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A SHORT  
 ACCOUNT  
 OF  
 GOD'S Dealings

With the REVEREND  
 Mr. GEORGE WHITEFIELD, A. B.  
 Late of *Pembroke-College, Oxford,*

FROM  
 His INFANCY to the Time of his entering  
 into HOLY ORDERS.

Written by HIMSELF, on board the *Elizabeth*,  
 Captain *Stephenson*, bound from *London* to  
*Philadelphia*, and sent over by FLIM to be  
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 in *Georgia*.

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*Thou, O God, hast taught me from my Youth up until  
 now: therefore will I tell of thy wondrous Works.  
 Psalm lxxi. 15.*

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A S H O R T  
A C C O U N T  
O F  
*G O D ' s Dealings*

With the REVEREND  
Mr. *G E O R G E W H I T E F I E L D .*

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The I N T R O D U C T I O N .

**A**LTHOUGH the following Account of what God has done for my Soul, will undoubtedly be differently judged of by different People ; yet, since I believe a single Eye to God's Glory moves me to write, and I find myself much pressed in Spirit to publish it at this Time, I am not in the least solicitous about the Reception it will meet with in the World.

The Benefit I have received from reading the Lives of others, the Examples we have in Scripture of the sacred Authors composing their own Histories, and more especially the Assistance I have had from the Holy Spirit, in bringing many Things to my Remembrance, which otherwise I should have forgotten,

seem'd to me Reasons sufficient to justify my Conduct in the Sight of God and 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 deferred till after my Death, or wrote by some other Person, yet I thought it might be more beneficial, and be better credited, if wrote with my own Hand, and published 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. They have given us the bright, but not the dark Side of their Character. This, I think, proceeded from a kind of pious Fraud, lest mentioning Persons Faults should encourage others in Sin.—It cannot, I am sure, proceed from the 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 us, that out of *Mary Magdalene* *Jesus Christ* cast seven Devils.

I have therefore endeavour'd to follow their good Example.—I have simply told what I was by Nature, as well as what I am by Grace.—I am not over cautious as to any suppos'd Consequences, since none can be hurt by these but such as hold the Truth in Unrighteousness.—*To the pure all Things will be pure.*

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 Dealings with me in my riper Years, I shall, as I am able, give the following brief Account of them.

## S E C T. I.

*From my Infancy, till my being for some Time  
at the University.*

**I** 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 my Endeavours to make good my Mother's Expectations, and so follow the Example of my dear Saviour, who was born in a Manger belonging to an Inn.

My very Infant Years must necessarily not be mentioned; yet I can remember such early stirrings of Corruption in my Heart, as abundantly convinces 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 for ever banished from his divine Presence.

I can truly say I was froward 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 used to make no Scruple of taking Money out of her Pocket before she was up.—I have frequently betrayed my Trust, and have more than once spent Money I took in the

House, in buying Fruits, Tarts, &c. to satisfy my sensual Appetite.—Numbers of Sabbaths have I broken, and generally used to behave myself very irreverently in God's Sanctuary.—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 this I have often since, and do now bless and 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 how he had kept the Commandments from his Youth, with Shame and Confusion of Face I confess, that I have broken them all from my Youth.—Whatever foreseen Fitness for Salvation others may talk of and glory in, I disclaim any such Thing; if I trace myself from my Cradle to my Manhood, I can see nothing in me but a Fitness to be damned.—I speak the Truth in *Christ*, I lie not. If the Almighty had not prevented me by his Grace, and wrought most powerfully upon my Soul, quickening me by his free Spirit when dead in Trespasses and Sins, I had now either been sitting in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death, or condemned, as the due Reward of my Crimes, to be for ever 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 blessed Spirit upon my Heart, sufficient to satisfy me that 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

I had early some Convictions of Sin, and once I remember, when some Persons (as they frequently did) made it their Business to teaze me, I immediately retired to my Room, and kneeling down, 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 of being a Clergyman, used frequently to imitate the Ministers reading Prayers, &c. Part of the Money I used to steal from my Parent 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, and always kept me in my tender Years (for which I never can sufficiently thank her) from intermeddling in the least with the 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 for Temporals, but God over-ruled it for good.— It set 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 Crypt* in *Gloucester*, the last Grammar School I ever went to. Having a good Elocution and Memory, I was remarked for making Speeches before the Corporation at their annual Visitation. But I cannot say I felt any Drawings of God upon my Soul for a Year or two, saving that I laid out some of the Money that was given me on one of those 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 some Time after I bought it, was of great Benefit to my Soul.

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

My Master seeing how mine and my Schoolfellows Vein run, composed 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. The Remembrance of this has often covered me with Confusion of Face, and I hope will do so, even to the End of my Life.

And I cannot but here observe with much Concern of Mind, how 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 *Jesus Christ*, - as Light to Darkness, Heaven to Hell. 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 his other Scholars, in teaching us to speak and write correctly.

Before I was fifteen, having, as I thought, made a sufficient Progress in the Classics, and, at the Bottom, 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  
 " Univerity Education, more Learning I thought  
 " would spoil me for a Tradesman, and therefore I  
 " judged it best not to learn *Latin* any longer." She at first refused to consent, but my Corruptions 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 on the Decline, and 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, washed Mops, cleaned Rooms, and, in one Word, became a professed and common Drawer for nigh a Year and an 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



whole House upon my Hands, yet I composed *two or three Sermons, and dedicated 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 to look into my Heart.—Frequently I read the Bible when sitting up at Night. Seeing the Boys go by to School has often cut me to the Heart.—And a dear Youth (now with God) would often come intreating me, when serving at the Bar, to go to *Oxford*. My general Answer was, I wish I could.

