

Edw. A. Steyer New York

Brief and General

A C C O U N T

Of the First Part of the

L I F E

Of the Reverend

Mr. George Whitefield,

From his BIRTH, to his entering into
H O L Y O R D E R S.

Written by H I M S E L F.

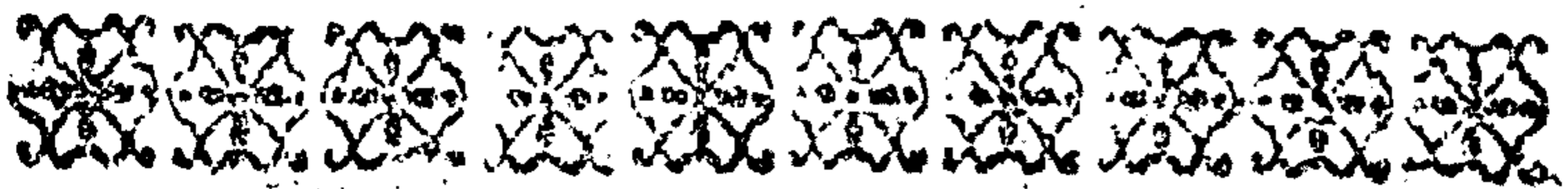
With a PREFACE, containing Reasons for his
Writing and Publishing the same.

B O S T O N : N E.

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P R E F A C E.

Altho' the following Account of what GOD has done for my Soul, will undoubtedly be differently judged of by different People, yet as I trust a single Eye to GOD's Glory moved me to write, and as I find myself much pressed in Spirit to publish it, I am not in the least solicitous about the Treatment it will meet with in the World.

The Benefit I have receiv'd from reading the Lives of Good Men, the Examples we have in Scripture of the sacred Authors composing their own Histories, and more especially the Assistances I have receiv'd from the Holy Spirit in bringing many Things to my Remembrance, which otherwise I should have forgotten; seemed to me Reasons sufficient to justify my Conduct in the Sight of GOD, and all good Men.

Further, As GOD has been pleas'd of late to call me to a Publick Work, I thought his Children would be glad to know how I was trained up for it — and tho' some may think this had been as well defer'd till after my Death, or wrote by some other Persons; yet I thought it would be more beneficial and be better credited if wrote with my own Hand, and publish'd whilst I was yet alive.

In the Accounts of good Men which I have read, I have observed, that the Writers of them have been partial.

P R E F A C E.

— They have given us the bright, but not the black Side of their Characters. This I think proceeds from carnal Reasoning, lest mentioning the Person's Faults should encourage others in Sin — It cannot, I am sure, proceed from that Wisdom which cometh from above. — The sacred Writers give an Account of their Failings as well as their Virtues. — Peter is not ashamed to confess that with Oaths and Curses he thrice denied his Master; nor do the Evangelists make any Scruple of telling that out of Mary-Magdalen JESUS CHRIST cast seven Devils.

I fearing therefore lest my surviving Friends should not be thus impartial in giving an Account of me, I was resolved (among other Reasons) to give the following Account of myself, that those who now have my Person too much in Admiration, seeing what once I was, may learn not to think more highly of me than they ought to think. — That those who are awaken'd to a Sense of Sin may not despair, since for this Cause I obtained Mercy, that in me JESUS CHRIST may shew forth all Long-suffering for a Pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to Life everlasting — And finally, that all true Lovers of GOD may join in hearty Thanks and Praises to the most adorable Trinity, for plucking such a Firebrand out of the Burning.

As I have often wish'd, when in my best Frames, that the first Years of my Life might be put down as a Blank, and had no more in Remembrance, so I could almost wish now to pass them over in Silence. But as they will, in some Degree, illustrate God's Dealing with me in my riper Years, I shall, as I am able, give the following brief Account of them.

August 1739.

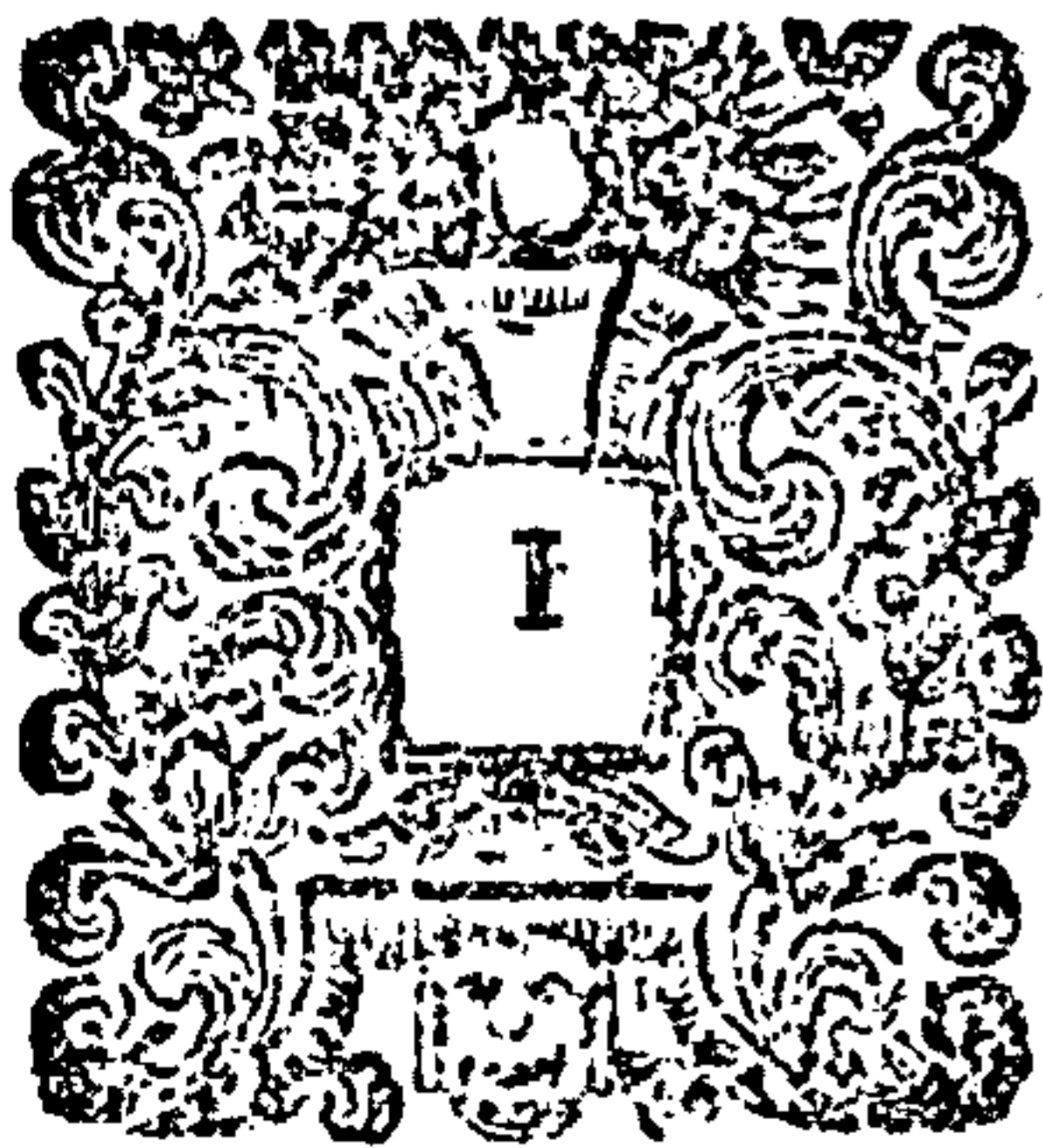


A Brief and General
ACCOUNT, &c.



SECTION, I.

From my INFANCY, *till my being for*
some Time at the UNIVERSITY.



Was born in *Gloucester*, in the
Month of *December* 1714.
My Father and Mother kept
the *Bell Inn*. — The former
died when I was two Years
old — the latter is now alive,
and has often told me, how
she endured fourteen Weeks
Sickness after she brought me into the World ;
but was used to say, even when I was an Infant,
that she expected more Comfort from me than
any other of her Children. — This, with the
Circumstance of my being born in an *Inn*, has
been often of Service to me in exciting me to
make good my Mother's Expectations, and to fol-
low the Example of my dear Saviour, who was

born in a Stable and laid in a Manger belonging to an Inn.

My very infant Years must necessarily not be mention'd — Yet I can remember such early Stirrings of Corruption in my Heart, as abundantly convince me that *I was conceived and born in Sin* — That in me dwelleth no good Thing by Nature. — And that if GOD had not freely prevented me by his *Grace*, I must have been forever banished from his divine Presence.

