

"My dear Jane, I have no doubt respecting it and hope that He who has given you the desire will bless His own ordinance to your soul. Would you wish it now or tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow, if you please, Sir, I am growing faint now—I hope to be better when you come again."

I was so much affected with my last visit to little Jane, and particularly with her tender anxiety respecting the Lord's supper, that it formed the chief subject of my thoughts for the remainder of the day.

Disease was making rapid inroads upon her—and she was aware of it. But as the outward man decayed—she was strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man. She was evidently ripening fast for a better world. The next morning I went to Jane's cottage. On entering the door the woman who so frequently visited her met me and said: "Perhaps, Sir, you will not wake her just yet—for she has dropped asleep and she seldom gets much rest, poor girl!"

I went gently upstairs. The child was in a half-sitting posture, leaning her head upon her right hand, with her Bible open before her. She had evidently fallen asleep while reading. Her countenance was beautifully composed and tranquil. A few tears had rolled down her cheek, and (probably unknown to her) dropped upon the pages of her bible.

I looked around me for a moment. The room was outwardly comfortless and uninviting; the walls and floor broken and uneven; the window broken in many places, and mended with patches of

paper. There was no furniture but a three-legged stool, and an old oak chest. A little shelf against the wall, over the bedstead where Jane lay, served for her medicine, her food, and her books. "Yet here" I said to myself, "lies an heir of glory, waiting for a happy dismissal. This poor chamber is a palace in the eye of faith!"

I approached without waking her and observed that she had been reading Luke 23:1-56. The finger of her left hand lay upon the book, pointing at these words: "Lord remember me when You come into Your kingdom." In a moment, I discovered that her finger was indeed an index to the thoughts of her heart.

She half awoke from her dozing state, but not sufficiently to perceive that any person was present and said in a kind of whisper: "Lord remember me, remember me, remember, remember a poor child, Lord remember me."

She then suddenly startled and perceived me as she became fully awake—a faint blush overspread her cheeks for a moment, and then disappeared.

"How long have I been asleep? Sir, I am very sorry."

"And I am very glad to find you thus," I replied.

"What were you reading?"

"The history of the crucifying of Jesus, Sir."

"How far had you read, when you fell asleep?"

"To the prayer of the thief that was crucified with Him and thought what a mercy it would be if the Lord Jesus would remember me likewise—and so I fell asleep; and I fancied in my dream that I saw Christ upon the cross. And I thought I said: 'Lord remember me,' and I am sure He did not look angry upon me."

All this seemed to be a sweet commentary on the text, and a most suitable forerunner of our intended sacramental service. The time was sweet and solemn. I went through the sacramental service. The countenance and manner of the child evinced powerful feelings. Tears mingled with smiles, resignation brightened by hope, humility animated by faith, a childlike modesty adorned with the understanding of a riper age, gratitude, peace, devotion, patience—all these were visible.

"My mercies are great, very great, Sir, greater than I can express. I thank you for this favor. Sir, I shall never forget this day."

"Neither I think shall I."

"Sir," said the child, "I wish you could speak to my mother when you come again. I am so grieved about her soul and I am afraid she cares nothing at all about it herself."

"I hope I shall have an opportunity the next time I come. Farewell, my child."

"Goodbye, Sir, and I thank you for all your kindness to me."

"Surely," I thought as I left the cottage, this young bud of grace will bloom beautifully in paradise! May the Lord transplant her there in His own good time! Yet if it be his will, may she live a little

longer, that I may further profit by her conversation and example."

Memory reflects with gratitude, while I write, on the profit and consolation which I individually derived from her society. Nor I alone. The last day will, if I err not, disclose further fruits of the love of God to this little child; and, through her, to others that saw her. And may not hope indulge the prospect, that this simple memorial of her history shall be as one arrow drawn from the quiver of the Almighty, to reach the hearts of the young and thoughtless? Direct its course, O my God! May the eye that reads, and the ear that hears, the record of little Jane, each become a witness for the truth as it is in Jesus!

I remembered the tender solicitude of this dear child for her mother. I well knew what an awful contrast the dispositions and conduct of her parents exhibited, when compared with her own.

One morning, I arrived at the stile nearly adjoining her dwelling. The upper window was open, and I soon distinguished the sound of voices. I entered the house, unperceived by those above stairs, and sat down below, not wishing as yet to interrupt a conversation which quickly caught my ear.