After I had continued about a Year in this fervile Employment, my Mother was obliged to leave the Inn. My Brother, who had been bred up for the Business, married; whereupon all was made over to him; and I, being accustomed to the House, it was agreed that I should continue there as an Assistant. But God's Thoughts were not as our Thoughts.

By his good Providence it happened that my Sister-in-law and I could by no Means agree; and at length the Resentment grew to such an Height, that my proud Heart would scarce suffer me to speak to her for three Weeks together. But notwithstanding I was much to blame, yet I used to retire and weep before the Lord, as *Hagar*, when flying from her Mistress *Sarah*, 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 for a long while 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*.

Here God was pleased to give me great Foretastes of his Love, and fill me with such unspeakable Raptures, particularly once in *St. John's Church*, that I was carried out beyond myself.—I felt great Hung-  
rings

rings and Thirstings after the blessed Sacrament, and wrote many Letters to my Mother, telling her I would never go into the publick Employment again. *Thomas a 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 surely whispered, *This would not last.*

And indeed so it happened. 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 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 fauntring 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, the Sense of the Divine Presence I had vouchsafed unto me insensibly wore off my Mind, and I at length fell into an abominable secret Sin, 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 doing Despite to the Spirit of Grace.—He saw me with Pity and Compassion, when lying in my Blood.—He passed by me, He

He

He said unto me, *Live*, and even gave me some Forefight of his providing for me.

One Morning, as I was reading a Play to my Sister, said I, "Sister, 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 barred up, so that I think God will provide for me some Way or other that we cannot apprehend."

How I came to say these Words I know not.—— God afterwards shewed me they came from him.—— Having thus lived with my Mother for some considerable Time, a young Student, who was once my School-fellow, and then a Servitor of *Pembroke-College, Oxford*, came to pay my Mother a Visit. Amongst other Conversation, he told her how he had discharged all College Expences that Quarter, and received a Penny. Upon that my Mother immediately cried out, "This will do for my Son."—— Then turning to me, she said, "Will you go to *Oxford, George?*" I replied, *With all my Heart*. Whereupon, having the same Friends that this young 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-entered myself, and being grown much in Stature, my Master addressed 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 something to translate into *Latin*; and tho' I had made no Application to my Classics for so long a Time, yet I had but one inconsiderable Fault in my Exercise. This, I believe, somewhat surprized my Master then, and has afforded me Matter of Thanks and Praise ever since.

Being resettled at School, I spared no Pains to go forward in my Book. God was pleased to give me  
his

his Blessing, and I learned much faster than I did before. But all this while I continued in secret Sin; and at length got acquainted with such a Set of debauched, abandoned, atheistical Youths, that if God, by his free, unmerited, and especial Grace, had not delivered me out of their Hands, I should long since have sat in the Scorners's Chair, and made a Mock at Sin.—By keeping Company with them, my Thoughts of Religion grew more and more like theirs.—I went to publick Service only to make Sport and walk about.—I took Pleasure in their leud Conversation—I began to reason as they did, and to ask why God had 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.—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 on 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 at different Times working powerfully and convincingly upon my Soul. One Day in particular, as I was coming down Stairs, and overheard my Friends speaking well of me, God so deeply convicted me of 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, some Time after being overtaken in Liquor (as I have been twice or thrice in my Lifetime) 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, working them

up

up to just what he pleases, when by Intemperance they have chased away 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 my Thoughts, Words, and Actions. I kept the following *Lent*, fasting *Wednesday* and *Friday* 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 amongst my School-fellows. I 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 at Cards, and of reading and seeing Plays, tho' I began to have some Scruples about it.

Near this Time I dreamed that I was to see God on Mount *Sinai*, but was afraid to meet him.—This made a great Impression upon me: And 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 once I affected to look more rakish, I now strove to appear more grave than I really was.—However, an uncommon Concern and Alteration was visible in my Behaviour, and I often used to find Fault with the Lightness of others.

One Night, as I was going 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) turned short upon me, crying out, *What does the Boy mean? Pruthee hold thy Tongue; or something to that Purpose.*

Purpose. God has since shewn her from what that Impression came.

For a Twelvemonth 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 feared this would not hold long, and that I should forget all when I came to *Oxford*. This Caution did me much Service, for it set me upon praying for Perseverance: And, under God, the Preparation I made in the Country, was a Preservative against the manifold Temptations which beset me at my first coming to that Seat of Learning.

Being now near eighteen Years old, it was judged proper for me to go 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 repaid) to defray the first Expence of entring; — and the Master, contrary to all Expectations, admitted me Servitor immediately.

Soon after my Admission, I went and resided, and found my having been used to a Publick-house was now of Service to me. For many of the Servitors being sick at my first coming up, by my diligent and ready Attendance, I ingratiated myself into the Gentlemens Favour so far, that many, who had it in their Power, chose me to be their Servitor.

This much lessened my Expence; and indeed, God was so gracious, that with the Profits of my Place, and some little Presents made me by my kind Tutor, for almost the first three Years I did not put all my Relations together to above 24 *l.* Expence. And it has often grieved my Soul to see so many young Students spending their Substance in extravagant Living, and thereby intirely unfitting themselves for the Prosecution of their proper Studies.

I had not been long at the University, before I found the Benefit of the Foundation I had laid in the  
Country

Country for a holy Life. I was quickly sollicitated to join in their Excess of Riot with several who lay in the same Room. God, in Answer to Prayers before put up, gave me Grace to withstand them; and once in particular, it being cold, my Limbs were so benumbed 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 as a singular odd Fellow.