I can truly say, I was sroward from my Mother's Womb. — I was so brutish as to hate Instruction, and used purposely to shun all Opportunities of receiving it. — I can date some very early Acts of Uncleanness — I soon gave pregnant Proofs of an impudent Temper. — Lying, filthy talking, and foolish Jesting, I was much addicted to, even when very Young. — Sometimes I used to curse, if not swear. — Stealing from my Mother I thought no Theft at all, and I therefore used to make no Scruple of stealing Money out of her Pocket before she was up; and have more than once spent Money I took in the House in buying Fruits, Tarts, &c. to satisfy my sensual Appetite. — I was never much given to Fighting, but that I fear rather proceeded from Cowardice, than a principle of Meekness, or a good Temper. Numbers of *Sabbaths* have I broken, and generally used to behave myself very irreverently in GOD's *Sanctuaries*. — Much Money have I spent in Plays, and in the common Entertainments of the Age — Cards, and reading Romances, were my Heart's Delight — Often have I joined with others in playing roguish Tricks, but was generally, if not always, happily detected; for which I have often since, and do now, praise GOD.

It would be endless to recount the Sins and Offences of my younger Days— They are more in Number than the Hairs of my Head— My Heart would fail me at the Remembrance of them, was I not assured that my Redeemer liveth, ever to make Intercession for me; however the *Young Man* in the *Gospel* might boast that he had kept, yet with Shame and Confusion of Face, I confess, that all GOD's Commandments I have broken from my Youth. ——— Whatever foreseen Fitness others may boast of for Salvation, if I trace myself from my Cradle to my Manhood, I can see nothing in me but a Fitness to be damned ——— And if GOD had not quickened me by his FREE SPIRIT when dead in Trespasses and Sins, and irresistibly worked upon my Soul; I had now either been sitting in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death, or been condemned as the due Reward of my Crimes, to be forever lifting up my Eyes in Torments.

But such was the *FREE GRACE* of *GOD* to me, that tho' Corruption worked so strongly in my Soul, and produced such early and bitter Fruits, yet I can recollect very early Movings of the *bles-sed Spirit* upon my Heart, sufficient to satisfy me, God loved me with an everlasting Love, and separated me even from my Mother's Womb, for the Work to which he afterwards was pleased to call me.

I had early some Convictions of Sin, and once I remember when Persons (as they frequently did) made it their Business to tantalize me, I immediately retired to my Room, and kneeled down, and with many Tears prayed over that Psalm wherein *David* so often repeats these Words, *But in the Name of the Lord will I destroy them.* I was always
fond

fond of being a *Clergyman*, I used frequently to immitate the Ministers reading Prayers, and to make little Sermons, in little Books about as long as my Finger. — Part of the Money I used to steal from my Parents I gave to the Poor, and some Books I privately took from others (for which I have since restored four fold) I remember were Books of Devotion.

My Mother was very careful of my Education, put me out to two different Schools to board, and always kept me in my tender Years (for which I can never sufficiently thank her (from intermeddling in the least with publick Business.

About the tenth Year of my Age, it pleased God to permit my Mother to marry a second time — It proved what the World would call an unhappy Match as to temporal Things ; but God over-ruled it for Good — It set many of my Brethren upon thinking more than otherwise they would have done, and made an uncommon Impression upon my own Heart in particular.

When I was about Twelve, I was placed at a School called *St Mary de Cryps* in *Gloucester*, the last Grammar School I ever went to. — Having a good Elocution and Memory, I was remark'd for my making Speeches before the Corporation at their annual Visitations — But I cannot say I felt any Drawings of GOD upon my Soul for a Year or two, saving that I layed out some of the Money, that was given me, on one of the forementioned Occasions, in buying *Ken's Manual* for Winchester Scholars ; a Book that had much affected me, when my Brother used to read it in my Mother's Troubles, and which, for sometime after I bought it, was of great Benefit to my Soul.

During

During the Time of my being at School, I was very fond of reading Plays, and have kept from School for Days together, to prepare myself for acting them. — My Master seeing how mine and my School-Fellows Vein run, compos'd something of this kind for us himself, and caused me to dress myself, in Girls Cloaths (which I had often done) to act a Part before the Corporation, a Thing which has, and I trust will cause me much Sorrow even to the End of my Life.

For tho' GOD brought Good afterwards even out of this Evil, as it was a Means of strengthening my Memory and teaching me a proper Gesture of speaking : Yet this Way of training up Youth has a natural Tendency to debauch the Mind, to raise ill Passions, and to stuff the Memory with Things as contrary to the Gospel of J E S U S C H R I S T as Darkness to Light, Hell to Heaven; — However tho' the first Thing I had to repent of, was my Education in general, yet I must always acknowledge my particular Thanks are due to my Master, for the great Pains he took with me, and the other Scholars in teaching us to speak and write correctly.

Before I was Fifteen, having as I thought made a sufficient Progress in the Classicks, and secretly longing to be set at Liberty from the Confinement of a School, I one Day told my Mother, since her Circumstances would not permit her to give me an University Education, more Learning I thought would spoil me for a Tradesman, and therefore I judg'd it best not to learn Latin any longer — She at first refused to consent, but my Corruption soon got the better of her good Nature. — Hereupon for some Time I went to learn to write only — But my Mother's Circumstances being
much

much on the decline, and I being tractable that Way, I from Time to Time began to assist her occasionally in the Publick House, 'till at length I put on my blue Apron and my Snuffers, wash'd Mops, clean'd Rooms, and in one Word became a profess'd and common Drawer for near a Year and a half.

But he, who was with DAVID when he was following the Sheep big with Young, was with me even here ——— For notwithstanding I was thus employed in a common Inn, and had sometimes the Care of the whole House upon my Hands; yet I compos'd two or three Sermons, and dedicat-ed one of them, in particular, to my elder Brother. One Time I remember I was much pressed to Self Examination, and found myself very unwilling at first to look into my Heart. ——— And when a dear Youth (now with God) would often come entreating me, when serving at the Bar, to go to Oxon, my general Answer was, I wish I could.

And he that has promised to fulfil the Desires of them that fear him, was pleas'd to fulfil this Desire his Holy Spirit had put into my Heart.

When I had been employ'd above a Year in this servile Manner, my Mother was oblig'd to leave the Inn. ——— My Brother, who had been bred up for the Business, married. ——— All was made over to him. ——— I being accustom'd to the House, it was agreed on all Hands, that I should continue there as an Assistant. ——— But God's Thoughts were not as our Thoughts. ——— By his good Providence it happen'd that my Sister-in-Law and I could by no means agree. ——— And at length the Resentment grew to such a Height, that my proud Heart could scarce suffer me to speak to her for three Weeks together: But notwithstanding I was
much

much to blame yet I used to retire and weep as *Hagar* did before the Lord, little thinking that God by this means was forcing me out of the Publick-Business, and calling me from drawing Wine for Drunkards, to draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation for the Refreshment of his spiritual *Israel*. — After continuing a long Time under this Burden of Mind, I at length resolved, thinking my Absence would make all Things easy, to go away: Accordingly, by the Advice of my Brother, and Consent of my Mother, I went to see my elder Brother then settled at *Bristol*.

And here God was pleased to give me great Foretastes of his Love, and filled me with such unspeakable Raptures, in *St John's Church*, that I was carried out even beyond myself — I felt great Hungrings and Thirstings after the blessed Sacrament, and wrote many pious Letters to my Mother, telling her, I would never go into the publick Employ again — *Kempis* was my great Delight, and I was always impatient 'till the Bell rung to call me to tread the Courts of the Lord's House — But in the midst of these Illuminations, something secretly whisper'd, this would not last.

And indeed so it happen'd — For (Oh that I could write it in Tears of Blood) when I left *Bristol* (as I did in about two Months) and returned to *Gloucester*, I changed my Devotion with my Place. — Alas! all my Fervour went off! — I had no Inclination to go to Church or draw nigh unto God. — In short, my Heart (tho' I had so lately tasted of his Love) was far from him.

However, I had so much Religion left as to persist in my Resolution not to live in the Inn — And therefore my Mother gave me leave, tho' she had but a little Income, to have a Bed upon the Ground, and

and live at her House 'till Providence should point out a Place for me.

Having now, as I thought, nothing to do, it was a proper Season for Satan to tempt me ——— Much of my Time I spent in reading Plays, and in sauntering from Place to Place. ——— I was careful to adorn my Body, but took little Pains to deck and beautify my Soul. ——— Evil Communications, with my old School-Fellows, soon corrupted my good Manners ——— By seeing their evil Practices, a Sense of the divine Presence and past Convictions insensibly wore off my Mind, and I at length fell secretly into a Sin for which *Onan* dyed ; the dismal Effects of which I have felt and groaned under ever since.

But God, whose Gifts, and Callings are without Repentance, would let nothing pluck me out of his Hands, tho' I was continually opposing the *Spirit of Grace* ——— He saw me, with Pity and Compassion, when lying in my Blood ——— He passed by me, He said unto me LIVE, and even then gave me some Foresight of his providing for me.

One Morning as I was reading a Play to my Sister, said I, *Sister I believe God intends something for me, which we know not of ; as I have been diligent in Business, I believe many would gladly have me for an Apprentice, but every Way seems to be barr'd up, so that GOD I think will provide for me some Way or other.*

How I came to say these Words I know not ——— God afterwards shewed me they came from him ; for having lived thus with my Mother for a considerable Time, a young Student, who was once a School-Fellow, and then a Servitor of *Pembroke College Oxon*, came to pay my Mother a Visit ——— Amongst other Conversation he told he

how he had discharged all College Expences that Quarter and received a Penny. — Upon this, my Mother immediately cryed out, that will do for me. — Then turning to me she said, *Will you go to Oxford George?* — *Yes*, I replied, *with all my Heart.* — Whereupon having the same Friends as this Student had, my Mother, without Delay, waited on them — They promised their Interest to get me a Servitor's Place in the same College. — She then applied to my old Master, who much approved of my coming to School again.