"Mother! mother! I have not long to live. My time will be very short. But I must, indeed I must, say something for your sake before I die. O mother! you have a soul—you have a soul! What will become of it when you die? O my mother, I am so uneasy about your soul!"

"O dear! I shall lose my child—she will die! What shall I do when you are gone, my child?" She sobbed aloud.

"Mother, think about your soul. Have not you neglected that?"

"Yes, I have been a wicked creature, and hated all that was good. What can I do?"

"Mother, you must pray to God to pardon you for Christ's sake. You must pray!"

"Jenny, my child, I cannot pray; I never did pray in all my life. I am too wicked to pray."

"Mother, I have been wanting to speak to you a long time. But I was afraid to do it. You did not like me to say anything about religion, and I did not know how to begin. But indeed, mother, I must speak now, or it may be too late. I wish Mr. Richmond was here, for he could talk to you better than I can. But perhaps you will think of what I say, poor as it is, when I am dead. I am but a young child, and not fit to speak about such things to anybody. But mother, I cannot bear to think of your perishing forever! My Savior has shown me the way to heaven. I hope I shall see Him there; but I want to see you there too, mother. Do, please do, leave off swearing and other bad ways; go to church and hear our minister speak about Jesus Christ, and what He has done for wicked sinners. He wishes well to souls. He taught me the way, and he will teach you, mother. Do not be angry with me, mother; I only speak for your good!"

"Yes, my child, you were always a good girl, and minded your bible."

"No, mother, no; not always. I cared nothing about God or my Bible until the minister came, and sent for us, as you know, on Saturday afternoons. Don't you remember, mother, that at first you did not like me to go, and said you would have no such pious doings about your house; and that I had better play about the streets and fields, than be laughed at and made fun of? Ah, mother, you did not know what I went for, and what God designed for me and my poor sinful soul. But, thank

God, I did go, and there learned the way of salvation. Mother, I wish you had learned too!" As I listened to this affecting conversation, I rejoiced to hear such weighty and important exhortation dropping from the daughter's lips. I felt that present circumstances rendered it far more valuable than my own could have been. At this moment the front door opened, and a younger child, a brother of Jane, came in. The mother asked from above who it was—the boy replied, and without further inquiry, she remained in the chamber. I beckoned the lad to sit down quietly; and thus it remained unknown that I was below.

"Mother!" continued Jane, "that is my brother, and will soon be your only remaining child. Do, please, encourage him to follow godly ways. Send him to Mr. Richmond, and he will be kind to him as he has been to me. He is a wild boy, but I hope he will be brought to think about his soul. Those naughty wicked boys teach him to swear and fight, and run after all manner of evil. Lord, help him to flee from the wrath to come!"

I made a sign to the boy to listen to what his sister said concerning him. He seemed to hear with attention, and a tear dropped down his cheek.

"Ah, Jenny, it is to be hoped he will, and that we all shall likewise."

"Mother, then you must flee to Christ. Nothing you can do will save you without that. You must repent and turn from sin—without the grace of God you cannot do it; but seek and you shall find it. Do, for your own sake, and for my sake, and my little brother's sake!" The woman wept and sobbed without replying. I now thought it time to appear, and went to the bottom of the stairs, and said, "May a friend come up?"

"Oh," said the mother, "that is Mr. Richmond." The woman looked confused. Jane smiled as I entered, and welcomed me as usual.

"Come in, Sir," said Jane; "I am very glad you have come."

"I hope I shall be forgiven, both by mother and daughter, for having remained so long downstairs, during the conversation which has just taken place. I came in the hope of finding you together, as I have had a wish for some time past to speak to you, Sarah, on the same subjects about which, I am happy to say, your daughter is so concerned. You have long neglected these things, and I wish to warn you of the danger of your state; but Jenny has said all I could desire, and I now solemnly ask you whether you are not much affected by your poor child's faithful conversation? You ought to have been her teacher and instructor in the ways of righteousness; whereas now she has become yours. Look at your dying child, and think of your other and only remaining one, and say whether this sight does not call aloud upon you to hear and fear."

Jane's eyes were filled with tears while I spoke. The woman hung her head down, but showed some emotions of dislike, at the plain dealing used towards her.

"Jane" said I, "how are you today?"