All this while I was not fully satisfied of the Sin of playing at Cards and reading Plays; till God upon a Fast-day was pleased to convince me. For, taking a Play, 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 again; and, blessed be his Name, I have not 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 to purchase it. Soon after my coming up to the University, seeing a small Edition of it in a Friend's Hand, I 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*.

I now began to pray and sing Psalms thrice every Day, besides Morning and Evening, and to fast every *Friday*, and to receive the Sacrament at a Parish-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 Twelvemonth, my Soul longed to be acquainted with some of them, and I was strongly pressed to follow their good Example, when I saw them go through a ridiculing Crowd to receive the Holy Eucharist at St. *Mary's*. — At length God was

pleas'd to open a Door.— It happened that a poor Woman in one of the Workhouses had attempted to cut her Throat, but was happily prevented. Upon hearing of this, and knowing that both the Mr. *Wesleys* were ready to every good Work, I sent a poor aged Apple-woman of our College to inform Mr. *Charles Wesley* of it, charging her not to discover who sent her. She went; but contrary to my Orders, told my Name. He having heard of my coming to the Castle and a Parish-Church Sacrament, and having met me frequently walking by myself, followed the Woman when she was gone away, and sent an Invitation to me by her, to come to 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 a-thirst 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 all his Discourses tend that Way.— And when he had put into my Hands Professor *Frank's* Treatise against the Fear of Man, and a Book, intitled, *The Country Parson's Advice to his Parishioners* (the last of which was wonderfully blessed to my Soul) I took my Leave.

In a short Time he let me have another Book, intitled, *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 Treatise by the Hands of my never to be forgotten Friend.

At my first reading it, I wondered what the Author meant by saying, "That some falsely plac'd 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 poor Neighbours."— Alas! thought I, "If this be not Religion, what is?" God soon shew'd me. For in reading a few Lines further, that "true Re-  
"ligion



“ligion was an Union of the Soul with God, and  
 “*Christ* formed within us ;” a Ray of divine Light  
 was instantaneously darted 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 of *Samaria*, 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 have gladly received  
 it.—But alas ! my Words seemed to them as idle  
 Tales !—They thought that I was going besides my-  
 self, and by their Letters confirmed me in the Reso-  
 lutions I had taken not to go down into the Coun-  
 try, but continue where I was, lest that by any Means  
 the good Work which God had begun in my Soul,  
 might be made of none Effect.

From time to time Mr. *Wesley* 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 Hardness 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 ate or  
 drank, or whatsoever I did, I endeavoured to do all  
 to the Glory of God. Like them, having no week-  
 ly Sacrament (altho' the Rubrick required it) at our  
 own College, I received 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, at first  
 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 intirely changed ; whereas, before I was busied in studying the Dry Sciences, and Books that went no farther than the Surface, I now resolved to read only such as entered into the Heart of Religion, and which 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 my Way signally prosperous, and given me abundant Success.

God enabled me to do much Good to many, as well as to receive much from the despised Methodists, and made me instrumental in converting one who is lately come out into the Church, and, I trust, will prove a burning and a shining Light.

Several short Fits of Illness was God pleased to visit and to try me with after my first Acquaintance with Mr. *Wesley*. My new Convert was a Help meet for me in those and in all other Circumstances ; and in Company with him, and several other Christian Friends, did I spend many sweet and delightful Hours.—Never did Persons, I believe, strive more earnestly to enter in at the strait Gate.—They kept their Bodies under even to an Extreme.—They were dead to the World, and willing to be accounted as the Dung and Offscouring 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 Thirst for the Praise of Men, more than that which cometh from God, and a servile Fear of Contempt, caused Numbers that had set their Hand to the Plow, shamefully to look back.—The World (and not themselves)

elves) gave them the Title of Methodists, I suppose from their Custom of regulating their Time, and planning the Business of the Day every Morning.— Mr. *John* and *Charles Wesleys*, were two of the first that thus openly dared to confess *Christ*; and they, under 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 is 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 the divine Assistance, give in the following Section.

## S E C T. II.

### *A brief and summary Account of my Temptations.*

**A**T my first setting out, in Compassion to my Weakness, I grew in Favour both with God and Man, and used to be much lifted up with sensible Devotion, especially at the blessed Sacrament.— But when Religion began to take Root in my Heart, and I 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 fair Reputation.— I had

had no sooner received the Sacrament publickly 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 that 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 very few Masters, no under Graduates (but the Methodists) attended upon it.

Mr. *Charles Wesley* (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, one of our Fellows passing by, I was ashamed to be seen to knock at his Door. But, blessed be God, this 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 confessed the Methodists more and more publickly every Day.—I walked openly with them, and chose rather to bear Contempt with those People of God, than to 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 by this Treatment, and over-awed by his Authority, I spake 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, and visited the Poor the first Opportunity, and told my Companions, if ever I was called to a Stake for *Christ's* Sake, I would serve my Tongue as Archbishop *Cranmer* served his Hand, *viz.* make that burn first.

My Tutor being a moderate Man, did not oppose me much, but thought, I believe, that I went a little too far. He lent me Books, gave me Money, visited

visited me, 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 the 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 Madness.—I daily underwent some Contempt at College. Some have thrown Dirt at me; others, by Degrees, took away their Pay from me.—And two Friends, that were dear unto 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, “That no one  
“ hath left Father or Mother, Brethren or Sisters,  
“ Houses or Lands, for *Christ’s* Sake and the Gos-  
“ pel’s, but he shall receive a hundred-fold in this  
“ Life, with Persecution, as well as eternal Life in  
“ the World come.”