In about a Week I went and re-enter'd myself, and being grown pretty much in Stature, my Master address'd me *thus*, *I see George you are advanced in Stature, but your better Part must needs have gone backwards* — This made me blush — He set me a proper Theme to translate into *Latin.* — And tho' I had made no Application to my Classicks for so long a Time, yet I had but one inconsiderable Fault in my Exercise — This, I believe, somewhat surprized my Master, and has afforded me Matter of Praise and Thanks ever since.

Being re-fettled at School, I spared no Pains to go forward in my Book. — God was pleased to give me his Blessing — And I learnt much faster than ever I did before.

All this while I continued in secret Sin, and at length got acquainted with a Set of such debauched, abandoned, atheistical Youths, that if God by his free, unmerited, distinguishing Grace, had not delivered me out of their Hands, I should long since have sat in the Scorners's Chair.

My Thoughts of Religion insensibly grew more and more lax. I went to publick Service only to make Game and walk about — I took Pleasure in
 B their

their lewd Conversation——I begun to reason as they did, and to ask why God has given me Passions and not permitted me to gratify them —— Not considering that God did not originally give us these corrupt Passions, and that he had promised Help to withstand them, if we would ask it of him —— In short, I soon made a great Proficiency in the School of the Devil. ~~and~~ I affected to look Rakish, and was in a fair way of being as infamous as the worst of them.

But (Oh stupendous Love) God even here stopped me, when running in a full Career to Hell —— For just as I was upon the Brink of Ruin, he gave me such a Distaste of their Principles and Practices, that I discovered them to my Master, who soon put a Stop to their Proceedings.

Being thus delivered out of the Snare of the Devil, I began to be more and more serious, and felt God convicting and working upon my Soul in some small Degree. —— One Day as I was coming down Stairs, and overheard my Friends speaking well of me, God so deeply convicted me of my Hypocrisy, that tho' I had formed frequent, but ineffectual, Resolutions before, yet I had then Power given me over my secret and darling Sin —— Notwithstanding sometime afterwards, being overtaken in Liquor, (as I have been twice or thrice in my Life time) Satan gained his usual Advantage over me again —— An experimental Proof to my poor Soul, how that wicked One makes use of Men as Machines to work up to just what he pleases, when by Intemperance they have chased the Spirit of God from them.

Being now near the Seventeenth Year of my Age, I was resolved to prepare myself for the *Holy Sacrament*, which I received on *Christmas Day* —— I began now to be more and more watchful

over

over my Thoughts, Words and Actions. —
 I kept the following *Lent*, fasting *Wednesdays* and *Fridays* thirty six Hours together — My Evenings, when I had done waiting upon my Mother, were generally spent in Acts of Devotion, reading *Drelincourt* upon Death, and other practical Books, and I constantly went to publick Worship twice a Day — Being now upper Boy, by God's help, I made some Reformation among my School Fellows. — Was very diligent in reading and learning the *Classicks* and in studying my *Greek Testament*; but was not yet convinced of the absolute unlawfulness of playing Cards, reading and seeing Plays, tho' I began to have some Scruples about them.

Near this Time I dream't, that I was to see God on *Mount Sinai*, but was afraid to meet him. This made a great Impression upon me; a Gentlewoman to whom I told it, said, George this is a Call from God.

Still I grew more serious after this Dream. — But yet Hypocrisy crept into every Action. — As I once affected to look more rakish, I now strove to appear more grave than really I was. — However an uncommon Concern and Alteration were visible in my Behaviour. — I often used to find Fault with the Lightness of others, and sometimes took upon me to reprove my elder Brethren.

Not long after, as I was going one Night on an Errand for my Mother, an unaccountable but very strong Impression was made upon my Heart, that I should Preach and Print quickly. — When I came home I innocently told my Mother what had befallen me. — But she (like *Joseph's* Parents, when he told them his Dream) turning short upon me cryed out, *What does the Boy Mean? prithee hold thy Tongue*, or something to that Purpose. —

Since GOD has shewn her from whom these Impressions came.

For a Twelve-Month I went on in a Round of Duties, receiving the Sacrament Monthly, fasting frequently, attending constantly on publick Worship, and praying often more than twice a Day in private. — One of my Brothers used to tell me, he fear'd this would not hold long, and that I would forget all when I came to *Oxford*. — This Caution did me much Service, it set me upon praying to God for Perseverance. — And, under God, the Preparation I made in the Country was an excellent Preservative against those manifold Temptations which beset me at my first coming to that Seat of Learning.

Being near Eighteen, it was judged a proper Time for my going to the *University*. — God had sweetly prepared my Way. — The Friends before applied to, recommended me to the Master of *Pembroke-College*; another Friend took up Ten Pounds upon Bond (which I have since paid) to defray the first Expences of ent'ring, and the Master, contrary to all Expectations, admitted me *Servitor* immediately.

Soon after my Admission I went to reside, and found my being, at a publick House, was of Service to me. — For, all the Servitors being sick at my first coming up, by my diligent and speedy Attendance, I ingratiated myself into the Gentlemens Favour so far that many who had it in their own Power chose me to be their Servitor.

This much lessen'd my Expence, and indeed God was so good to me, that with the Profits of my Place, and some little Presents made me by my kind Tutor, for almost the three first Years I did not put all my Relations together, to above Eight Pounds Expence per Ann. ~~per Ann.~~ And it has of-

ten grieved my Soul to see so many young Men spending their Substance in extravagant Living, and thereby entirely unfitting themselves for the Prosecution of their Studies.

I had not been long here before I found the Benefit of the Foundation I had laid in the Country for a holy Life — I was quickly solicited to join with several, who lay in the same Room, in their Excess of Riot — God in Answer to my Prayers, gave me Grace to withstand them; and once in particular, it being cold, my Thighs were so benumb'd by sitting alone in my Study, because I would not go out amongst them, that I could scarce sleep all Night. — But I soon found the Benefit of not yielding — For, when they perceived they could not prevail, they let me alone for a singular comical Fellow.

All this while I was not fully satisfied of the Sin of playing at Cards and reading of Plays, till God upon a Fast-Day was pleased to convince me — For taking the Play called *George Barnwell*, to read a Passage out of it to a Friend, God struck my Heart with such Power, that I was obliged to lay it down; and, blessed be his Name, I have never read any such Book since.

Before I went to the University, I met with Mr. LAW's *Serious Call to a devout Life*, but had not then Money enough to purchase it — Soon after my coming up to the University, I, seeing a small Edition of it in a Friend's hand, soon procured it. — GOD worked powerfully upon my Soul, as he has since upon many others, by that and his other Treatise upon *Christian Perfection*. — For which I desire to bless his Holy Name.

I now began to pray and sing Psalms thrice every Day, besides Morning and Evening; to fast every Friday, and to receive the Sacrament at a Parish Church.

Church, near our College, and at the Castle where the despised *Methodists* used to receive once a Month.

The young Men so called, were then much talked of at *Oxford* — I had heard of and loved them before I came to the University. — And so strenuously defended them when I heard them reviled by the Students, that they began to think that I also, in time, should be one of them.

For above a Twelve-Month my Soul longed to be acquainted with them, and I was strongly pressed to follow their good Example, when I saw them go thro' a ridiculing Crowd to receive the holy Eucharist at *St. Mary's*. — At length God was pleased to open a Door. — It happened that a poor Woman, in one of the Work-Houses, had attempted to cut her Throat but was happily prevented. — I hearing of this, and knowing that both of the *Mr. WESLY's* were famous for being ready for every good Work, sent a poor aged Apple-Woman of our College, to inform *Mr. CHARLES WESLY* of it, charging her not to discover who sent her. — She went, but, contrary to my Orders, discovered my Name; he having heard of my coming to the Castle and Parish Church Sacrament, and having met with me walking frequently by myself, followed the Woman when she was gone away, and sent an Invitation to me by her to come and breakfast with him the next Morning.

I thankfully embraced the Opportunity. — And, blessed be God, it was one of the most profitable Visits I ever made in my Life. — My Soul at that Time was athirst for some spiritual Friends to lift up my Hands when they hung down, and to strengthen my feeble Knees. — He soon discovered it, and like a wise Winner of Souls, made

made all his Discourses tend that Way; and after he had put into my Hands FRANK'S Treatise against *the Fear of Man*, and a Book entitled, *The Country Parson's Advice to his Parishoners*, the last of which was wonderfully blessed to my Soul, I took my Leave.

In a short Time after he let me have another Book, entitled, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* ——— And tho' I had fasted, watched and prayed, and received the Sacrament so long, yet I never knew what true Religion was, 'till God sent me that excellent Treatise, by the Hand of my never to be forgotten Friend Mr. CHARLES WESLY.