"Sir, I have been talking a good deal, and feel rather faint and weary, but my mind has been very easy and happy since I last saw you. I am quite willing to die, when the Lord sees fit. I have no wish to live, except it be to see my friends walking in God's way, before I depart. Sir, I used to be afraid to speak to them; but I feel today as if I could hold my peace no longer, and I must tell them

what the Lord has done for my soul, and what I feel for theirs."

There was a firmness, I may say a dignity, with which this was uttered, that surprised me. The character of the child seemed to be lost in that of the Christian; her natural timidity yielded to a holy assurance of manner, resulting from her own inward consolations, mingled with spiritual desire for her mother's welfare. This produced a flush upon her otherwise pallid countenance, which much added to her interesting appearance. The Bible lay open before her as she sat up in the bed. With her right hand she enclosed her mother's.

"Mother, you are unable to read this book—you should therefore go constantly to church, that you may hear it explained. It is God's book, and tells us the way to heaven; I hope you will learn and mind it: with God's blessing it may save your soul. Do think of that, mother, please do. I am soon going to die. Give this Bible to my brother. And will you be so kind Sir, as to instruct him?"

She was quite overcome, and sank away in a kind of fainting fit. Her mother observed that she would now probably remain insensible for some time before she recovered.

I improved this interval in a serious address to the woman, and then prepared to take my departure, perceiving that Jane was too much exhausted for further conversation at that time. As I was leaving the room, the child said faintly, "Come again soon, Sir—my time is very short."

I returned home, and silently meditated on the eminent proofs of piety and faith which were just afforded me in the scene I had witnessed. Surely, I thought, this is an extraordinary child! What cannot grace accomplish? At a very early hour on the morning of the following day, I was awake by the arrival of a messenger, bringing an earnest request that I would immediately go to the child, as her end appeared to be just approaching.

It was not yet day when I left my house to obey the summons. The morning star shone conspicuously clear. The moon cast a mild light over the prospect, but gradually diminished in brightness as the eastern sky became enlightened. The birds were beginning their songs, and seemed ready to welcome the sun's approach. The dew plentifully covered the fields, and hung in drops from the trees and hedges. A few early laborers appeared in the lanes, traveling towards the scene of their daily occupations. The rays of the morning star were not so beautiful in my sight—as the spiritual lustre of this young Christian's character. Her night was far spent; the morning of a better day was at hand. The sun of eternal blessedness was ready to break upon her soul with rising glory. Like the moon, which I saw above me, this child's exemplary deportment had gently cast a useful light over the neighborhood where she dwelt. Like this moon she had for a season been permitted to shine amidst the surrounding darkness; and her rays were also reflected from a luminary, in whose native splendor her own would quickly be blended and lost. All was still and calm. My mind, as I proceeded, dwelt upon the affecting events which I expected soon to witness. On arriving at the house I found no one below. I paused for a few minutes and heard the girl's voice very faintly saying: "Do you think he will come? I would be so very glad to see him before I die."

I ascended the stairs—her father, mother, brother, and the woman who cared for her, were in the chamber. Jane's countenance bore the marks of a speedy death. The moment she saw me, a renewed vigor beamed in her eye; grateful affection sparkled in the dying face. For some time she was silent, but never took her eyes off me. At length she said: "This is very kind, Sir, I am going

fast—I was afraid I would never see you again in this world."

I said, "My child, are you resigned to die?"

"Quite."

"Where is your hope?"

She lifted up her finger, pointed to heaven and then directed the same downward to her own heart, saying successively as she did so: "Christ there—and Christ here." These words, accompanied by the action, spoke her meaning more solemnly than can easily be conceived. A momentary spasm took place. Looking towards her weeping mother, she said, "I am very cold—but it is no matter—it will soon be over." Then she said to me, "I wish, Sir, when I am gone, that you would tell the children of the parish how good the Lord has been to me, a poor sinner. Tell them that those who seek Him early will find Him. Tell them that the ways of sin and ignorance, are the ways to ruin and hell. And please, tell them from me, Sir, that Christ is indeed the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He will never cast out any who come."

"My dear child, you will soon be forever in His arms, who is now guiding you by His rod and staff through the valley of the shadow of death."

"I believe so, indeed, I do," said she, "I long to be with Him—Jesus, save me, help me through this last trial."

