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CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHY.

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LIFE OF THE  
REV. WILLIAM GRIMSHAW, A. B.

BY THE REV. JOHN NEWTON;

*In Six Letters, to the REV. HENRY FOSTER.*

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Religious Tract Society,

*Instituted 1799;*

PUBLISHED AND SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATER-  
NOSTER-ROW; BY J. NISBET, 21, BERNERS STREET,  
AND OTHER BOOKSELLERS.

Printed by **J. Rider, Little Britain, London.**

LIFE OF THE  
REV. WILLIAM GRIMSHAW, A. B.

*In Six Letters, from the late Rev. John Newton to the late  
Rev. Henry Foster.*

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LETTER I.

*Some Account of Mr. Grimshaw previous to his  
Settlement in Haworth.*

**SOME** accounts of our exemplary friend, the late Mr. Grimshaw, are already in print; but many particulars concerning him, which are well worthy of being recorded, are not generally known. From my own personal acquaintance with him, and the information you have procured me from the neighbourhood of Haworth, I hope I shall be able more fully to illustrate his extraordinary character, and to vindicate him from misrepresentation; and your desire has encouraged me to make the attempt.

But I shall not confine myself strictly to the task of a biographer, to dates and facts; but shall occasionally offer such reflections as may occur, with simplicity and freedom; as writing a few letters to an intimate friend, rather than a book.

Though St. Paul was too long a persecutor of the disciples, and was instigated by his misguided conscience to do many things against the cause to which he was afterwards devoted; yet he says, that God, who in due time called him by his grace, had separated him, and set him apart for his service from his mother's womb. Gal. i. 15. The recollection of his state and conduct in the days of his ignorance, was useful to him in future life. It kept him humble, and

from being exalted above measure, when he was afterwards honoured of the Lord, with most eminent grace, gifts, and usefulness. His pertinacious attachment to the form of religion in which he had been educated as a pharisee, made his subsequent change more noticed, and rendered him a more unsuspected witness to the truth and power of the gospel of Christ; for the sake of which he renounced all his former hopes of salvation by the works of the law, and considered what he had long counted his gain, as but loss and dung in comparison with the excellency of the knowledge of his Saviour. Phil. iii. 8. Having much forgiven, he loved much; and the constraining sense of the love of Christ to himself, engaged all the powers of his soul; so that unwearied by incessant labours, and undismayed by the greatest dangers, he was always meditating new services, and from more exalted motives than a celebrated hero of antiquity, thought little of what he had already done, while any thing remained for him to do. The deep sense that he retained of the misery and danger of his former conduct, taught him compassion for his fellow-sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles; and his endeavours to rescue them from ignorance and ruin, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, were so strenuous and unremitted, in defiance of all the scorn, opposition, and persecution to which his zeal continually exposed him, that he was thought by many to be beside himself. 2 Cor. v. 13. Instances had been frequent of persons enduring and venturing much, in pursuit of power, wealth, or fame; but the apostle cheerfully exposed himself to contempt and suffering, in order to make others, though strangers and enemies, joint partakers with himself, in the comforts and hopes of the gospel.

May we not consider every person whom the Lord is pleased to qualify and send forth to preach the word of life to sinners, as thus set apart from his birth; and

that the dispensations he meets with, and the steps he is permitted to take during the time of his ignorance, are directed and overruled, to promote his future competency and usefulness? He makes little useful reflection upon what passes, while in an unawakened state; but he afterwards derives many useful lessons from a remembrance of the wormwood and the gall; the disappointments he has known from without, and the proofs he has had of the deceitfulness and wickedness of his own heart, enable him to speak with propriety and feeling when he would warn sinners from their evil ways. He needs not to have recourse to great books to teach him how to describe the vanity of the world, the emptiness of its pretended pleasures, and the misery of the mind in which conscience and inclination are continually at variance; for his own past experience has instructed him upon these subjects. Farther, the mercy he receives afterwards, animates his zeal, and furnishes him with powerful motives to devote himself and his all, to Him who died to procure pardon and life for him; and warrants him to propose himself as an instance of the truth of the faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

Thus it was with Mr. Grimshaw; he loved much, because much had been forgiven him. He had found the way of transgressors to be hard; and he could describe the present attending evils, and the alarming danger of the path if persisted in, not merely from what he had read, but from what he had felt. He knew the depravity of human nature, not as a man who, by inspecting a map, can form some confused ideas of a country which he never saw: but as one who had long lived in the land, and had explored it with attention. And a sense of the love of Christ to himself, filled him with love and compassion to the souls of men. Like a traveller who had mistaken his way, when the Lord was pleased to

bring him into the right road, he redoubled his speed; and his diligence in redeeming the uncertain remainder of his time has seldom been equalled.

He was born at Brindle, near Preston in Lancashire, on the 3d of September, 1708, and educated at the grammar-schools of Blackburn and Heslim in that county. In this period of his life, he was not without serious reflections on death, a future judgment, and the happiness or misery of an eternal state. These thoughts were transient, but frequently returned. But during his residence at Cambridge, where he was admitted a member of Christ's College, in his eighteenth year, they were, to appearance, totally effaced and excluded. He went thither professedly with the view of obtaining a due preparation for the important office of a minister of the gospel; but the pursuits and manners of those with whom he most associated while at college, were very unfavourable to this design. What proficiency he made there in learning, I know not. But bad examples stimulating his natural propensities and passions, he soon made a proficiency in wickedness. Our universities doubtless afford many advantages, to a serious and studious mind capable of improving them; but these advantages are frequently counteracted, by the temptations and snares incident to the situation. It is too obvious that our public schools and universities, are more celebrated for forming classical or mathematical scholars, than solid and scriptural divines. And while a college testimonial, in which more regard is paid to literary attainments, than to principles and morals, is considered as a sufficient prerequisite for admission to holy orders, we cannot wonder that many young men undertake the cure of souls, without being duly aware of the importance of the charge.