At my first reading it, I wonder'd what the Author meant by saying, *That* "Some falsely placed Religion, in going to Church, doing Hurt to no one, being constant in the Duties of the Closet, and now and then reaching out their Hands to give Alms to their Neighbours." ——— Alas! thought I, *If this be not Religion, what it?* God soon shewed me ——— for reading in a few Lines following, *That TRUE Religion was an Union of the Soul with GOD and CHRIST formed within us* ——— a Ray of divine Light broke in upon my Soul, and from that Moment, but not till then, did I know that I must be a *New Creature*.

Upon this, like the Woman when CHRIST revealed himself to her at the Well, I had no Rest in my Soul till I wrote Letters to my Relations, telling them there was such a Thing as the NEW BIRTH. I imagined they would gladly have received them, but alas! my Words seem'd to them as idle Tales, they thought that I was going beside myself, and by their Letters confirm'd me in the Resolution I had taken up, not to go down into the Country, but continue where I was to carry on the good Work GOD had begun in my Soul.

From

From Time to Time Mr. WESLY permitted me to come unto him, and instructed me as I was able to bear it. ——— By Degrees he introduced me to the rest of his Christian Brethren. ——— They built me up daily in the Knowledge and Fear of God, and taught me to endure Hardship like a good Soldier of JESUS CHRIST.

I now began, like them, to live by Rule, and to pick up the very Fragments of my Time, that not a Moment of it might be lost. ——— Whether I eat or drank, or whatsoever I did, I did all to the Glory of God. ——— Like them, having no weekly Sacrament (altho' the *Rubrick* requires it) at our College, I received it every Sunday at *Christ Church*. ——— I joined with them in keeping the Stations, by fasting *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, and left no Means unused which I thought would lead me nearer to JESUS CHRIST.

Regular Retirement Morning and Evening I found some Difficulty in submitting to, but it soon grew profitable and delightful; as I grew ripe for such Exercises, I was from time to time engaged to visit the Sick and the Prisoners, and to read to poor People, till I made it a Custom, as most of us did, to spend an Hour every Day in doing Acts of Charity.

The Course of my Studies I soon entirely changed; whereas before I was busied in studying the dry Sciences, and Books that went no further than the Surface, I now resolved to read only such Books as enter'd into the Heart of Religion, and led me directly into an experimental Knowledge of JESUS CHRIST and him crucified.

The lively Oracles of God were my Soul's Delight. ——— The Book of the *divine LAWS* was seldom out of my Hands. ——— I meditated therein Day and Night, and, ever since that, God has made

made my Way most signally prosperous, and gave me abundant Success.

Much Good GOD enabled me to do, as well as to receive from, the despised *Methodists*, and made me instrumental of converting one, who is lately come into the Church, and I trust will make a burning and shining Light.

Several short Fits of Illness was God pleased to visit and try me with, after my first Acquaintance with Mr. WESLY. — My new Convert was a Help meet for me in those and every other Circumstance — And in Company with him and several other young christian Heroes, did I spend many sweet and delightful Hour. — Never did Persons I believe strive more earnestly to enter in at the strait Gate. — They kept their Bodies under even to an Extream — They were dead to the World, and willing to be counted as the Dung and Off-scouring of all Things, so that they might win CHRIST — Their Hearts glowed with the Love of GOD, and they never prospered so much in the inward Man, as when they had all Manner of Evil spoken against them falsely *without*.

Many came amongst them for a while, who in Time of Temptation fell away — The Displeasure of a *Tutor* or Head of a College, the changing of a Gown from a lower to a higher Degree; above all, a Love for the Praise of Men, more than that which cometh from God, and a servile Fear of Contempt, caused Numbers that had put their Hands to the Plough, shamefully to look back. — The World, not themselves, gave them the Title of *Methodists*, I suppose from the Custom of regulating their Time, and planning the Business of the Day every Morning — Mr. JOHN and CHARLES WESLY were the first that thus openly dared to confess CHRIST, and they, under God,

God, were the spiritual Fathers of most of them — They had the Pleasure of seeing the Work of the Lord prosper in their Hands before they went to *Georgia* — Since their Return the small Grain of Mustard-Seed has sprung up apace, it has taken deep Root — It's growing into a great Tree — Ere long I trust it will fill the Land, and Numbers of Souls will come from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South and lodge under the Branches of it.

But to return — whilst I was thus comforted on every Side, by daily conversing with so many Christian Friends, God was pleased to permit *Satan* to sift me like Wheat, a general Account of which I shall, by divine Assistance give in the following Section.



S E C T I O N II.

A brief and summary Account of my
T E M P T A T I O N S.

T my first setting out, in compassion to my Weakness, I grew in Favour both with God and Man, and used to be wrapped up with sensible Devotions, especially at the blessed Sacrament — But when Religion sunk from my Head into my Heart, and was fully convinced my Soul must totally be renewed, ere it could see God, I was visited with outward and inward Trials.

The first Thing I was called to give up for God, was, what the World calls my fine Reputation — I had no sooner received the Sacrament publicly

lickly on a Week-Day at *St. Mary's*, but I was set up as a Mark for all the polite Students, that knew me, to shoot at — By *this* they knew I was commenced *Methodist*. — For tho' there is a Sacrament at the Beginning of every Term, at which all, especially the Seniors, are by Statute obliged to be present; yet so dreadfully has that once faithful City played the Harlot, that no under Graduates, but those of *that* Way, attended upon it.

Mr. CHARLES WESLY (whom I must always mention with the greatest Deference and Respect) walked with me in order to confirm me, from the Church even to the College. I confess, to my Shame, I would gladly have excused him — And the next Day going to his Room, and one of our *Fellows* passing by, I was ashamed to be seen to knock at his Door — But blessed be God, this cursed Fear of Man gradually wore off — As I had imitated *Nicodemus* in his Cowardice, so by the divine Assistance, I followed him in his Courage — I confess'd the *Methodists* more and more publickly every Day — I walked openly with them, and rather chose to endure Contempt with those *despised* People of God, than enjoy the Applause of *almost* *Christians* for a Season.

Soon after this I incurred the Displeasure of the Master of the College, who frequently chid and once threatened to expel me, if ever I visited the Poor again — Being surprized with his Treatment, and over-aw'd by his Authority, I spoke unadvisedly with my Lips, and said, *If it displeased him I would not* — My Conscience soon pricked me for this sinful Compliance — I immediately repented, visited the Poor, the first Opportunity, and told my Companions, if I was called to suffer for CHRIST'S Sake, I would do with my *Tongue* as Archbishop *Cranmer* did with his *Hands*, make *that* turn first.

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My Tutor, being a moderate Man did not oppose me much, but tho't, I believe, that I went a little too far.——He lent me Books, gave me Money, visited and furnished me with a Physician when Sick——In short, he behaved in all Respects like a Father, and I trust GOD will remember him for Good, in Answer to those many Prayers, I have put up in his behalf.

My Relations were quickly alarmed at the Alteration of my Behaviour, conceived strong Prejudices against me, and for some time counted my Life but Madnets.

I daily underwent some Contempt at College. Some have thrown at me, others, by Degrees, took their Pay from me——And two Friends, who were dear to me, grew shy of and forsook me when they saw me resolved to deny myself, take up my Cross daily, and follow JESUS CHRIST——But our LORD, by his Spirit, soon convinced me that I must know *no One* after the FLESH——And I soon found that Promise literally fulfilled *viz. That no One hath left Father or Mother, Brethren or Sisters, Houses or Lands for CHRIST'S Sake and the GOSPEL, but what shall receive an hundred fold in this Life, with Persecution, as well as eternal Life in the World to come.*

These, tho' little, were useful Trials——They inured me to Contempt, lessen'd Self-Love, and taught me to die daily——My inward Sufferings were of a more uncommon Nature, *Satan* seem'd to have desired me in particular, to sift me as Wheat——God permitted him, for what Reason, I have seen already, *viz.* That his future Blessings might not prove my Ruin.

Ever since my first Awakenings to the divine Light, I felt a particular Hungering and Thirsting after the Humility of JESUS CHRIST. Night and
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Day I prayed to be Partaker of that Grace ; imagining the Habit of Humility would be instantaneously infus'd into my Soul. But as *Gideon* taught the Men of *Succoth* by Thorns, so GOD (if I am yet in any measure Blessed with true Poverty of Spirit) taught *me* by strong Temptation.

I observed before how I used to be favour'd with sensible Devotions — Those Comforts were soon withdrawn, and an horrible Fearfulness and Dread permitted to overwhelm my Soul — One Morning, in particular, rising from my Bed, I felt an unusual Oppression and Weight upon my Breast, attended with inward Darknes — I applied to my Friend Mr. CHARLES WESLEY. — He advised me to keep upon my Watch, and refer'd me to a Chapter in *Kempis*.

In a short time I perceived this Load gradually increased, till it almost weighed me down, and actually convinced me, that *Satan* had as real a Possession given him of my Body, as he had over *JOB's* — All Power of Meditating or even Thinking, was taken from me — My Memory quite fail'd me — My whole Soul was barren & dry, and I cou'd fancy myself to be like nothing, so much as a Man locked up in iron Armour. — Whenever I kneeled down I felt great Heaviness in my Body, and have often prayed under the Weight of them, 'till the Sweat came through me. — At these Times *Satan* used to terrify me much, & threatened to punish me if I discovered his Wiles — It being my Business, as Servitor, in my turn, to knock at the Gentlemen's Rooms, by ten at Night, to see who were in their Rooms, I thought the Devil would appear to me every time I went up, and he so troubled me when I lay down to rest, that for some Months I scarce slept above three Hours in a Night.