She then gave one hand to her father, the other to her mother, and said: "God bless you, God bless you—seek the Lord—you cannot know what I have felt for both of you. Lord, pardon and save my dear father and mother."

She then took hold of her brother's hand, saying, "Thomas, I beg you to leave off your bad ways. Read the Bible—I give you mine. May the Lord turn your heart to love and follow Him." To the woman who cared for her, she said: "I thank you, for all your kindness since I have been ill. I hope the Lord will remember you for it, according to His rich mercy."

"Ah, my child," said the woman, "I wish I was as fit to die as you are, but I fear that will never be—my sins have been many, very many."

"Christ's blood cleanses from all sin," said the child. At this moment, instead of growing weaker, through the fatigue of so much speaking, she seemed to gather fresh strength. She turned to me with a look of surprising earnestness and animation, saying, "You, Sir, have been my best friend on earth. You have taught me the way to heaven—and I love and thank you for it. You have spoken to me of the love of Christ, and He has made me to feel it in my heart. I shall see Him face to face! He will never leave me nor forsake me. He is the same and changes not. Dear Sir, God bless you." The child suddenly rose up with an unexpected exertion, threw her ashen, wasted arms around me as I sat on the bedside, laid her head on my shoulder and said distinctly: "God bless and reward you. Give thanks for me to Him. My soul is saved. Christ is everything to me. Sir, we shall meet in heaven, shall we not? Oh yes, yes—then all will be peace .. peace .. peace."

She sank back on the bed, and spoke no more. She drew a deep sigh, smiled—and died. For some time I remained silently gazing on the breathless corpse, and could hardly persuade myself

that Jane was indeed no longer there. As I returned homeward, I found it difficult to repress the strong feelings of affection which such a scene had excited. Neither did I wish it. Jesus Himself wept over the coming sorrows of Jerusalem. He wept also at the grave of his friend Lazarus. Such an example consecrates the tear of affection, while it teaches us, 'concerning those who are asleep—not to sorrow, as those which have no hope.'

I soon fell into meditation on the mysterious subject of the flight of a soul from this world to that of departed spirits. Swifter than an arrow from a bow, or than the rays of light from the sun—has this child's spirit hastened, in obedience to its summons from God, to appear in His immediate presence! What a change for her! from that poor tattered chamber—to the regions of paradise! from a bed of straw—to the bosom of Abraham!

I have lost a young disciple, endeared to me by a tender tie. Yet how can I complain of that as lost—which God has found? Her willing and welcome voice no longer seeks or imparts instruction here. But it is far better employed. Why then should I mourn? The whole prospect, as it concerns her, is filled with joy and immortality, 'Death is swallowed up in victory!' As I looked upon the dew-drops which rested on the grass and hung from the branches of the trees, I observed that the sun's rays first filled them with beautiful and varied colors; then dried them up, and they were seen no longer.

Thus it was with myself. The tears which I neither would nor could restrain, when I first began thus to reflect on the image of dead little Jane, were speedily brightened by the vivid sunshine of hope and confidence. They then gradually yielded to the influence of that divine principle which shall finally wipe the tear from every eye, and banish all sorrow and sighing for evermore. On the fourth day from thence, Jane was buried. The attendants were not many, but I was glad to perceive among them—some of the children who had been accustomed to receive my weekly private instruction along with her. As I stood at the head of the grave, during the service, I connected past events, which had occurred in the churchyard, with the present. In this spot Jane first learned the value of that gospel which saved her soul. Not many yards from her own burial-place, was the epitaph which has already been described as the first means of affecting her mind with serious and solemn conviction. The evening was serene—nothing occurred to interrupt the quiet solemnity of the occasion.

'Peace' was the last word little Jane uttered while living; and peace seemed to be inscribed on the farewell scene at the grave where she was laid.

Attachment to the spot where this young Christian lay, induced me to plant a yew-tree, close by the head of her grave, adjoining the eastern wall of the church. I designed it as an evergreen monument of one who was dear to memory. The young plant appeared healthy for a while, and promised by its outward vigor long to retain its station. But it withered soon afterwards, and, like the child whose grave it pointed out to notice—early faded away and died. The yew-tree proved a frail and short-lived monument. But a more lasting one dwells on my own heart. And perhaps this narrative may be permitted to transmit her memory to other generations, when the hand and heart of the writer shall be cold in the dust.