Mr. Grimshaw was ordained deacon in the year 1731. Upon this occasion, he was not without some serious thoughts concerning the weight of the minis-

terial office, in which he was about to engage; but they were of short continuance, and produced little effect. He removed to Todmorden soon afterwards, from Rochdale, where he had for some time associated with a few religious persons. Being thus separated from them, his seemingly pious resolves quickly vanished, like the morning cloud or the early dew. He did duty, as the phrase is, in the church, once on the Lord's-day: that is, he read prayers and a sermon. With this his conscience was satisfied. Whether his flock were satisfied or not, he neither knew nor cared. Nor did he attend more to useful studies. He was a gentle casuist, a compliant companion, a man of the world. He had so much regard to his character, as to guard against profane swearing and excess in drinking, when in company with those who disliked these practices; for he was not willing to be deemed quite a profligate. But he was under no restraint, with respect to the more decent modes of dissipation.

Thus he went on, unconcerned for his own salvation, or that of the people committed to his care, for three or four years. The progress from bad to worse, is no less natural, and not much less common, than the motion of a bowl running down a steep hill. It is generally known and acknowledged, that habits gather strength from time and exercise. When therefore an unexpected and permanent change takes place in a man's views and conduct, so that he who was thoughtless and vicious yesterday, becomes serious and prayerful to-day, all outward circumstances remaining the same, and if the influence of this change extends to every faculty and continues through life; there is an effect produced, for which only the Scriptures can assign an adequate cause. There we find it ascribed to the agency of the Holy Spirit of God. It is his office to convince of sin. He, who in the beginning said, "Let there be light, and there was light," shines into the heart which till then was dark. By



this light, a discovery is made of the majesty, holiness and goodness of the great God, which before was unthought of, and unperceived. For our sense of the evil of sin will always be proportionate to the views we have of Him, against whom it is committed. When we are duly apprised of our absolute dependance upon him, and of our obligations to him as our Creator, Benefactor, and Law-giver, sin will appear exceedingly sinful, and will bring a burden upon the conscience, which can only be removed by faith in the Redeemer. About the year 1734, and in the twenty-sixth of his age, Mr. Grimshaw was thus powerfully awakened and alarmed, and he began to be concerned in good earnest for the salvation of his soul. He prayed much and waited long, before he experienced that peace of mind which is the effect of a lively faith in the Saviour. But there was an immediate and great change in his outward deportment. He was no longer a trifler. He had now neither time nor taste for amusements and diversions. He attended diligently to the duties of his charge, warned his parishioners of the wrath to come, pressed upon them the necessity of a religious course of life, and carefully catechised their children; knowing, and feeling in himself, the terrors of the Lord, he endeavoured to persuade others of their danger. But it was some time before his own experience warranted him to invite the weary and heavy-laden to apply to Jesus, that they might find rest to their souls.

Thus he was, in many respects, a changed man. He laboured, he fasted, he prayed; he aimed at a great strictness and regularity in his conduct. But though he did, and suffered many things; like the woman mentioned by the Evangelists, Luke viii. 43, he found himself not better but worse. His temptations, fears, and difficulties increased. He was dismayed by new and various discoveries of the evils of his heart, and pestered with a torrent of vain, wicked

and blasphemous thoughts, so that he was almost driven to despair.

All the Lord's people are not called to navigate in these deep waters of soul distress; but many are, and it is frequently the lot of those whom he designs to honour with eminent usefulness in the ministry of his gospel; as in a great building, the foundation is laid deep, in proportion to the height and weight of the intended superstructure. It is in this school of temptation and exercise, that they acquire the tongue of the learned, and an ability to speak a word in season to them that are weary. Isaiah l. 4. By what they have themselves passed through, they are taught to sympathize with their fellow-sinners under similar trials, and likewise how to give them advice suitable to their cases. And the remembrance of their past conflicts with a depraved nature, and the powers of darkness, is sanctified to keep them humble, watchful, and dependant in their future course.

His troubles were aggravated by having no kind friend to whom he could disclose them;\* at least he had no liberty in his mind to speak of them. He thought the language of his complaints would not be understood, and that he should be deemed melancholy or mad. He did not then know that his case was far from singular, but rather took it for granted that there was no one affected like himself. It was not till some years afterwards that he had any acquaintance with the people stigmatized by the name of Methodists. In the midst of all his discouragements, he persevered in prayer, and in the study of the Scriptures; and in

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\* His convictions and temptations are here mentioned, as the means the Lord employed to humble his proud spirit, and make him willing to seek and accept a free salvation. The account is repeated in Letter IV. with a different view, as these exercises of his mind greatly contributed to form the characteristics of his preaching, when at Haworth.

due time, when he had learned by painful experience the depravity of his nature, his utter unworthiness and insufficiency, his prayers were answered. His progress for a time was gradual, like the light, which, from a faint and scarcely discernible dawn, shineth more and more unto the perfect day; till in due time the Sun of righteousness arose upon his mind with healing under his beams. Then he gladly renounced all dependance upon himself either for righteousness or strength. He believed and was made whole. The voice of that blood which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, proclaimed peace in his heart. As the season of his consolation approached, his preaching became more savoury, experimental, and successful.