God only knows how many Evenings I have lain upon my Bed, groaning under the Weight I felt, and bidding *Satan* depart from me in the Name of *JESUS* of *Nazareth*—Whole Days and Weeks have I spent in lying prostrate on the Ground, and begging for Freedom from those proud hellish Thoughts, which used to crowd in upon and distract my Soul—But God made *Satan* drive out *Satan*.
 ——— For these Thoughts & Suggestions raised such a Self-Abhorrence within me, that I never ceased wrestling with God, till he blessed me with a Victory over them—Self-Love, Self-Will, Pride and Envy so buffeted me in their Turns, that I was resolved either to dye or conquer.—I wanted to see Sin as it was, but feared at the same Time lest the Sight of it should terrify me to Death.

Whilst my *inward* Man was thus exercised, my *outward* Man was not unemployed, I soon found what a Slave I had been to my sensual Appetite, and now resolv'd to get the mastery over it, by the Help of *JESUS CHRIST* ——— Accordingly by Degrees I began to leave off eating Pye, Fruit, and such like, and gave the Money, I usually spent in that way, to the Poor ——— I always chose the worst sort of Food, tho' my Place furnish'd me with Variety ——— I fasted twice a Week. My Apparel was very mean. I thought it unbecoming a Penitent to have his Hair powder'd, I wore woollen Gloves, a patch'd Gown and dirty Shoes — And tho' I was then, in some Degree convinced that the Kingdom of God did not consist in Meats and Drinks, yet I resolutely persisted in these voluntary Acts of Self-Denial, because I found them great Promoters of the spiritual Life.

For many Months I went on in the State before described, faint, yet pursuing, travelling along in
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the Dark, hoping that the Star I had once seen, would hereafter appear again——During this Season I was very active, but finding Pride creep in at the End of almost every Tho't, Word & Action, and meeting with *Castaniza's* spiritual Combat, in which he says, *That he that was employed in mortifying his Will, was as well employed as tho' he was converting Indians, or Words to that Effect --- Satan* so impos'd upon my Understanding, that he perswaded me to shut my self up in my Study, till I could do Good with a single Eye, lest in endeavouring to save others, as I did now, I should at last, by Pride and Self-complacence lose my self.

Henceforward he transformed himself into an Angel of Light, and worked so artfully upon my Understanding, that I imagined the *good* and not the *evil Spirit*, suggested to me every Thing that I did.

His main Drift now was to lead me into a State of *Quietism* He generally ploughed with God's Heifer, and when the *Holy Spirit* put into my Heart good Thoughts or Convictions, he always drove them to Extremes. For Instance, Being checked for having, out of Pride, put down in my Diary what I gave away, *Satan* tempted me to lay my Diary quite away——When *Castaniza* advised to talk but little, *Satan* said I must not talk at all——So that I who used to be most forward in exhorting my Companions, have set whole Nights without speaking scarce any Thing——Again, When *Castaniza* told me about keeping up a silent Recollection to GOD, *Satan* told me, I must leave off all Forms, and not use my Voice in Prayer at all——The Time would fail me was I to recount all the Instances of this Kind in which he has deceived me——But when Matters came to an Extremity, GOD always shewed me my Error,

and by his Spirit pointed out a Way for me to escape.

The Devil also sadly imposed upon me in doing my College Exercise. Whenever I went to compose my Theme, my Head was like Brass. I had not Power to write a Word, nor tell my christian Friends of my Inability for so doing. Saturday being come (which is the Day the Students give up their Compositions) Satan (but as I thought the *Holy Spirit*) told me I must go down in the Hall, confess I could not make a Theme, and so publickly suffer for my Master's Sake. When the Bell rung to call us, I went to open the Door to go down Stairs, but feeling something give me a violent inward Check, I retired into my Study, and continued instant in Prayer, waiting the Event. My Tutor fined me half a Crown. The next Week Satan served me so again. But having now got more Strength, and perceived no inward Check, I went into the Hall. My Name being called, I stood up and told my Tutor I could not make a Theme. I think he fined me a second Time; but, knowing that I would not willingly neglect my Exercise, he afterwards called me into the common Room and kindly enquired whether any Misfortune had befallen me, or what was the Reason I could not make a Theme. I burst into a Flood of Tears, assured him it was not out of Contempt of Authority, and that I could not act otherwise; then at length, he said, he believed I could not. And when he left me, told a Friend (as he very well might) that he took me to be really Mad. This Friend hearing from my Tutor what had happen'd, came to me, urging the Command in Scripture, *to be subject to the higher Powers*. I answered Yes, but I have a new Revelation. So artfully

fully did the Devil lead me captive at his Will. By this was I experimentally convinced that my Understanding was not my own.

Further, as I daily got Strength by continued, tho' almost silent, Prayer, in my Study, my Temptations grew stronger, particularly for two or three Days before Deliverance came—Near five or six Weeks had I now spent in my Study, except when I was obliged to go out—During this Time I was battling with my Corruptions, and did little else besides kneeling down by my Bed side, under great Loads upon my Body, and unspeakable Pressure of Mind, offering up my Soul to GOD thro' CHRIST to stamp what he pleased upon it.

—Satan began now to suggest to me, That JESUS CHRIST went among the wild Beasts when he was tempted, and that I ought to follow his Example—Whereupon, being willing to copy after JESUS CHRIST, after Supper I went into *Christ Church*, walked near our College, and continued in silent Prayer, under one of the Trees, for near two Hours, sometimes lying flat upon my Face, sometimes kneeling upon my Knees; all the while fearing Mr. JOHN WESLEY, (who I knew was not far off reading the *Holy Scripture* to some young Gentlemen at his Brother's Room) should be destroy'd with Pride—It being a very blustering stormy Night, it gave me awful Thoughts of the *Day of Judgment*—I continued, I think till great Tom called me home—And finding Reluctance in the natural Man against staying so long in the Cold, when I rose off my Knees, I felt a rubbing my Hand, and hasted to College, saying these Words, *I am but a fresh Water Soldier.*

The next Night I repeated the same Exercise, at the same Place, but Satan (as he always does)

now overshot, and thereby discovered himself, or rather, the Hour of Extremity being come, GOD was pleased to interpose.

By this Time I had left off keeping my Diary, using any Forms or scarce my Voice in Prayer, visiting the Prisoners &c — Nothing remained for me to leave (unless I forsook publick Worship, which I believe I should have done shortly) but my Religious Friends — *Satan* now told me that I must now even leave them for CHRIST'S Sake — This was a sore Trial, but rather than not be CHRIST'S Disciple, I was resolved to renounce them, tho' as dear to me as my own Soul. — Accordingly the next Day, being *Wednesday*, whereon we kept one of our weekly Fasts, instead of meeting with my Brethren, as usual, I went out into the Fields, and prayed silently by myself — Our Evening Meeting I neglected also, and went not to Breakfast, according to Appointment, with Mr. CHARLES WESLY the Day following — This with many other concurring Circumstances, made my Hon. Friend Mr. CHARLES WESLY suspect something more than ordinary to be the Matter: — He came to my Room, soon found out my Case, apprised me of my Danger, if I would not take Advice, and recommended me to his Brother, as more experienced in the spiritual Life — God gave me (for ever blessed be his holy Name) a reachable Temper, I waited upon his Brother, with whom from that Time I had the Honour of growing intimate — He advised me to resume all my *Externals*, tho' not to depend on them in the least. — From Time to Time he gave me Directions as my various and pitiable Cases required, and at length, by his excellent Advice and Management of me, under GOD, I was delivered from these Wiles of Satan. — Praise the LORD, O my Soul,

Soul, and all that is within me, Praise his holy Name.

During this and all other Seasons of Temptations, my Soul was inwardly supported with great Courage and Resolution from Above. — Every Day GOD made me willing to renew the Combat, and tho' my Soul, when quite empty of GOD, was very prone to seek Satisfaction in the Creature, yet I was generally enabled to sit in Silence, to wait for the Salvation of GOD, or to persist in Prayer, 'till some Gleams of inward Comfort were given me from on high — Sometimes I fell into Sensuality.

Kempis (since translated and published by Mr. JOHN WESLY) *Castaniza's* Spiritual Combat, and the *Greek Testament*, which I prayed over Verse by Verse every Day, were great Means of carrying me on — At the *Holy Sacrament*, especially before Trials, and just upon receiving the Elements, I have had *Grace* in an abundant and very perceptible Manner imparted to my Soul — An irretrageable Proof to me, against the Doctrine of that detestable Book, called, *The plain Account of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, which sinks that holy Ordinance into a bare Memorial — The Author, without Repentance, shall bear his Punishment, whosoever he be.