Perhaps some, into whose hands these pages may fall, will be led to cultivate their spiritual young plants, with increased hope of success in so arduous an endeavor. May the tender blossoms

reward their care, and bring forth early and acceptable fruit!

While the parent, teacher, or minister, is occupied in this grateful task of laboring in his heavenly Master's garden, some blight, some tempest, may perhaps take away a favorite young blossom, in a premature stage of its growth.

If such a case should befall him, he will then perhaps, as I have often done, when standing in pensive recollection at little Jane's grave, make an application of these lines, which are inscribed on a grave-stone erected in the same churchyard—

"This lovely bud, so young and fair,

Called hence by early doom,

Just came to show how sweet a flower

In Paradise would bloom." A tribute of affection has been paid to the memory of the Young Cottager, by putting up a grave-stone, on which the following verses are inscribed:

"You who the power of God delight to trace,

And mark with joy each monument of grace,

Tread lightly o'er this grave, as you explore

The short and simple Annals of the Poor! A child reposes underneath this sod—

A child to memory dear, and dear to God;

Rejoice! yet shed the sympathetic tear;

Jane, 'the Young Cottager,' lies buried here."

S. Visit to the Infirmary

Visit to the Infirmary by Legh Richmond A few months ago, I went to visit a parishioner, then in the County Infirmary, within some miles of which I reside, and was informed that in an adjoining ward there lay a very good old man, confined by a crippling disease in his foot, who would take particular satisfaction in any Christian conversation which time would allow me to afford him. The nurse conducted me into a room, where I found him alone on a bed. The character of his countenance was venerable, cheerful, contented, and pious. His hoary hairs proclaimed him to be aged, although the liveliness in his eye was equal to that of the most vigorous youth.

"How are you, my friend?" I said.

"Very well, sir, very well. Never better in all my life. Thank God for all his mercies," replied the man, with so cheerful a tone of voice, as at once surprised and delighted me.

"Very well? How so? I thought, from what I heard, you were in much pain and weakness?" said I.

"Yes, sir, that is true ; but I am very well—even for all that. For God is so good to my soul; and he provides everything needful for my body. The people in the house are very kind; and friends come to see me, and talk and pray with me. Sir, I desire nothing—but more grace, to praise the Lord for all his goodness."

"Why, my friend, you are an old pilgrim, and I am glad to see that you have learned thankfulness, as you travel through the wilderness."

"Thankfulness!" quickly returned he; "No, sir; I never did thank the Lord, I never could thank him, no, nor I never shall thank him—as I ought, until I get to glory. And then — O! then — how I will thank him for what he has done for me!" Tears of affection filled his eyes as he spoke.

"What a good Master you serve I" I added.

"Ay, sir—if only the servant was but as good as the Master. But here I am, a poor old sinner, deserving nothing, and receiving everything which I need. Sir, I desire nothing, but more grace to serve him better. I lie here on this bed, and pray and sing by night and day. Sir, you must let me sing you my hymn—I always begin it about four o'clock in the morning, and it keeps my spirits alive all the day through."

Without waiting for my reply, he raised himself up, and in an aged and broken, but very affecting tone of voice, he sang two or three verses, expressive of God's goodness to him, and his own desire to live to God's glory. The simplicity, serenity, and heartfelt consolation, with which this venerable disciple went through it, gave a coloring to the whole, and left an impression on my mind, which it would be impossible to convey to the reader. As soon as he had finished his hymn, he said, "Do not be offended, sir, at my boldness. I hope you love the Lord, too; if so, then I am sure you won't be angry to hear me praise him. But now, sir, talk to me about Jesus Christ. You are his minister, and he has sent you here today to see a poor unworthy soul, that does not

deserve the least of his mercies. Talk to me, sir, if you please about Jesus Christ."

"Neither you nor I are able to talk of him as we ought." I answered, "and yet, if we were to hold our peace, the very stones would cry out."

"Ay, and well they might, sir, cry shame, shame upon us, if we refused to speak of his goodness," said the old man.

"Jesus Christ," I continued, "is a sure refuge, and a present help in time of trouble."

"That's right, sir—so he is."

"Jesus Christ has taken care of you, and watched over you all the days of your life; and he will be your guide and portion in death."

"That's right again, sir—so he will."

"You have committed your soul into his keeping long since, have you not?"