In the year 1742 he was removed to the perpetual curacy of Haworth, near Bradford in Yorkshire, to preach to a people, who, when he first went among them, were very ignorant, brutish, and wicked. But very soon, by the blessing of God upon his ministry, this wilderness assumed the appearance of a fruitful field, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed like the rose.

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## LETTER II.

*A Copy of his solemn dedication to God, with Reflections on a remarkable incident to which he therein refers.*

It was a frequent practice with Mr. Grimshaw, from the time when the great change took place in his views and conduct, to make and repeat engagements or covenants, by which, in dependance upon the strength of the Lord, he devoted himself, with the greatest seriousness and solemnity, to his service and disposal. They were written and subscribed by his

own hand. I believe that, of which you procured me a copy, was the last he wrote. It is the only one I have seen, and though dated in the year 1752, ten years after his removal to Haworth, I think I may transcribe it here, as a proper introduction to what particulars I can collect, of his ministerial aims and labours from his first entrance on his charge to the end of his life; for the principles and motives expressed therein, were deeply impressed upon his mind, before he quitted Todmorden. And his general conduct was uniformly influenced by them, from first to last.

Many judicious persons have differed in their sentiments with respect to the propriety or utility of such written engagements. They are usually entered into, if at all, in an early stage of profession, when, though the heart is warm, there has been little actual experience of its deceitfulness. Frequently, the young convert (like the Israelites when they saw the Egyptians dead upon the shore of the Red Sea) fondly supposes that his warfare is at an end, when it is scarcely begun. They believed in the Lord, and sang his praises; little apprehending what a wilderness was before them. Thus in the day when the Lord turns our mourning into joy, and speaks peace by the blood of his cross, to the conscience burdened with guilt and fear, resolutions are formed, which, though honest and sincere, prove, like Peter's promise to our Lord, too weak to withstand the force of subsequent unforeseen temptations. Such views, made in too much dependance upon our own strength, not only occasion a further discovery of our weakness, but frequently give the enemy advantage to terrify and distress the mind. Therefore some persons, of more mature experience, discountenance the practice as legal and improper. But as a scaffold, though no part of an edifice, and designed to be taken down when the building is finished, is yet useful for a time in carrying

on the work; so many young converts have been helped by expedients, which, when their judgments are more ripened, and their faith more confirmed, are no longer necessary. Every true believer of course ought to devote himself to the service of the Redeemer, yea, he must and will, for he is constrained by love. He will do it not once only, but daily. And many who have done it in writing, can look back upon the transaction with thankfulness to the end of life, recollecting it as a season of peculiar solemnity and impression, accompanied with emotions of heart, neither to be forgotten nor recalled. And the Lord, who does not despise the day of small things, nor break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, accepts and ratifies the desire; and mercifully pardons the mistakes which they discover, as they attain to more knowledge of him and of themselves. And they are encouraged, if not warranted, to make their surrender in this manner, by the words of the prophet Isaiah: "One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall SUBSCRIBE WITH HIS HAND to the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Isa. xlv. 5.

But Mr. Grimshaw was not a novice when he wrote the following dedication of himself to the Lord's service. He mentions one which was dated in the year 1738, which was probably the first; another in the year 1744. During the interval of fourteen years between the first and the last, he had sufficient time to consider and reconsider his views and motives. He had experienced the consequences of his engagement, the duties it required, and the difficulties with which it was attended. It will appear by this paper, written when he was fully engaged in his unusual course of labours, and had sufficient proof of the opposition and trials to which he was on all sides exposed, for his indefatigable zeal, that he was neither wearied nor intimidated. I shall transcribe the whole from the copy

now before me: for though it is of some length, I think it would be injured by abridgment.

“Eternal and unchangeable Jehovah! Thou great Creator of heaven and earth, and adorable Lord of angels and men! I desire, with the deepest humiliation and abasement of soul, to fall down at this time, in thine awful presence, and earnestly pray that thou wilt penetrate my heart with a suitable sense of thine unutterable and inconceivable glories! Trembling may justly take hold upon me, when I, a sinful worm, presume to lift up my head to thee—presume to appear in thy majestic presence on such an occasion as this! What is my nature or descent, my character or desert, that I should mention or desire to be one party in a covenant, where thou, the King of kings, art the other? I blush even to mention it before thee. But, O Lord, great as is thy majesty, so also is thy mercy. If thou hold converse with any of thy creatures, thy superlatively exalted nature must stoop infinitely low. I know that through Jesus, the Son of thy love, thou condescendest to visit sinful mortals, and to allow their approach to thee, and their covenant intercourse with thee. Nay, I know the scheme and plan is entirely thine own, and that thou hast graciously sent to propose it unto us; as none, untaught by thee, could have been able to form it, or inclined to embrace it, even when actually proposed.

“To thee, therefore, do I now come, invited by thy Son, and trusting in his righteousness and grace. Laying myself at thy feet with shame and confusion of face, and smiting upon my breast, saying, with the humble publican, God be merciful to me a sinner! I acknowledge, O Lord that I have been a great transgressor. My sins have reached unto heaven, and mine iniquities have been lifted up unto the skies. My base corruptions and lusts have numberless ways wrought to bring forth fruit unto death. And if thou wert extreme to mark what I have done amiss, I could