To proceed, I had now taken up my *Externals* again — And tho' *Satan*, for some Weeks has been bruising my Heel, GOD soon shewed me that I should bruise his Head — A few Days after, as I was walking along I met with a poor Woman, whose Husband was then in Bocardo, Oxford Town Goal, which I constantly visited — Seeing her much discompos'd, I enquired the Cause — She told me, not being able to bear the Cries of her Children, ready to perish for Hunger, and she having nothing to relieve them, she had been to drown herself, but was mercifully prevented, and said,
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she was coming to my Room to inform me of it — I gave her some immediate Relief, and desired her to meet me at the Prison with her Husband in the Afternoon. — She came, and God there apprehended them both by his *Free Grace* — She was powerfully quicken'd from above, and when I had done reading, her Husband came to me, like the trembling Jaylor, and grasping me hard, crying out, *I am upon the Brink of Hell* — From this Time forward, both of them grew in *Grace* — GOD by his Providence soon delivered him from his Confinement — Tho' before notorious Offenders, against God and one another, yet now they became Helps meet for each other in the great Work of their Salvation — They are both now living, and I trust will be my Joy and Crown of Rejoycing in the Day of our Lord JESUS.

Soon after this, the holy Season of *Lent* came on, which our Friends always kept very strictly, eating no Flesh during the six Weeks, except on *Saturdays* and *Sundays*; I abstained frequently on *Saturdays* also, eating nothing on that and other Days, except *Sundays*, but coarse Bread and Sage Tea, without Sugar — I constantly walk'd out in the cold Mornings, till Part of one of my Hands was quite black — This with my continued Abstinence and inward Conflicts, at length, so emaciated my outward Man, that at *Passion Week*, finding I could scarce creep up Stairs, I was obliged to inform my kind Tutor of my Condition, who immediately sent for a Physician to me.

This caused no small Triumph among the Collegians, who began to cry out, *What is his Fasting come to now?* — But I rejoiced in this Reproach, knowing that tho' I had been imprudent & lost much of my Flesh, yet I had encreased proportionably in the Spirit.

This Fit of Sickness continued upon me for above seven Weeks, and a glorious Visitation it was——While the Physician was purging my Body, God's Spirit was purifying my Soul——All my *Gross* and even my *Heart* Sins were brought to my Remembrance, which I put down immediately, and confessed them before GOD Morning and Evening——Tho' weak, I often spent two Hours in my Retirements, and prayed over the *Greek* Testament and Bishop *Hall's* most excellent Contemplations, every Day that my Health would permit——About the End of seven Weeks, and after I had been groaning under an unspeakable Load both of Body & Soul for above a Twelve-Month, GOD was pleased to set me free in the following Manner——One Day perceiving an uncommon Drought and a noisome Clamminess in my Mouth, and using Things to allay my Thirst, but in vain; it was suggested to me, that when JESUS CHRIST, cried out, *I thirst*, his Sufferings were near over——Upon this I threw myself upon the Bed, crying out, *I thirst I thirst*: Soon after I perceived my Load go off: a Spirit of Mourning was taken from me, and I knew what it was truly to rejoice *in the LORD*——At first, after this, I could not avoid singing Psalms wherever I was; but my Joy gradually became more settled, and, blessed be GOD, has abode and encreased in my Soul, saving a few casual Intermissions, ever since.

Thus were the Days of my Mourning ended! After a long Night of Desertion & Temptation, the Star which I had seen at a Distance before, began to appear again, and the Day-Star arose in my Heart,——Now did GOD take full Possession of my Soul, and, as I humbly hope, sealed me to the Day of Redemption.

SECTION,

SECTION III.

From the Time of my first leaving the UNIVERSITY, to go to GLOUCESTER, till the Time of my ORDINATION.

AS fast as I got strength from the Sickness before mentioned — My Tutor, Physician, and some others, were still urging me to go into the Country, hoping thereby to divert me (as they tho't) from my present too intense Application to Religion — I had for some Time been aware of their Design, and wrote Letters, beseeching my Mother, if she valu'd my Soul, not to lay her Commands on me to come down — She was pleas'd to leave me to my Choice, but finding, at last, it was necessary for my Health, and many other providential Circumstances pointing out my Way, after earnest Prayer for Support, by the Advice of Friends, I left my sweet Retreat at Oxford, & went to Gloucester, the Place of my Nativity.

GOD having now given me the Spirit of Adoption, my Friends were surprized to see me look and behave so chearful, after the many Reports they had heard concerning me — However I soon found my self to be a *Sheep* sent forth amongst *Wolves* in *Sheep's* Cloathing — For they immediately endeavour'd to dissuade me (as they lately had a Friend that began with me) from such a constant Use of the Means of *Grace*, especially from weekly Abstinence and receiving the blessed Sacrament — But GOD enabled me to resist them stedfastly in the FAITH, and by keeping close to him in *Holy Ordinances*, I was made to triumph over all.

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Being accustom'd for a long Season, not to live without spiritual Companions, and finding none that would join heartily with me, no not one, I watch'd unto Prayer all the Day long beseeching GOD to raise me some religious Associates in his own Way and Time.

I will either *find* or *make* a Friend, had been my Motto and Practice for some Time — And therefore, after importunate Prayer one Day, I resolv'd to go to the House of one Mrs. — to whom I formerly had read *Plays, Spectators, Popes Homers* and such like trifling Books, hoping the Alteration she now might see in my Sentiments, might, under GOD, influence her Soul — GOD was pleas'd to bless the Visit with the desired Effect — She received the *Word* gladly — She wanted to be taught the Word of GOD more perfectly, and soon became a *Fool* for CHRIST'S Sake — Not long after, GOD made me instrumental to awaken several other young Persons, who soon formed themselves into a little Society and had quickly the Honour of being despis'd at *Gloucester*, as we had been before them at *Oxford* — For they that will *live Godly* in CHRIST JESUS must suffer Persecution.

My Mind being now more open and enlarged, I began to read the *Holy Scriptures* on my Knees, laying aside all other Books, and praying over, if possible, every Line and Word, — This proved *Meat* indeed, and *Drink* Indeed to my Soul — I daily acquired fresh Light, Life, and Power from above — I got more true Knowledge from reading the Book of GOD one Month than I could acquire from *humane Writings* in a Year — In one Word, I found it profitable, for *Reproof*, for *Correction*, for *Instruction* in RIGHTEOUSNESS, every way sufficient to make the *Man* of GOD *perfect*,
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thoroughly furnished to every good WORD and WORK.

Before I return'd from *Gloucester* to *Oxford*, I spent three Weeks at *Bristol*, where I went to see some Relations, but could not do them much Good, because of the Prejudices they had imbibed against me — I daily walked with God; and in visiting an *Aunt*, then in an Alms House, GOD put in my Way a young Woman, who was hungering and thirsting after *Righteousness* — She receiv'd the Word into an honest and good Heart, and since has proved a *true* Follower of JESUS CHRIST,

— So good was GOD even in those early Days, not to leave me in any Place without a Witness.

According to his abundant Mercy, he also rais'd me up some temporal Supplies — For some Time I had taken up the *laudable* Custom of *Pro-*
FRANK, lately of *Germany*; and whenever any worldly Assistance, pleaded the *uses* for the Things of *this* Life, as much is to come in the Name of JESUS

— This is still my Practice, and I never yet failed once of Success — When I came from *Oxford*, on account of my Sickness and other unavoidable and extraordinary Expences, I think I owed *twelve* or *thirteen* Pounds — And when I was going to *Bristol* my kind *Hostess* (with whom I lodged at *Gloucester*, and whose Husband and Family, I pray GOD eternally to bless) lent me half a Crown to bear my Charges on the Road — I was not disheartned at the lowness of my Circumstances — I continued pleading the *Pro-*
mises in the Name of CHRIST; and soon after my coming to *Bristol* received an Answer, For a Brother of mine coming from Sea, GOD inclined his Heart to give me *four* Guineas and some Shirts — Likewise when I returned to *Gloucester*, as I did
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after I had continued a short Time in *Bristol*, Those I expected would assist me, did not ; but Persons I scarce ever spoke to, and who, I thought, were mine Enemies, were raised up to furnish me with Money, and thereby fulfilled that Promise, *Seek first the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto you.*

Oh! what sweet Communion did I daily carry on with GOD in Prayer, after my coming again to *Gloucester* — How often have I been carried out beyond myself, when meditating, as *Isaac* did, in the Fields! How have I felt that CHRIST dwelt in *me*, and I in him! And how did I daily walk in the Comforts of the HOLY GHOST, and was edified! Not that I was always upon the Mount. Sometimes a Cloud would overshadow me — But the Sun of Righteousness quickly arose and dispel'd it, I knew that it was JESUS that reveal'd Himself unto my Soul.

I always observed, that as my *inward* Strength increased, so my outward Sphere of Action increased proportionably — In a short time therefore, I began to read to some poor People *twice* or *thrice* a Week. — I likewise visited two other little Societies besides my own, and almost every Day, both then and since, have found the Benefit of being tempted my self, because that alone taught me how to give proper Advice and Succour to those that came to me when tempted.