These, tho’ little, were useful Trials.—They inured me to Contempt, lessened Self-love, and taught me to die daily.—My inward Sufferings were of a more uncommon Nature.—*Satan* seemed to have desired me in particular to sift me as Wheat.—God permitted him, for wise Reasons I have seen already, *viz.* that his future Blessings might not prove my Ruin.

From my first Awakenings to the divine Life, I felt a particular hungering and thirsting after the Humility of *Jesus Christ*.—Night and Day I prayed to be a Partaker of that Grace, imagining that the Habit of Humility would be instantaneously infused into my Soul. But as *Gideon* taught the Men of *Succoth* with Thorns, so God (if I am yet in any Measure blessed with true Poverty of Spirit) taught it me by the Exercise of strong Temptations.

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I observed before how I used to be favoured with sensible Devotion; 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 Impression and Weight upon my Breast, attended with inward Darkneſs.—I applied to my Friend Mr. *Charles Wesley*;—he advised me to keep upon my Watch, and referred me to a Chapter in *Kempis*.

In a short Time I perceived this Load gradually increase, till it almost weighed me down, and fully convinced me that *Satan* had as real a Possession of, and Power given over my Body, as he had once over *Job's*.—All Power of meditating, or even thinking, was taken from me.—My Memory quite failed me.—My whole Soul was barren and dry, and I could fancy myself to be like nothing so much as a Man locked up in Iron Armour.

Whenever I kneeled down, I felt great Heavings in my Body, and have often prayed under the Weight of them till the Sweat came through me. At this Time *Satan* used to terrify me much, and threatened to punish me if I discovered his Wiles.—It being my Duty, as Servitor, in my Turn to knock at the Gentlemens Rooms by ten at Night, to see who were in their Rooms, I thought the Devil would appear to me every Stair I went up.—And he so troubled me when I lay down to rest, that for some Weeks I scarce slept above three Hours at a Time.

God only knows how many Nights I have lain upon my Bed, groaning under the Weight I felt, and bidding *Satan* depart from me in the Name of *Jesus*.—Whole Days and Weeks have I spent in lying prostrate on the Ground, and begging for Freedom from those proud hellish Thoughts that used to crowd in upon, and distract my Soul.—But God made *Satan* drive out *Satan*,—For these Thoughts and Suggestions created 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

and Envy, so buffeted me in their Turns, that I was resolved either to die 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 resolved to get the Mastery over it by the Help of *Jesus Christ*.—Accordingly, by Degrees I began to leave off eating Fruits and such like, and gave the Money I usually spent in that Way to the Poor.—Afterward I always chose the worst Sort of Food, tho' my Place furnished me with Variety.—I fasted twice a Week.—My Apparel was mean.—I thought it unbecoming a Penitent to have his Hair powdered.—I wore woollen Gloves, a patched Gown and dirty Shoes;—and tho' I was then 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 this State, faint, yet pursuing, and travelling along in the dark, in hope that the Star I had (before once) seen, would hereafter appear again.—During this Season I was very active; but finding Pride creeping in at the End of almost every Thought, Word and Action, and meeting with *Castaniza's Spiritual Combat*, in which he says, “That he that is employed in mortifying his Will, was as well employed as tho' he was converting *Indians*,” or Words to that Effect, *Satan* so imposed upon my Understanding, that he persuaded me to shut myself 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 myself.

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

His main Drift was to lead me into a State of Quietism; (He generally plowed 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, having, out of Pride, put down in my Diary what I gave away, *Satan* tempted me to lay my Diary quite aside.—When *Castaniza* advised to talk but little, *Satan* said I must not talk at all.—So that I, who used to be the most forward in exhorting my Companions, have sate whole Nights almost without speaking at all. Again, when *Castaniza* advised to endeavour after a silent Recollection and waiting upon God, *Satan* told me I must leave off all Forms, and not use my Voice in Prayer at all.—The Time would fail me to recount all the Instances of this Kind in which he had deceived me.—But when Matters came to an Extreme, 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 the Matter of my College Exercises.—Whenever I endeavoured to compose my Theme, I had no Power to write a Word, nor so much as tell my Christian Friends of my Inability to do it.—*Saturday* being come (which is the Day the Students give up their Compositions) it was suggested to me, that I must go down into the Hall, and confess I could not make a Theme, and so publickly suffer, as if it were 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 entered my Study, and continued instant in Prayer, waiting the Event.—For this my Tutor fined me half a Crown. The next Week *Satan* served me in like Manner again;—But having now got more Strength, and perceiving 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 imagining that I would not willingly neglect my Exercise, he afterwards called



led 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 Tears, and assured him that it was not out of Contempt of Authority, but 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 happened, came to me, urging the Command in Scripture, to be subject to the higher Powers. I answered, Yes; but I had a new Revelation. Lord, what is Man!

As I daily got Strength, by continued, tho' almost silent Prayer, in my Study, my Temptations grew stronger also, particularly for two or three Days before Deliverance came.—Near five or six Weeks I had now spent in my Study, except when I was obliged to go out. During this Time I was fighting with my Corruptions, and did little else besides kneeling down by my Bed-side, feeling, as it were a heavy Pressure upon my Body, as well as an unspeakable Oppression of Mind, yet offering up my Soul to God, to do with me as it pleased him. It was now suggested to me, that *Jesus Christ* was amongst the wild Beasts when he was tempted, and that I ought to follow his Example; and being willing, as I thought, to imitate *Jesus Christ*, after Supper I went into *Christ-Church Walk*, near our College, and continued in silent Prayer under one of the Trees for near two Hours, sometimes lying flat on my Face, sometimes kneeling upon my Knees, all the while filled with Fear and Concern lest some of my Brethren should be overwhelmed with Pride.—The Night being stormy, it gave me awful Thoughts of the Day of Judgment. I continued I think till the great Bell rung for Retirement to the College, not without finding some Reluctance in the natural Man against staying so long in the Cold.