never abide it. But thou hast graciously called me to return unto thee, though I am a prodigal son, and a backsliding child. Behold, therefore, I solemnly come before thee, O my Lord! I come convinced of my sin and folly. Thou knowest, O Lord, I solemnly covenanted with thee, in the year 1738; and before that wonderful manifestation of thyself unto me, at church, and in the clerk's house, between the hours of ten and two o'clock on Sunday, Sept. 2, 1744, I had again solemnly devoted myself to thee on Aug. 8, 1744. And now once more and for ever, I most solemnly give up, devote, and resign all I am, spirit, soul, and body, to thee, and to thy pleasure and command, in Christ Jesus, my Saviour, this 4th of December, 1752. Sensible, O Lord, of my vileness and unworthiness, but yet that I am thy pardoned, justified, and regenerated child, in the Spirit and blood of my dear and precious Saviour Jesus Christ, by clear experience. Glory be to thee, O my triune God! Permit me to repeat, and renew my covenant with thee. I desire and resolve to be wholly and for ever thine, in thy Spirit. Blessed God! I most solemnly surrender myself unto thee. Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth! I avouch, this day, the Lord to be my God, Father, Saviour, Portion, for ever! I am one of His covenant children, for ever! Record, O eternal Lord, in thy book of remembrance, that henceforth, I am thine for ever. From this day, I solemnly renounce all former lords, world, flesh, and devil, in thy name. No more, directly or indirectly, will I obey them. I renounced them many years ago, and I renounce them for ever. This day I give myself up To thee, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto thee; and which I know is my reasonable service. to thee I consecrate all my worldly possessions; in thy service I desire and purpose to spend all my time; desiring thee to teach me to spend every moment of it to thy glory, and the setting forth of thy praise, in

every station and relation of life, I am now or may hereafter be in. And I earnestly pray, that whatever influence thou mayest in any wise give me over others, thou wouldst give me strength and courage to exert it to the utmost, to thy glory, resolving not only myself to do it, but that all others, so far as I can rationally and properly influence them, shall serve the Lord. In that course would I, O Lord, steadfastly persevere to my last breath; steadfastly praying, that every day of my life may supply the defects and correct the irregularities of the former, and that by divine grace I may be enabled, not only in that happy way to hold on, but to grow daily more active in it. Nor do I only consecrate all I have to thy service, but I also most humbly resign and submit to thy holy and sovereign will, all that I have. I leave, O Lord, to thy management and direction, all I possess, and all I wish, and set every enjoyment and interest before thee, to be disposed of as thou pleasest. Continue or remove what thou hast given me, bestow or refuse what I imagine I want, as thou seest good; and though I dare not say, I will never repine, yet I hope I may say, I will labour not only to submit, but to acquiesce; not only to bear thy heaviest afflictions on me, but to consent to them, and praise thee for them; contentedly resolving in all thy appointments, my will into thine; esteeming myself as nothing, and thee, O God, as the great Eternal All, whose word should determine, and whose power should order, all things in the world.

“Use me, O Lord, I beseech thee, as the instrument of thy glory: and honour me so far, as either by doing or suffering thy appointments, I may bring praise to thy name, and benefit to the world in which I live. And may it please thee from this day forward to number me among thy peculiar people, that I may no more be a stranger or foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God.



Receive, O heavenly Father, being already washed in thy blood, and clothed with thy righteousness, me, thy child, and sanctify me throughout, by the power of thy Holy Spirit. Destroy, I beseech thee, more, the power of sin in my heart; transform me more into thine image; and fashion me into the resemblance of Jesus, whom I would henceforth ever acknowledge as my Teacher and Sacrifice, my Intercessor, and my Lord. Communicate unto me, I beseech thee, all needful influences of thy purifying, cheering, comforting Spirit; and lift up that light of thy countenance upon me, which will put the sublimest joy and gladness into my heart.

“Dispose my affairs, O God, in a manner which may be wholly subservient to thy glory, and my own true happiness • and when I have done, borne, and endured thy will upon earth, call me hence at what time, and in what manner thou pleasest. Only grant, that in my dying moments, and the near approach of eternity, I may remember these my engagements to thee, and may employ my latest breath in thy service. And do thou, when thou seest me in the agonies of death, remember this covenant too, though I should be incapable of recollecting it. Look down upon me, O Lord, thy languishing dying child; place thine everlasting arms underneath my head; put strength and confidence into my departing spirit, and receive it to the embraces of thine everlasting love! Welcome it to the abodes of those who sleep in Jesus, who are with him above, to wait with them that glorious day, when the last of thy promises to thy people shall be fulfilled in their triumphant resurrection, and that abundant entrance which shall be administered unto them, into that everlasting kingdom of which thou hast assured them by thy covenant; in the hope of which I now lay hold of it, desiring to live and die with my hand upon that hope.

“And when I am thus numbered with the dead,

and all the interests of mortality are over with me, for ever; if this solemn memorial should fall into the hands of any surviving friends or relatives, may it be the means of making serious impressions upon their minds; and may they read it, not only as *my* language, but as *their own*; and learn to fear the Lord my God, and, with me, to put their trust under the shadow of his wings for time, and for eternity. And may they also learn to adore with me, that grace which inclines our hearts to enter into the covenant, and condescends to admit us into it, when so inclined: ascribing with me, and with all the nations of the redeemed, to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that glory, honour, and praise, which is so justly due to each divine Person, for the part he bears in this illustrious work. Amen, I solemnly subscribe this dedication of myself to the for-ever-blessed triune God, in the presence of angels, and all invisible spectators, this fourth day of December, 1752.

“WILLIAM GRIMSHAW,  
Minister of Haworth.”

“I renewed this solemn dedication in a most awful manner, 5th of June, 1760. Oh, that day! I carefully remember and keep it!

“I proposed to renew this dedication with a quarterly fast, the first Friday in January, April, July, and October, during life.”