Occasionally, as Business and Opportunity permitted, I generally visited one or two sick Persons every Day, and tho' *Silver* and *Gold* I had little of my own ; yet in imitation of my *Lord's Disciples*, who intreated in behalf of the fainting Multitude, I used to pray to him, and he from Time to Time inclined several that were rich in this *World's Goods*, to give me Money, so that I generally had

a little Stock for the Poor in *Hand* — One of the Poor whom I visited in this Manner, was called effectually by GOD at the *Eleventh* Hour. — She was a Woman above *threescore* Years old, and I really believe died in the *true* Faith of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

About this Time GOD was pleased to enlighten and bring me into the Knowledge of the *Freeeness* of his *Grace*, and the Necessity of being *justified*, in his Sight, by *FAITH* alone. — This was more extraordinary, because our Friends at *Oxon*, run into the *Mystick Scheme*. And one of them (a dear Servant of our Lord) lately confessed, he did not like me so well, at my first coming to *Oxford*, as the rest of his Brethren, because I held *Justification by Faith*. — And yet he observed I had more Success. — But, blessed be GOD, most of us now have been taught *this Doctrine* of GOD, and I hope shall be willing to die in the Defence of it. It is the good old *Doctrine* of the *Church of England*. It is what the *Holy Martyrs* in *Queen MARY's* Time sealed with their Blood, and which, I pray GOD, if need be, that I and my Brethren, may seal with ours.

BURKITT's and HENRY's *Expositions* were of admirable Use to lead me into *this* and all other evangelical Truths. — Many Months have I knelt to study and pray over those Books, as tho' I had been sitting at my Master's Feet. The *Holy Spirit* from Time to Time has let me into the Knowledge of divine Things, and I have been directed, by watching and reading the Scriptures in this Manner, even in the minutest Circumstances, as plainly as the *Jews* were, who consulted the *Urim* and *Thummim* at the high Priest's Breast.

ALLEN's *Alarm*, BAXTER's *Call to the Unconverted*, and JANEWAY's *Life*, when I read them, at leisure Hours,

Hours, were much blessed to me. — I bless GOD, the Partition Wall of *Bigotry* and *Sectarianism* was soon broken down out of my Heart. As soon as the *Love* of GOD was shed abroad in my Soul, I loved all, of whatever Denomination, that loved the Lord Jesus in Sincerity.

During my Stay here, GOD enabled me to give a publick Testimony of my Repentance for seeing and acting *Plays* — Hearing the Strolers were coming to Town, and knowing what an egregious Offender I had been, I wrestled with GOD in Prayer, to put me in a Way to manifest my *Abhorrence* of my former ill Conduct — In Answer to this, I was stirred up to extract Mr LAW's excellent little Treatise, intitled, *The absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage Entertainment* — GOD gave me *Favour* in the *Printers* Sight. At my Request he put a little of it in the *News* for six Weeks successively, and GOD was pleased to give it his Blessing.

Having been absent for six Months from the *University*, I thought it time to think of moving thither, but before I came to a Resolution, was convinced that the Hour for returning thither was not as yet come.

At my first coming to *Gloucester* being used to visit the Prisoners at *Oxford*, I prayed most earnestly, that GOD would open a Door for me to visit the Prisoners here also — Quickly after I dreamt, *That one of the Prisoners came to be instructed by me.* — The Dream was impressed much upon my Heart — In the Morning I went to the Door of the County Goal — I knocked, no Body came to open it, I thought the Hour was not yet come — I waited still upon GOD in Prayer, and in some Months came a Letter from a Friend at *Oxford*, desiring me to go to one *Pebworth*, who had broken out of *Oxford* Goal and was retaken at

Gloucester — As soon as I had read this Letter, it was suggested to me, that my Prayer was now answered — Immediately I went to the Prison, assuredly gathering that the Lord called me thither — I met with the Person, and finding him and some others willing to hear the Word of GOD, having gained leave of the Keeper and two Ordinaries, I constantly read to and prayed with them every Day I was in Town — I also begg'd Money for them in general, relieved *one* or *two* in particular, ordered Provisions weekly to be distributed amongst them, and put such Books into their Hands as I judged most proper — I cannot say any one of the Prisoners was effectually wrought upon — However much Evil was prevented, many were convinced, and my own Soul much edified and strengthened in the *Love* of GOD and Man.

Thus employed I continued in my own City for three Months longer — Despised indeed by many, but highly blessed and favoured by GOD — My Understanding was enlightened, my Will broke, and my Affections more and more enlivened with a Zeal for *CHRIST* — Many I believe were added unto my Society, who shall be saved — Fresh Supplies came from unexpected Hands to defray the Expences of the *University* during my Absence — And at the End of nine Months I returned *thither*, to the mutual Joy and Comfort of me and my Friends, till I was called to take upon me *HOLY ORDERS* — The particular Circumstances of which I shall relate in the following Chapter.

SECTION IV.

My Preparations for HOLY ORDERS.

FROM the Time I first enter'd at the *University*, especially from the Time I knew what was *true and undefiled Religion*, I entertained high Thoughts of the Importance of the ministerial Office, and was not solicitous what Place should be prepared for me, but how I should prepare myself for a Place.

That Saying of the Apostle, *Not a Novice lest being puffed up with Pride he fall into the Condemnation of the Devil* — And that first Question of our excellent Ordination Office, *Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this Office and Ministration*, used to make me tremble whenever I thought of entering into the *Ministry* — The shynets that *Moses* and some other *Prophets* expressed, when *GOD* sent them out to act in a publick Capacity, I thought were sufficient Examples for me to learn by, not to *run* before I was called — *GOD* knows my Heart, I never prayed more earnestly against any Sin, than I did against entering into the Service of the Church so soon — Oftentimes have I been in an Agony in Prayer, when under Convictions of my insufficiency for so great a Work — With strong Crying and Tears, in the Language of *Moses* I have cryed out, *LORD, I am a Youth of uncircumcised Lips; LORD, send me not out into thy Vineyard yet* — And sometimes I had Reason to think *GOD* was angry with me for resisting his Will — However I resolv'd to pray against it as long as I could — If *GOD* did not grant my Request in keeping me out, I

knew his Grace would be sufficient to support and strengthen me whenever he sent me into the Ministry.

To my Prayers I added my Endeavours, and wrote Letters to my Friends at *Oxford* beseeching them to pray to GOD to disappoint the Designs of my Country Friends, who were for my taking Orders as soon as possible——Their Answer was, *Pray we the Lord of the Harvest to send thee and many more such Labourers into his Harvest.*

Another old & worthy Minister of JESUS, when I wrote to him about the Meaning of the Word *Novice*, answered it meant a *Novice in Grace*, and not in Years, and he was pleased to add, *If St. PAUL was at Gloucester, he believed St. PAUL would ordain me*——All this did not satisfy me——I still continued instant in Prayer against going into *HOLY ORDERS*, and was not thoroughly convinced it was the *Divine Will*, till GOD, by his good Providence, bro't me acquainted with the present *Bishop of Gloucester*.

Before I conversed with his Lordship, GOD was pleased to give me previous Notice of it——One Night, before I had the least Prospect of being called before the Bishop, I dreamt, *I was talking with him in his Palace, and that he gave me some Gold, which chinked in my Hands*——Almost every Day after, this Dream would come into my Mind——Whenever I saw the Bishop at Church, a strong Persuasion would rise in my Mind that I should very shortly go to him——I always check'd it, and prayed to GOD to preserve me from desiring that Honour which cometh of Man——One Afternoon it happened that the Bishop took a solitary Walk, as I was told afterwards, to *Lady Selwyns near Gloucester*, who not long before had made me a Present
of

of a Piece of Gold—— She, I found, recommended me to the Bishop—— A few Days after, as I was coming from the *Cathedral* Prayers, thinking of no such Thing, one of the Vergers called after me, and said, the Bishop desired to speak with me—— I, forgetful at that Time of my Dream, immediately turned back, considering within myself what I had done to deserve his Lordship's Displeasure—— When I came to the Top of the Palace Stairs, the Bishop took me by the Hand, told me he was glad to see me, and begg'd me to wait a little till he had put off his Habit and he would return to me again—— This gave me an excellent Opportunity of praying to GOD for Assistance, and adoring him for his Providence over me—— At his Return, the Bishop told me he had heard of my Character, liked my Behaviour at Church; and after I told him my Age, Notwithstanding, says he, *I have declared I would ordain no one under Three and Twenty, yet I shall think it my Duty to ordain you, whenever you come for HOLY ORDERS*—— He then made me a Present of five Guineas to buy me a Book, which chinking in my Hand, put me in mind of my Dream, and fill'd my Heart with a Sense of GOD's Love.

Before I came home, this News had reach'd my Friends—— They, fond of my having such a great Man's Favour, were very solicitous to know the Event of my Visit—— Many Things I hid from them, but when they pressed me hard, I was obliged to tell them how the Bishop of his own accord had offer'd to give me *HOLY ORDERS* whenever I would—— They (knowing how I had depended on the Declaration his Lordship had made some time ago, that he would ordain none under *Twenty Three*) said, and then began to think

think so myself, that if I held out any longer I should fight against GOD ~~——~~ At length I came to a Resolution, by GOD's Leave, to offer myself for *HOLY ORDERS* the next *Ember Days*.