The next Night I repeated the same Exercise at the same Place. But the Hour of Extremity being now come, God was pleased to make an open Shew of those Diabolical Devices by which I had been deceived.

By this Time I had left off keeping my Diary, using my Forms, or scarce my Voice in Prayer, visiting the Prisoners, &c. Nothing remained for me to leave, unless I forsook publick Worship, but my religious Friends — Now it was suggested that I must leave them also for *Christ's* Sake. — This was a fore Trial, but rather than not be, as I fancied, *Christ's* Disciple, I 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 Wesley* the Day following. — This, with many other concurring Circumstances, made my honoured Friend, Mr. *Charles Wesley*, suspect something more than ordinary was the Matter. He came to my Room, soon found out my Case; apprized me of my Danger if I would not take Advice, and recommended me to his Brother *John*, Fellow of *Lincoln-College*, as more experienced in the spiritual Life. God gave me (Blessed be his holy Name!) a teachable 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 External, tho' not to *depend* on them in the least. — From time to time he gave me Directions as my various and pitiable State required; and at length, by his excellent Advice and Management of me, under God, I was delivered from those Wiles of *Satan*. — Praise the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me praise his holy Name!

During this, and all other Seasons of Temptation, my Soul was inwardly supported with great Courage  
and

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, and sometimes I fell into Sensuality, yet I was generally enabled to wait in Silence for the Salvation of God, or to persist in Prayer, till some Beams of spiritual Light and Comfort were vouchsafed me from on high. *Thomas a Kempis*, (since translated and published by Mr. *Johiz Wesley*) *Castaniza's* Combat, and the *Greek Testament* (every Reading of which I endeavoured to turn into a Prayer) were of great Help and Furtherance to me. On receiving the holy Sacrament, especially before Trials, I have found Grace in a very affecting Manner, and in abundant Measure sometimes imparted to my Soul; an irrefragable Proof to me of the miserable Delusion of the Author of that called, *The plain Account of the Sacrament*, which sinks that holy Ordinance into a bare Memorial, who, if he obstinately refuse the Instruction of the Most High, will doubtless, without Repentance, bear his Punishment, whosoever he be.

To proceed. I had now taken up my Externals again;—and tho' *Satan* for some Weeks had been biting my Heel, God was pleased to shew me that I should soon bruise his Head.—A few Days after, as I was walking along, I met with a poor Woman, whose Husband was then in *Bocardo*, or *Oxford Town-Goal*, which I constantly visited. Seeing her much discomposed, I enquired the Cause.—She told me, not being able to bear the crying of her Children, ready to perish for Hunger, and having nothing to relieve them, she had been to drown herself, but was mercifully prevented, and said 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 there God visited them both by his free Grace;—she was powerfully quickened from above; and when I had done reading, he came to me like the

trembling Goaler, and grasping my Hand, cried 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' notorious Offenders against God and one another before, 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 rejoicing in the great Day of our Lord *Jesus*.

Soon after this the holy Season of *Lent* came on, which our Friends kept very strictly, eating no Flesh during the six Weeks, except on *Saturdays* and *Sundays*. I abstained frequently on *Saturdays* also, and ate nothing on the other Days, (except on *Sunday*) but Sage-tea without Sugar, and coarse Bread.—I constantly walked 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 Body, 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 amongst 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, and lost much of my Flesh, yet I had nevertheless increased in the Spirit.

This Fit of Sickness continued upon me for seven Weeks, and a glorious Visitation it was.—The blessed Spirit was all this Time purifying my Soul.—All my former gross and notorious, and even my Heart-sins also, were now set home upon me, of which I wrote down some Remembrance immediately, and confessed them before God Morning and Evening.—Tho' weak, I often spent two Hours in my Evening Retirements, and prayed over my *Greek Testament*, and Bishop *Hall's* most excellent Contemplations, every Hour that my Health would permit.

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About the End of the seven Weeks, and after I had been groaning under an unspeakable Pressure both of Body and Mind for above a Twelve-month; God was pleased to set me free in the following Manner. — One Day, perceiving an uncommon Drought, and a disagreeable 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 at an End. Upon which, I cast myself down on the Bed, crying out, I thirst! I thirst! and acted Faith upon a crucified *Jesus*, bleeding for me in particular — Soon after this, I found and felt in myself, that I was delivered from the Burden that had so heavily oppressed me! The Spirit of Mourning was taken from me, and I knew what it was truly to rejoice in God my Saviour, and, for some Time, could not avoid singing Psalms wherever I was; but my Joy gradually became more settled, and, blessed be God, has abode and increased in my Soul (saving a few casual Intermissions) ever since!

Thus were the Days of my Mourning ended. — After a long Night of Desertion and 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 the Spirit of God take Possession of my Soul, and, as I humbly hope, seal me unto the Day of Redemption.

### S E C T. III.

*From the Time of my first leaving the University to go to Gloucester, till the Time of my Ordination.*

**A**S fast as I got Strength after my Sickness, my Tutor, Physician, and some others, were still urging me to go into the Country, hoping thereby

to divert me, as they thought, from a too intense Application to Religion.—I had, for some Time, been aware of their Design, and wrote Letters, beseeching my Mother, if she valued my Soul, not to lay her Commands on me to come down. She was pleased 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 my Friends, I left my sweet Retirement at *Oxford*, and went to *Gloucester*, the Place of my Nativity.