I cannot pass unnoticed the extraordinary circumstances to which he himself refers in the above paper, as taking place in the church of Haworth and in his clerk's house, on Sunday, the 2d of September, 1744. Dr. Doddridge is supposed to allude to the same fact, when, giving an account of the wonderful impression made upon the mind of Colonel Gardiner, which issued in his happy conversion, he speaks of a respectable clergyman of the established Church, who had experienced something of a similar kind. I have had

several long and interesting conversations with Mr Grimshaw, but never heard him mention it; and I do not find that such of his intimate friends as are yet living, were acquainted with many of the particulars related in a letter published in the Evangelical Magazine, for November, 1794. But as the writer of that letter, the late Mr. Joseph Williams of Kidderminster, was a man of unquestionable veracity, so far as he had the account which he gives from Mr. Grimshaw's own mouth, I am not disposed to controvert it. Though certainly, as it now stands, few people will think it a favorable representation of Mr. Grimshaw's character. Nor is it improbable, that Mr. Williams might incautiously insert some particulars in his narrative which he received from less authentic information.

When the apostle Paul told Agrippa that the Lord Jesus appeared to him on his way to Damascus, Festus, who seems to have had a candid opinion of his integrity, could only account for his relating so strange a story, by supposing he was mad. But the relation was confirmed by the effects. It was known to many who then heard him, that when he left Jerusalem, he was filled with rage and enmity against the disciples, and that the intent of his journey was to bring as many of them as he could in bonds to the high priest and council, from whom he had received commission and authority for that purpose. It was equally notorious that he entered Damascus with very different views; that he immediately associated with the people whom he had hated and despised, and from that time was a zealous preacher of the faith he had formerly laboured to destroy. Though his old friends soon became his bitter enemies, though stripes, bonds, and imprisonments awaited him in every place, and the Jews were continually thirsting for his blood, he persevered in his labours, undismayed by hardships or difficulties, to the end of his life. A change of conduct so sud-

den, and so permanent, must have a proportionate cause. The apostle assigned the true cause, and they who refuse to believe him will never be able to assign another that can account, even to their own satisfaction, for his subsequent conduct.

Thus, if Colonel Gardiner, after declaring, that at a moment when he expected nothing less, he thought he saw a visible representation of our Lord and Saviour as hanging upon the cross, had continued in the same course of dissipation, profligacy, and folly, as before, we might with reason have supposed it was a delusion, and have ascribed it to a distempered imagination. But he likewise became an altered, or rather a new man, from that hour. Evil propensities, to which he had been before so habituated and enslaved, that he had thought it impossible to overcome them, lost their power from that time. The love of Christ constrained him; he was no longer a libertine. He then found very different employment for his time, talents, and influence. I need not enlarge; his character as a Christian and an officer is well known. He who, while he was envied by his companions for his adroitness and success in modish wickedness, had often wished himself a dog, found true happiness where it can alone be found, in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and him crucified. He adorned the gospel which he professed, living and dying; and by his wise, consistent, humble, and exemplary conduct, extorted the respect of many who affected to despise it.

The best account I have met with of the incident to which Mr. Grimshaw refers on Sept. 2, 1744, and which I think may be credited, was given by a person who then lived with him as a servant, to the following purport:—That she was called up that morning at five o'clock, but found her master was risen before her, and was retired into a private room for prayer. After remaining there some time, he went to a house in Haworth, where he was engaged awhile in religious

exercises with some of his people ; he then returned home, and retired for prayer again, and from thence to church. She believes he had not eaten any thing that morning. While reading the second lesson he fell down ; he was soon helped up, and led out of the church. He continued to talk to the people as he went, and desired them not to disperse, for he hoped he should return to them soon, and he had something extraordinary to say to them. They led him to the clerk's house, where he lay seemingly insensible. She, and others, were employed in rubbing his limbs, which were exceedingly cold, with warm cloths. After some time he came to himself, and seemed to be in great rapture. The first words he spoke were, " I have had a glorious vision from the third heaven." But she does not remember that he made any mention of what he had seen. In the afternoon he performed service in the church, which began at two o'clock, and preached and spoke so long to the people, that it was seven in the evening before he returned home. So far the testimony of his servant.

We have the canon of scripture complete. The whole is given by inspiration of God, and is of itself, when rightly understood, and duly regarded, sufficient to make both ministers and people thoroughly furnished for every good work. We have now neither need nor warrant to expect visions, voices, or trances, either for our instruction or our consolation. If a person were to tell me that his religious experience was of this extraordinary nature, I should at first be disposed to distrust either his judgment or his veracity. But if he spoke of it as what had happened to him twenty years ago, and I knew that during all those years he had maintained an honourable, circumspect, and useful profession, I think I could not refuse to believe him. Thus I judge in Mr. Grimshaw's case. The occurrence is recorded in a paper drawn up, in the most solemn manner, as in the immediate presence

of the Almighty, in a paper which perhaps no person ever saw during his life-time. Had he been fond of mentioning it, I should probably have heard of it from himself, for I was frequently with him during the few years of our acquaintance. For some time before this event, and for many years after, his truth and integrity were unquestionable.