"Over forty years ago, sir. Over forty years ago, (when I first used to hear good Mr. Venn and Mr. Berridge,) he came to seek and to save me, a vile sinner, who deserved nothing but his wrath. I can never praise him enough."

"Well, my friend, and this very Savior Jesus Christ, whom you love, and in whom you trust, lived for you, and died for you; he rose again for you, and has sanctified you by his Holy Spirit, and now lives to make daily intercession for you; and having done all this, do you think he will leave you to perish at last?"

"No, sir!" said the old man, "faithful is he who has promised, and will do it. Mine, alas—is a changing heart; but he changes not. I believe that he has laid up a crown of glory for me; and though the old enemy of souls sometimes tells me I shall not have it—I believe in Christ sooner than in him, and I trust I shall have it at last."

"And do you not find by experience," I added, "that his yoke is easy, and his burden light? His commandments are not grievous, are they?"

"No, sir, no—it is a man's food and drink—if he loves the Lord—to do what he bids him."

"Where were you, before you came into this infirmary?"

"In the county workhouse."

"Have you a wife?"

"She died some years since, and got to her heavenly home before me."

"Have you any children?"

"Yes, sir, I have two married sons, who are settled in the world with families. One of them has been here to see me lately, and I hope that the Lord will save his soul—and that he will bring up his children in the fear of God."

"Have you any worldly cares upon your mind?"

"Not one, sir. I am come to this infirmary, I plainly see, to end my days; for this deadly disease in my leg must, before very long, bring me to the grave. And I am quite willing, sir, to go or to wait, the Lord's own time. I desire nothing, sir, but more grace to praise him." He often repeated these last words in the course of the conversation.

"You have reason," I said, "to feel thankful that there is such a house as this, for poor and sick people to be brought to, for food, lodging, and medicine."

"I am thankful, indeed, sir! It is a house of mercies to me, and I am ashamed to hear how unthankful many of the patients seem to be for the benefits which the Lord provides for them here. But, poor creatures—they neither know nor love him. May the Lord have mercy upon them; and show them the right way. I would never have known that good way, sir—if he had not taken compassion upon me, when I had none upon myself."

Tears ran down his aged cheeks as he spoke these last words. "Here," thought I, "is a poor man—who is very rich, and a weak man—who is very strong." At this moment the nurse brought in his dinner.

"There, sir, you see, more and more mercies! The Lord takes care of me, and sends me plenty of food for this poor old worn-out body."

"And yet," said I, "that poor old worn-out body will one day be renewed and become a glorified body, and live along with your soul in the presence of God forever!"

"That's right, sir," said the good old man, "so it will—for after the worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God! But come, sir," seeing me look at my watch, "you must speak a word to your Master, if you please, as well as for him. I will put down my dinner while you pray with me."

I did so, the man often adding his confirmation of what I offered up, by voice, gesture, and countenance, in a manner highly expressive of the agreement of his heart with the language of the prayer.

Having ended, he said, "God be with you, sir, and bless your labors to many poor souls! I hope you will come to see me again—if my life is spared. I am so glad to see those who will talk to me about Jesus Christ, and his precious salvation."

I replied, "May the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who carried them through the days of their pilgrimage, and brought them safe to a city which has foundations, bring you there too, and bless you all the remaining days of your journey, until you get home. I am going to see several serious friends this evening, who would be glad, I know, to receive a message from one who has had so much experience of a Savior's mercies. What shall I say to them?"

"Tell them, sir, with my Christian love and respects, that you have been to see a poor dying old man, who desires nothing at all, in this world, but more grace to praise the Lord with." So ended our first interview. I could not help reflecting, as I returned homeward, that as the object of my journey to the infirmary had been to carry instruction and consolation to the poor and the sick—so the poor and the sick were made instrumental to the conveying of both instruction and consolation to my own heart, in a very superior degree.

I saw him four or five times afterward, and always found him in the same happy, patient, thankful, and edifying state of mind and conversation. The last time I was with him, he said, "Sir, I long to be at my heavenly home—but I am willing to remain a traveler, as long as my Lord and Master sees good."

He died not long after my last visit to him, in the steadfast assurance of faith, and with a full hope of immortality.

(The foregoing conversation took place on September 22, 1808, and is faithfully related. J. S., the good old man, died in the infirmary, in December, 1808.)

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