Having now obtained Mercy from God, and received the Spirit of Adoption in my Heart, my Friends were surprized to see me look and behave so cheerfully, after the many Reports they had heard concerning me. However, I soon found myself to be as a Sheep sent forth amongst Wolves in Sheeps Clothing: For they immediately endeavoured to dissuade me (as they had lately done a Friend that began with me) from a constant Use of the Means of Grace, especially from weekly Abstinence, and receiving the blessed Sacrament.—But God enabled me to resist them stedfast in the Faith, and by keeping close to him in his holy Ordinances, I was made to triumph over all.

Being unaccustomed for some Time to live without spiritual Companions, and finding none that would join heartily with me, no, not one, I watched unto Prayer all the Day long, beseeching God to raise me some religious Associates in his own Way and Time.

“ I will endeavour either to find or make a Friend,” had been my Resolution now for some Time; and therefore, after importunate Prayer one Day, I resolved to go to the House of one Mrs. *W*——, to whom I had formerly read Plays, Spectators, *Pope's Homer*, and such like trifling Books,—hoping the Alteration she now would find in my Sentiments, might, under God, influence her Soul.—God was pleased to bless the Visit with the desired Effect.—She received

ved the Word gladly.—She wanted to be taught the Way of God more perfectly, and soon became a Fool for *Christ's* Sake.—Not long after, God made me instrumental to awaken several young Persons, who soon formed themselves into a little Society, and had quickly the Honour of being despised at *Gloucester*, as we had been before them at *Oxford*: Thus, *all* 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 (upon 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 received fresh Life, Light, and Power from above.—I got more true Knowledge from reading the Book of God in one Month, than I could *Ever* have acquired from *All* the Writings of Men.—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, throughly furnished unto every good Word and Work.

During my Absence from *Oxford*, I spent three Weeks at *Bristol*, whither I went to see some Relations, but could not do them much good because of the Prejudices they had conceived against me.—However, I daily walked with God, and going to visit an Aunt, then in an Alms-house there, God brought in my Way a young Woman, who was hungering and thirsting after Righteousness.—She received the Word into an honest and good Heart, and since has proved a true Follower of *Jesus Christ*.—So gracious was the Lord, even in these my very early Days, not to leave himself without Witness, in that he *thus* vouchsafed to bless my poor Endeavours in *every* Place whereto his Providence *now* sent me!

According to his abundant Mercy he also raised me up some temporal Supplies. For some considerable Time I had followed the Example of Professor *Frank*, and whenever I wanted any wordly Assistance, plead-

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ed the Scripture Promises for the Things of this Life, as well as that which is to come, in the Name of *Jesus Christ*.—This is still my Practice, and I never yet failed of Success.—When I came from *Oxford*, on account of my Sickness, and other extraordinary and unavoidable Expences, I owed, I think, about twelve or thirteen Pounds; and when I went to *Bristol*, I was so poor, that I was obliged to borrow Money of my kind Hostess, Mrs. *H*——, with whom I lodged at *Gloucester* (and whose Husband and Family I pray God eternally to bless) to bear my Charges on the Road. This, I bless God, did not dishearten me; but I continued pleading the Promises in the Name of *Christ*, and soon after my coming to *Bristol* I received an Answer.—For a Brother of mine coming from Sea, God inclined him to give me four Guineas, and some other Necessaries. And when I returned to *Gloucester* (as I did after I had continued a short Time at *Bristol*) those I expected should assist me, did not; but Persons I never spoke to, and who, I thought, were my Enemies, were raised up to supply my Wants, and fulfil that Promise which I always pleaded, “ Seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto you.”

Oh, what sweet Communion had I daily vouchsafed from God in Prayer after my coming again to *Gloucester*!—How often have I been carried out beyond myself when sweetly meditating in the Fields!—How assuredly 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 and refreshed in the Multitude of Peace! Not that I was always upon the Mount, sometimes a Cloud would overshadow me: But the Sun of Righteousness quickly arose and dispelled it, and I knew it was *Jesus Christ* that revealed himself to my Soul.

I always observed, as my inward Strength increased, so my outward Sphere of Action increased proportionally.—In a short Time therefore, I began to read to  
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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 myself, because that alone taught me how to give proper Advice 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 the Behalf of the fainting Multitude, I used to pray unto him; and he, from time to time, inclined several that were rich in this World to give me Money, so that I generally had a little Stock for the Poor always in my Hand. One of the Poor whom I visited in this Manner, was called effectually by God as at the eleventh Hour: She was a Woman about threescore Years old, and, I really believe, died in the true Faith of *Jesus Christ*.

About this Time God was pleased to enlighten my Soul, and bring me into the Knowledge of his free Grace, and the Necessity of being justified in his Sight by *Faith only*; this was more extraordinary, because my Friends at *Oxford* had rather inclined to the Mystic Divinity.—And one of them (a dear Servant of the Lord) lately confessed he did not like me so well when at *Oxford*, as the rest of his Brethren, because I held Justification by *Faith only*.—And yet he observed I had most Success.—But, blessed be God, most of us have now been taught this Doctrine of *Christ*, 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.

*Burkit's* and *Henry's Expositions* were of admirable Use to lead me into *this*, and all other Gospel Truths. For many Months have I been almost always

ways upon my Knees, to study and pray over these Books. The Holy Spirit from time to time has led me into the Knowledge of divine Things, and I have been directed, by watching and reading the Scripture in this Manner, even in the minutest Circumstances, as plainly as the *Jews* were, when consulting the *Urim* and *Thummim* at the High-Priest's Breast!

*Allen's Alarm*, *Baxter's Call to the Unconverted*, and *Janesway's Life*, which I read at leisure Hours, much benefited me. I bless God, the Partition-wall of Bigotry and Sect-religion was soon broken down in my Heart.—For 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 of Heart.