The only Thing now in Dispute, was, into what Part of my *LORD's Vineyard* I should be sent out first ~~——~~ GOD had given me such Success at *Gloucester*, and my Friends being desirous of having me near them, I had some Thoughts that GOD would settle me amongst them ~~——~~ But when I came to *Oxford*, my Friends urged several Reasons for my continuing at the University, viz Mr. WESLEY had not long been gone abroad, no one was left to take Care of the Prisoners Affairs ~~——~~ They further urged That GOD had blessed my Endeavours there as well as at Gloucester, that the University was the Fountain Head; that every Gown Man's Name was Legion, and that if I could convert one of them, it would be as much as converting a whole Parish ~~——~~ At the same Time, unknown to me, some of them sent to that great and good Man the late Sir JOHN PHILIPS, who was a great Encourager of the *Oxford Methodists*, and tho' he had never seen, but only heard of me, yet he sent Word, he would allow me *Thirty Pounds* per Annum, if I would continue at the University ~~——~~ Upon this finding the Care of the Prisoners would be no more than under GOD, I could manage with Pleasure, and knowing the *University* was the best Place to prosecute my Studies, I resolved, God willing, to let *Oxford* have the first Fruits of my ministerial Labours.

In the mean while (having before made some Observations upon the *Thirty-nine Articles* and proved them by Scripture) I strictly examined myself by the Qualifications required for a Minister, in PAUL's Epistle to TIMOTHY, and also every Que-
tic

tion that I knew was to be publickly asked me at the Time of my *Ordination* ——— This latter I drew out at large in Writing, and sealed my Approbation of it every *Sunday* at the *blessed Sacrament* ——— At length *Trinity Sunday* being near at Hand, and having my Testimonial from the *College*, I went a Fortnight before hand to *Gloucester*, intending to compose some Sermons, and to give my self up more particularly to Prayer .

But GOD's Tho'ts are not as our Tho'ts ——— When I came to *Gloucester*, notwithstanding I strove and prayed for several Days, and had Matter enough in my Heart, yet I was so restrained that I could not compose any Thing at all. ——— I mentioned my Case to one *Clergyman*, he said I was an *Enthusiast*. I wrote to another, who was experienced in the *divine Life*, he gave me some Reasons why GOD might deal with me in that Manner, and withal promised me his *Prayers* ——— I joined with him in importunate Supplication to know whether this Restraint was of GOD or the *Devil*. At last reading Mr. HENRY upon the Acts of the Apost'les, this Passage was much pressed upon my Heart, *We assay'd to go into Bythinia, but the Spirit suffer'd us not* Looking a little farther, I found a Quotation out of *Ezekiel*, wherein GOD said to that young Prophet, just after he had given him a divine and publick Commission, *Thou shalt be dumb, but when I speak unto thee then shalt thou speak* ——— This made me quite easy ——— The Remainder of the Fortnight, I spent in reading the several Missions of the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, and wrestled with God to give me Grace to follow their good Examples.

About three Days before Ordination the Bishop came to Town, the Evening after, I sent his Lordship an Abstract of my private Examination upon these two Questions, *Do you trust that you are inwardly*

wardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this Office and Ministration? Are you called according to the Will of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and the Laws of this Realm?

The next Morning I waited on the Bishop in Person——He received me with all Love, told me, He was glad I was come, that he was satisfied with the Preparations I had made, and with the Allowance given me by Sir JOHN PHILIPS —— I had myself, said he, made Provision for you of two little Parishes, but since you chuse to be at Oxford, I am very well pleased, I doubt not but you will do much Good—— Upon this I took my Leave, wondering at GOD's Goodness towards such a Wretch, but withal exceedingly delighted that in every Circumstance he had made my Way into the Ministry so very plain before my Face.

This I think was on Friday —— The Day following I continued to spend in Abstinence and Prayer. In the Evening I retired to a Hill near the Town, and pray'd most fervently for about two Hours, in behalf of myself and those who were to be ordained with me.

On Sunday Morning I rose early and prayed over St. PAUL's Epistle to TIMOTHY, particularly that Precept, *Let no one despise thy Youth.* When I went up to the Altar, I could think of nothing but SAMUEL standing before the LORD with a Linnen Ephod —— When the Bishop laid his Hands upon my Head, my Heart was melted down, and I offer'd up my whole Spirit, Soul and Body to the Service of GOD's Sanctuary —— I read the Gospel at the Bishop's Command, with Power, and afterwards sealed the good Confession I had made before many Witnesses, with CHRIST's most blessed Body.

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Being restrained, as was before observed, I could not, tho' solicited thereto, preach in the Afternoon, but I read Prayers to the poor Prisoners, being willing to let the first Act of my ministerial Office be an Act of Charity.

The next Morning, waiting upon GOD in Prayer, to know what he would have me to do, these Words, *Speak out PAUL*, came with great Power upon my Heart—Immediately my Heart was enlarged, GOD spake to me by his Spirit, I was no longer dumb—I finished a Sermon I had in Hand sometime before, I began another, and preached the *Sunday* following, to a very crowded Audience, with as much Freedom as tho' I had been a Preacher for some Years.

Oh! the unspeakable Benefit of reading to the Poor, and exercising our Talents while Students at the University! Such previous Acts create excellent Habits, and make young Ministers not awkward, but apt to teach.—It is remarkable, our Lord sent out his Apostles on short Missions before they were so solemnly authorized at the Day of *Pentecost*—Would *Tutors* of our *Universities* follow his Example, and send out their *Pupils* to visit the Sick and the Prisoners, to pray with, and read practical Books of Piety to the Poor, they would find such Exercises of more Service to their Pupils and the Church of GOD, than all their private and publick Lectures put together

But to come to a Conclusion—Thus GOD dealt with my Soul—At the same Time he was not forgetful of my Body, for he inclined the Bishop's Heart to gave me *five* Guineas more, and by this Time a Quarter's Allowance was due to me from Sir JOHN PHILLIPS, both which Sums put together served exceeding well to defray the Expences of my *Ordination* and taking my *Bachelors* Degree,

Degree, which was conferr'd upon me at *Oxford*, the Week after my being *ordained*, being then Twenty One Years and Seven Months old.

These Changes from a *Servitor* to a *Batchelor of Arts*, from a common *Drawer* to a *Clergyman*, were great Temptations to think more highly of myself than I ought to think— Some were jealous over me, as I trust they always will be, with a godly Jealousy— Hereby GOD, who is rich in Mercy, forewarned me of my Danger, stirred up my Heart, to pray against spiritual Pride, and kept me, as I hope he will unto the End, in some Measure humble.

Thus did GOD, thro' a Variety of unforeseen Acts of *Providence* and *Grace*, train me up for, and at length introduce me into the Service of his Church— What has happened to me since that Time, especially for these two last Year's past, is too notorious to need a Repetition— Howe-
ver, as I find Freedom in my self, & Leisure from my ministerial Employ, hereafter, GOD willing, I shall relate some Dealings of GOD with my Soul, and how he led me, without any Foresight of my own, into my present way of acting.

In the mean while, *My dear Reader*, whoever thou art, I pray GOD what I have now written may not prove a Savour of *Death unto Death*, but a Savour of *Life unto Life* unto thy Soul —
Many I fear through Ignorance, Prejudice & Unbelief, when they read this, will contradict & blaspheme— Be not thou of this Number— If thou art as yet unspotted from the World; I pray God to keep thee so— For, believe me, Innocence is better than Repentance— And tho' Sin may afford thee some brutish present Pleasure, yet the Remembrance of it is after wards exceeding bitter— If thou art immersed in Sin, as I was, take no Encouragement from me to continue in it on one

Hand

Hand, nor despair of Mercy on the other, let
 GOD's Goodness to me lead thee to Repentance —
 The same Lord is rich unto all that call upon
 him thro' *Faith* in *CHRIST JESUS*, and if thro'
Grace I have done any Thing praise worthy, not
 unto me, not unto me, but unto GOD give all the
 Glory — If thou art awaken'd to a Sense of the
divine Life, and art *hungering* and *thirsting* after the
Righteousness of *JESUS CHRIST* and the *Indwel-*
ling of his blessed Spirit in thy Heart, think it not
 absolutely necessary to undergo all the Tempta-
 tions that have befallen me — It is in the *spiritual*
 as it is in the *natural Birth* — Some feel more,
 others less, but all must experience some Pangs
 and Travails of Soul, ere *CHRIST JESUS* be
 formed within them — If GOD deals with thee
 in a more gentle *Way*, so that the Work of Con-
 version is effected in thy Heart, thou oughtest to
 be exceeding thankful — Or if he should lead
 thee thro' a longer Wilderness than I have passed
 thro', thou needest not complain — The more
 thou art *humbled* now, the more thou shalt be *ex-*
alted hereafter — One Taste of *CHRIST* in thy
 Heart will make amends for all — And if thou
 art one that hast felt the Powers of the *World to*
come, and art already converted, I know thou wilt
 rejoice and give Thanks for what GOD has done
 for my Soul — To conclude, May all that pe-
 ruse these few Sheets, be as deeply and as alter-
 nately affected with Grief and Joy, in reading, as I
 have been in writing them — I am confident
 they will then answer the intended Effect, and
 cause many Thanksgivings to be offer'd in my be-
 half, to that GOD who has called me out of *Darke-*
ness into his marvellous *Light* — That thou, O
 Reader,

Reader, whoever thou art, may'ft experience the
like Blessing, is the hearty Prayer of

Thy Soul's Friend

and Servant,

George Whitefield.