The powers of the human mind, when cultivated by education, and habituated to reflection, are certainly capable of great exertions ; but its researches are in many respects limited within narrow and mortifying boundaries. Man can calculate to a minute, an eclipse that shall happen five hundred years hence ; but he knows not what changes may take place the next day or hour in his most interesting concerns. He attempts to measure the earth, to weigh the subtle air, and almost to number and marshal the stars. But while he prides himself in his excursions abroad, he is a stranger at home. He is conscious of an active sentient principle within, which pervades and governs the wonderful mechanism of his earthly tabernacle ; but how body and spirit are united, and in what manner they act upon each other, is no less inexplicable to the philosopher than to the clown. Our perceptions are obtained through the medium of our bodily organs, but we cannot account for the actual or possible effect of a slight alteration in the animal system, nor how a blow on the head, or the ravages of a fever, can suddenly transform a wise man into an idiot. We use the words *memory* and *imagination* as if we understood them ; but how we can retain, combine, and diversify, the numberless various ideas which we receive from our senses, is a secret, a mystery which lies far beyond the grasp of human comprehension. And yet, vain man, who would be deemed wise, though he is ignorant as the wild ass's colt, presumes to determine what is, or is not credible, by the standard of his own defective and prejudiced judgment !

Infidels and sceptics think themselves at liberty to dispute or deny the reality of whatever does not fall under the cognizance of their senses. They disdain to listen to arguments taken from the scriptures of truth ; but they judge no less inconsistently with the principles of sound philosophy, to which they vainly pretend. With equal reason a man born blind might deny the possibility of a rainbow. We cannot describe it to him, and he might say that he will not believe there is such a thing, because he can neither hear it, nor feel it. The rainbow can only be perceived by sight, and he is blind. If we argue from analogy, it is at least highly probable that there may be innumerable objects as near to us, as any with which we are acquainted, but of which we can form no conception for want of suitable faculties. We know not but that he who gave us the five inlets of perception, which we call the senses, might, if he had so pleased, have given us fifty, all as distinct from each other, and as different in their mode of operation, as our sight is from our hearing.

How various are the gradations of life with which we are acquainted, from an oyster or an emmet, up to man ! Will reason warrant us to conclude that this gradation stops with us ? Rather, considering the immensity of the universe, is it not reasonable almost to take it for granted, without express information, that there may possibly be as many ranks of creatures superior to us, as we know there are below us ? They who believe the scriptures cannot doubt but there are innumerable intellectual beings, whose agency, though seldom or faintly perceived by us, is conversant with our concerns. We read of angels, principalities, and powers, in the unseen world. We are assured that the holy angels, the worshipping spirits before the throne of God, are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. And we know, not from scripture only, but from experience, that there are evil and malignant

spirits, who, so far as they are permitted (for they are conquered enemies, and cannot go beyond their chain) are active and industrious to deceive or to disturb the minds of mortals. Infidels may and do, boldly deny these things, but we are certain they cannot disprove them. However, I have little hope of repressing the daring infidel and sadducean spirit, which marks the character of the present day, nor do I write professedly for such. We who believe the scriptures are satisfied upon this head, nor would others be persuaded, though one should rise from the dead.

When Stephen was stoned by his persecutors, he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." He could scarcely mean by this expression, an opening in the visible sky, through which he saw his Saviour, beholding him as from a distance. The opening was doubtless in his own mind. So the apostle Paul informs us he was taken up into the third heavens, and that during his rapture, he could not tell whether he was in the body or out of it; that is, as I conceive, his bodily powers were so overwhelmed and locked up by the heavenly vision, that he could take no notice of the external objects around him. He expresses his situation upon this or some similar occasion, by saying, "While I was in the temple praying, I was in a trance."

A trance signifies a temporary suspension of the animal faculties; we may call it a waking dream. Perhaps there is a faculty in the human constitution adapted to an intercourse with the intellectual world, as our natural senses are to the objects which at present surround us, but which faculty is dormant while we are in health and distinctly awake, unless when God is pleased, in some extraordinary cases to call it into exercise. And then invisibles are seen, and unutterables are heard. Thus in answer to Elisha's prayer, the Lord opened the eyes of his servant (the



eyes of the mind); and he instantly saw that the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire. They, or the things emblematically represented by them, were there before, but till his eyes were in that manner opened he could not perceive them.

Though instances of this kind are not to be expected, nor should credit ever be lightly given to those who profess to have experienced them, yet something very analagous is frequently observable in dying persons. In that solemn period, when flesh and heart are failing, the poet's observation is often verified:

“ The soul's dark cottage, tatter'd and decay'd,  
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made.”

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord! We have been eye-witnesses to the transports of many. “ And it does not appear that either old age or great knowledge, or long experience, afford any considerable advantage in a dying hour; for when the heart is duly humbled for sin, and the hope solidly fixed upon the Saviour, persons of weak capacities and small attainments, yea, novices and children, are enabled to meet death with equal fortitude and triumph. We must be in similar circumstances ourselves before we can see as they see, or possess the ideas which they endeavour to describe, and which seem too great for the language of mortals to convey.”

Many likewise, who while in health, made a mock at sin, and treated religion with contempt, have not been able to conceal their terror and amazement, when compelled to look death in the face. To them the opening views of an eternal state have been dark and terrifying to an extreme. “ What was once slighted as a fable, is now seen and felt as a reality. Such cases I am afraid are frequent. But they are suppressed, ascribed to the violence of the fever, and forgotten, as soon as possible. Yet they sometimes

transpire." And frequently, one harbinger of death is an anticipation of joy or woe, too great for utterance.

Excuse this long digression, which I have been led into by a desire to shew, that what is related of Col. Gardiner's vision, or of Mr Grimshaw's trance, though not common, is not contradictory either to the principles of Scripture or of sound reason; and when the testimony is confirmed, as it was in them, by a long and exemplary course of piety, integrity, and usefulness, we are warranted to give it full credit.

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### LETTER III.