During my Stay here, God enabled me to give a publick Testimony of my Repentance as to seeing and acting Plays.—For hearing the Strollers 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 Sin and Folly. In Answer to this, I was stirred up to extract Mr. *Law's* excellent Treatise, intitled, *The absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage Entertainment*.—God gave me Favour in the Printer's Sight; and 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 about six Months from the University, I thought it Time to think of returning thither; but before I came to a Resolution, was convinced of the contrary.

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 dreamed that one of the Prisoners came to be instructed by me; and it was impressed much upon my Heart.—In the Morning I went to the Door of the County-Goal; I knocked,

I knocked, but 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 after came a Letter from a Friend at *Oxford*, desiring me to go to one *Pebworth*, who was broken out of *Oxford* Goal, and was retaken at *Gloucester*. As soon as I read this Letter, it appeared 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 begged Money for them, whereby I was enabled to release some of them, and cause Provision to be distributed weekly amongst them, as also to 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 was much edified and strengthened in the Love of God and Man.

Thus employed I continued in my own City three Months longer.—Despised indeed by Man, but highly blessed by the Grace of God.—My Understanding was enlightened, my Will broken, and my Affections more and more enlivened with a Zeal for *Christ*.—Many such, I believe, were added to our little Society as shall be saved.—Fresh Supplies came from unexpected Hands to defray my Expences at the University.—And at the End of nine Months I returned thither, to the mutual Joy and Comfort of my Friends, till I was called to enter into Holy Orders.—The particular Circumstances of which I shall relate in the following Section.

## S E C T. IV.

*Of my Preparation for Holy Orders.*

FROM the Time I first entered at the University, especially from the Time I knew what was true and undefiled Christianity, 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 be prepared 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 Administration?” used even to make me tremble whenever I thought of entering into the Ministry. The Shyness that *Moses* and some other Prophets expressed, when God sent them out in a publick Capacity, I thought was sufficient to teach me not to run till I was called.—He who knoweth the Hearts of Men, is Witness that I never prayed more earnestly against any Thing, than I did against entering into the Service of the Church *so soon*.—Oftentimes I have been in an Agony in Prayer, when under Convictions of my Insufficiency for so great a Work.—With strong Cryings and Tears I have often said, “Lord, I am a Youth of uncircumcised Lips; Lord, send me not into thy Vineyard yet;” And sometimes I had Reason to think God was angry with me for resisting his Will. However, I was resolved to pray *thus*, as long as I could. If God did not grant my Request in keeping me out of *it*, I knew his Grace would be sufficient to support and strengthen me whenever he sent me into the Ministry.

To

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 Labourers into his Harvest." Another old and worthy Minister of *Christ*, 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* were then 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 Providence, brought me acquainted with the present Bishop of *Gloucester*.

Before I conversed with his Lordship, God was pleased to give me previous Notice of it. Long ere I had the least Prospect of being called before the Bishop, I dreamed one Night, I was talking with him in his Palace, and that he gave me some Gold, which seemed to found again in my Hand.—Afterward this Dream would often come into my Mind; and whenever I saw the Bishop at Church, a strong Persuasion would arise in my Mind that I should very shortly go to him: I always checked it, and prayed to God to preserve me from ever desiring that Honour which cometh of Man.—One Afternoon it happened that the Bishop took a solitary Walk, (as I was told afterwards) to old Lady *Selwyn's* near *Gloucester*, who, not long before, had made me a Present of a Piece of Gold. She, I found, recommended me to the Bishop; and 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 bid me to wait a little till he had put off his Habit, and he would return to me again. This gave me an Opportunity of praying to God for his Assistance, and adoring him for his Providence over me.

At his coming again into the Room, the Bishop told me he had heard of my Character, liked my Behaviour at Church, and enquiring my Age, "Notwithstanding, says he, I have declared I would not ordain any 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 founding again in my Hand, put me in Mind of my Dream, whereupon my Heart was filled with a Sense of God's Love.

Before I came home this News had reached my Friends; who, being 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 offered to give me Holy Orders whenever I would. On which they, knowing how I had depended on the Declaration his Lordship had made some Time ago, that he would ordain none under three and twenty, said,—and I then began to think 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 to labour first.—God had given me much Success in *Gloucester*; and my Friends being desirous of having me near them, I had Thoughts of settling amongst them. But when I came to *Oxford*, my Friends urged

urged several Reasons for my continuing at the University.—“ The Mr *Wesleys* had not long been gone abroad, and now no one was left to take Care of the Prison Affairs, &c.”—They further urged, “ That God had blessed my Endeavours *there* as well as at *Gloucester* ; that the University was the Fountain-head, that every Gownsmans Name was Legion, and that if I should be made instrumental in converting 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 a Year, if I would continue at the University. Upon this, finding the Care of the Prisoners would be no more than under God I could undertake with Pleasure, and knowing the University was the best Place to prosecute my Studies, I resolved, God willing, to wait at *Oxford* for a Blessing on 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 *St. Paul’s* Epistle to *Timothy*, and also by every Question that I knew was to be publickly put to me at the Time of my Ordination. *This* latter I drew out in Writing at large, and sealed my Approbation of *it* every Sunday at the blessed Sacrament.—At length *Trinity-Sunday* being near at hand, and having my Testimonials from the College, I went a Fortnight before hand to *Gloucester*, intending to compose some Sermons, and to give myself more particularly to Prayer.

But God’s Thoughts are not as our Thoughts.—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 not?—At last, in reading Mr. Henry, upon the *Acts of the Apostles*, this Passage was much pressed upon my Heart, "*We essayed to go into Bytbinia, but the Spirit suffered 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 the Time appointed for Ordination the Bishop came to Town. The next Evening I sent his Lordship an Abstract of my private Examination upon these two Questions, "*Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this Office and Administration?*" And, "*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. He received me with much Love, telling me, "He was glad I was come; that he was satisfied with the Preparation 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 choose to be at Oxford, I am very well pleased.—I doubt not but you will do much good."—Upon this I took my Leave, abashed with God's Goodness to such a Wretch, but withal exceed-



exceedingly rejoiced, that in every Circumstance he made my Way into the Ministry so very plain before my Face !

This, I think, was on *Friday*. The Day following I continued in Abstinence and Prayer.—In the Evening I retired to a Hill near the Town, and prayed fervently for about two Hours, in Behalf of myself and those that were to be ordained with me.

On *Sunday* Morning I rose early, and prayed over *St. Paul's* Epistle to *Timothy*, and more particularly over *that* Precept, “*Let no one despise thy Youth.*” —When I went up to the Altar, I could think of nothing but *Samuel's* standing a little Child before the Lord with a Linen Ephod.—When the Bishop laid his Hands upon my Head, my Heart was melted down, and I offered 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 afterward sealed the good Confession I had made before many Witnesses, by partaking of the holy Sacrament of our Lord's most blessed Body and Blood !

Being restrained from Writing, as was before observed, I could not preach in the Afternoon, tho' much sollicitated thereto. 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 to my Soul. Immediately my Heart was enlarged.—God spake to me by his Spirit, and I was no longer dumb.—I finished a Sermon I had in hand some Time 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 are very proper to prepare us for the Work of our Lord, and make us not unapt to teach in a more publick Manner.—It is remarkable that our Lord sent out his Apostles on short Missions, before they were so solemnly authorised at the Day of *Pentecost*. Would the Heads and Tutors of our Universities follow his Example, and, instead of discouraging their Pupils from doing any Thing of this Nature, send them to visit the Sick and the Prisoners, and to pray with, and read practical Books of Religion to the Poor, they would find such Exercises of more Service to *them*, and to the *Church* of God, than *all* their private and publick *Lectures* put together.

Thus God dealt with my Soul.—At the same Time, by his gracious Providence, he supplied me with all Things needful for my Body also.—For he inclined the Bishop's Heart to give me five Guineas more, and, by this Time, a Quarter's Allowance was due to me from Sir *John Philips*, both which Sums put together, fully served to defray the Expences of my Ordination, and taking my Batchelor's Degree, which was conferred on me at *Oxford* the Week after my being ordained, when I was about one and twenty Years of Age.

These Changes, from a Servitor to a Batchelor of Arts, from a common Drawer to a Clergyman, were no doubt Temptations to think more highly of myself than I ought to think; and some were therefore jealous over me, as I trust they always will be, with a godly Jealousy; God, who is rich in Mercy, thereby forewarned me of my Danger, stirred up my Heart to pray against spiritual Pride, and kept me (as I hope he will to the End) in some Measure always humbled before him!

Thus did God, by a Variety of unforeseen Acts of Providence and Grace, train me up for, and at length introduce me into the Service of his Church.

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What has happened to me since that Time, especially for these two last Years, is so known as to need no Repetition ; however, as I find Freedom in myself, and Leisure from my ministerial Employ, I shall hereafter relate God's further Dealings with my Soul, and how he led me into my present Way of acting.

In the mean while, my dear Reader, whosoever thou art, I pray God what I have now written may not prove a Saviour of Death unto Death, but a Saviour of Life unto Life unto thy Soul!—Many, I fear, thro' Ignorance, Prejudice, and Unbelief, when they read this, will contradict and blaspheme. Be not thou of this Number ; but if thou are yet uninfected with the Contagion of 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 afterwards is exceeding bitter.—If thou art immersed in Sin as I was, take no Encouragement from me to continue in *it* on the one Hand, nor despair of Mercy on the other.—Let God's Goodness to me lead thee also to Repentance.—The same Lord is rich unto ALL that call upon him through Faith in *Christ Jesus*. If through divine Grace I have done any Thing Praise-worthy, not unto me, not unto me, but unto God give all the Glory!—If thou art awakened to a Sense of the divine Life, and art hungering and thirsting after that Righteousness which is by Faith only in *Jesus Christ*, and the In-dwelling of his blessed Spirit in thy Heart, think it not absolutely necessary to pass through all the Temptations that have beset me round about on every Side.—It is in the spiritual as in the natural Life ; some feel more, others less, but all experience some Pangs and Travails of Soul, ere *Christ Jesus* is formed within them. If God deals with thee in a more gentle Way, yet so as that a thorough Work of Conversion is effected in thy Heart, thou oughtest to be exceeding

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ing thankful.—Or if he should lead thee through a longer Wilderness than I have passed through, thou needest not complain.—The more thou art *humbled now*, the more thou shalt be *exalted hereafter*.—One Taste of *Christ's* Love in thy Heart, will make Amends for all.—And if thou *hast felt the Powers of the World to come, and been made a Partaker of the Holy Ghost*, I know thou wilt rejoice, and give Thanks for what God has done for my Soul.—To conclude ; may all that peruse these few Sheets be as much affected alternately with Grief and Joy in reading, as I have been in writing them ; they will then have the desired Effect, and cause many Thanksgivings to be offered in my Behalf to that God who has called me out of Darkness into his marvellous Light ! And that thou, O Reader, whoever thou art, mayst experience the like and greater Blessings, is the hearty Prayer of thy Soul's Friend and Servant,

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.