#### *On the Manner of Mr. Grimshaw's Preaching.*

HAWORTH is a small village about nine or ten miles from Halifax, and nearly the same distance from Bradford, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. It is one of those obscure places, which, like the fishing towns in Galilee, favoured with our Lord's presence, owe all their celebrity to the gospel. The name of Haworth would scarcely be known at a distance, were it not connected with the name of Grimshaw. The bleak and barren face of the adjacent country, was no improper emblem of the state of the inhabitants; who in general had little more sense of religion than their cattle, and were wild and uncultivated like the rocks and mountains which surrounded them. But, by the blessing of God upon Mr. Grimshaw's ministry, this desert soon became a fruitful field, a garden of the Lord, producing many trees of righteousness, planted by the Lord himself, and the barren wilderness rejoiced and blossomed like the rose.

When he removed from Todmorden, to settle at Haworth, he had a deep sense of the evil of sin, a warm compassion for sinners, whom he observed, ignorant

of their state and danger, going careless and unconcerned in the path that leadeth to destruction. He likewise knew for himself, and was able to point out to others, the way of salvation by faith in the Son of God. But his knowledge and judgment were not yet fully ripened. He was more acquainted with the conflicts than with the comforts of a believer. He was harassed by distressing doubts and fears, and fiercely assaulted by the temptations and fiery darts of the enemy. Perhaps a minister in this stage of experience, which some undervalue as legal, is peculiarly adapted to preach with effect to ignorant and wicked people, whose habits of sin have been strengthened by a long disregard of the holy law of God, and who have had no opportunity of hearing the gospel. From his own feelings he will enforce upon them the urgent necessity of fleeing from the wrath to come: till they are in a measure apprized of this, they will be but little affected with all that they hear of the grace and love of the Redeemer. They cannot at first receive, nor even understand, that accurate and orderly statement and discussion of evangelical truths, which render ministers who are more advanced in knowledge, acceptable to judicious and enlightened hearers. But they may feel a close and faithful application to their consciences, and be persuaded by the terrors of the Lord to consider their ways, before they are capable of being much influenced by the consideration of his tender mercies. While they are whole, they are not sensible of their need of a physician. And we often meet with people who will bear to be told plainly of their sins, and their danger, with much more patience, than they will hear of the only remedy and refuge which God has provided. And therefore a preacher not wholly freed from a legal spirit himself, if his heart be right with God according to the light he has already received, may be well qualified to speak to those who are sleeping securely in their sins. He is sufficiently

before them, to point out the first steps in the way; and as he goes gradually forward, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Saviour, they gradually follow him. Thus many of our most eminent evangelical modern preachers were led. They set out as it were in the twilight, but the dawn is a sure presage of advancing day. They have lived to see many mistakes and defects in their first efforts, and became, in God's due time, more competent to build up and establish those who have already received faith through grace; but perhaps their greatest success in awakening sinners, was when their views of the scheme of salvation, were much less clear and distinct.

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, he did not lead them to Canaan by the shortest way, (Exod. xiii. 17; Deut. viii.) but round by the wilderness, to humble and prove them, and shew them what was in their hearts. And likewise by the occasion of the difficulties they met with, and the perverseness of their conduct, to shew them more of his power, wisdom, goodness, and patience, than they would otherwise have known. Thus we usually pass through a long train of trying exercises; we mourn over our own broken promises, and weary ourselves with vain and perplexing contrivances, before we obtain a stable peace, and a hope in Christ not easily shaken. We then begin to perceive that there was a shorter way; and that if we could have believed at once, the record that God has *given* us eternal life, and this life is in his *Son*, and simply complied with the command—Look and live, believe and be saved—we might have escaped much pain and anxiety. This shorter way we kindly endeavour to point out to others, but, for the most part, with little success. There may be exceptions, but (unless in the case of those who are converted very near the close of life) it seems in general to be the will of the Lord, that all his people shall go round about; for they all have need of learning by painful

experience, what is in their hearts, a lesson which is seldom effectually learned, but in the school of the cross. The tuition of the law is, in the usual course of the Lord's dealings with his people, a preparatory step to the right understanding, and unabused enjoyment, of the gospel.

The tenor and energy of Mr. Grimshaw's preaching soon engaged the attention of his hearers. Some of these had seldom thought it worth their while to enter the doors of a church; and those who had attended public worship, had as seldom heard any thing more from the pulpit, than cold lectures upon lean, modern morality. But he commanded their attention. His heart was engaged, he was pressed in spirit, he spoke with earnestness and authority, as one who was well assured of the truth and importance of his message. Nor did he long speak in vain. A power from on high applied to the heart, what he could only declare to the ear. An impression, similar to what he himself felt, began to be felt by some, and in a short space, by many of his hearers. The effects were soon visible. An effectual door was now opened, and adversaries were not wanting. But a growing number, who approved and prized his ministry, were soon distinguished, not only by a change in their views and sentiments, but in their tempers and conduct. Sin was, in many instances, forsaken and discountenanced; the drunkard became sober; the idle, industrious; profaneness gave place to prayer; and riot to decorum.

If his labours had been confined to his parish church, he would not have laboured in vain. It might be said of many who heard him there, The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. They were turned from the power of sin and Satan, to serve God; and having received that grace which bringeth salvation, they were thereby taught and enabled to renounce ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world.

But it was a mercy to numbers that his labours were not so closely confined. His line of usefulness was gradually and providentially enlarged. There are four hamlets in the parish of Haworth; and as in them there were persons whom age, sickness, distance, or prejudice, prevented from attending at church, he considered them all as belonging to his charge, and was unwilling that any of them should perish in ignorance. He therefore went to those, who could not, or would not, come to him, teaching and exhorting them from house to house; and preaching in a more public way in the houses where he was invited. Hearers flocked to him from adjacent, and in short time from more distant, places. And when strangers were effectually wrought upon by his words, they of course felt a strong attachment to him themselves, and a concern for their neighbours.

His zeal, and his desire to be useful to the souls of men, made him readily accept invitations to visit and preach in other parishes. Thus the line of his services was gradually extended. His constitution was strong, his health firm, his spirits good, and his zeal ardent. He was able to bear much fatigue and hardship, and he did not spare himself. The love of Christ constrained him. Without intermitting his stated services at home, he went much abroad. In a course of time, he established two circuits, which, with some occasional variations, he usually traced every week, alternately. One of these, he often pleasantly called his idle week, because he seldom preached more than twelve or fourteen times. His sermons in his working or busy week, often exceeded the number of twenty-four, and sometimes amounted to thirty.

I am writing his life, not his apology. I do not think myself bound either to justify or to censure his irregularity, considered as a parochial minister. My business is to relate the fact as I find it. His uncommon and incessant labours, no less than the strain of

his preaching, occasioned him to be marked with the opprobrious stigma of a methodist. But I believe he entered upon his itinerancy before he had any acquaintance with Mr. Wesley or Mr. Whitfield, or their connexions; and it is certain he no more derived his sentiments, views, and motives, from them, than St. Paul received his from the apostles at Jerusalem, with whom he had no communication, till some time after the Lord himself had taught him the same truths at Damascus. Mr. Grimshaw might truly say with St. Paul, that he received not the gospel from man.

An itinerant preacher, especially an itinerant clergyman, was a character little known previous to the rise of methodism. He was, perhaps, the very first man in Yorkshire, whose zeal prompted him to preach in the parish of another minister, without his express consent. But in so doing, he did not break through those stipulations and engagements to be regular, which it has been thought proper in succeeding times, to require from many candidates for holy orders. The circumstances which gave occasion for such restrictions did not then exist. Nor did he go abroad unasked. The visible effects of his ministry at home, engaged his neighbours to solicit his assistance. He neither could, nor would, nor did he dare to deny them, when he saw in many places,

The hungry sheep look up, but were not fed,

The providence of God favoured him in the attempt. For though unsupported by great patronage, and unsolicitous to obtain it; and though he went far beyond all his contemporaries in this novel and offensive method, by which much envy, jealousy, and displeasure, were excited against him; yet he was not restrained. Nor have I heard that he met with any serious and determined marks of disapprobation from his superiors in the church. But he sometimes met with opposition from those who hated to be reformed. He was once,

when preaching at Colne, in Lancashire, disturbed by a set of rioters, who, it is said, were hired for the purpose; and the minister of the parish preached a sermon against him, and afterwards printed it: this gave occasion to the only publication which I have heard attributed to Mr. Grimshaw. It was printed at Preston, in the year 1749, and entitled, *An Answer to a Sermon published against the Methodists, by the Rev. Mr. George White, M.A. Minister of Colne and Marsden, in Lancashire, by the Rev. William Grimshaw, Minister of Haworth, Yorkshire.* It is reported and believed in that neighbourhood, that Mr. White, when on his dying bed, sent for Mr. Grimshaw, expressed his concern for having opposed him, and was perfectly reconciled to him. But in the latter years of his ministry, his character and motives were so generally known, that he was respected not only by the pious, but the profane; he lived down all outward opposition, and there was scarcely a person within the circle of his connexions, (which was not a small one,) who, however different from him in principles, or in practice, did not believe that Mr. Grimshaw was upright in his profession and aims, and a friend to mankind.

The Lord gave him a strength of bodily constitution, and of natural spirits, well adapted to his zeal for God, and his love for souls. Otherwise, however willing, he would not have been able to support his incessant labours, for so many years. For he not only preached very often, but his sermons were frequently long, sometimes, I believe, two hours at least. But they were usually so animated, pathetic, and pertinent, that few persons who had spiritual discernment, and the command of their own time, thought him too long. I once heard him apologize for the length of his discourse to this effect: "If I were in some situations, I might not think it needful to speak so much; but many of my hearers who are wicked and careless, are likewise very ignorant, and very slow of apprehension.



If they do not understand me, I cannot hope to do them good; and when I think of the uncertainty of life, that perhaps it may be the last opportunity afforded; and that it is possible I may never see them again till I meet them in the great day, I know not how to be explicit enough: I endeavour to set the subject in a variety of lights; I express the same thoughts in different words, and can scarcely tell how to leave off, lest I should have omitted something, for the want of which, my preaching and their hearing might prove in vain. And thus, though I fear I weary others, I am still unable to satisfy myself."

The same desire of usefulness to persons of the weakest capacity, or most destitute of the advantages of education, influenced his phraseology in preaching. Though his abilities as a speaker, and his fund of general knowledge, rendered him very competent to stand before great men; yet, as his stated hearers were chiefly of the poorer and more unlettered class, he condescended to accommodate himself, in the most familiar manner, to their ideas, and to their modes of expression. Like the apostle, he disdained that excellence and elegance of speech, which is admired by those who seek entertainment, perhaps not less than instruction, from the pulpit; he rather chose to deliver his sentiments in what he used to term *market language*; and though the warmth of his heart, and the rapidity of his imagination, might sometimes lead him to clothe his thoughts in words, which even a candid critic could not wholly justify; yet the general effect of his plain manner was striking and impressive, suited to make the dullest understand, and to fix for the time the attention of the most careless. Frequently a sentence, which a delicate hearer might judge quaint or vulgar, conveyed an important truth to the ear, and fixed it in the memory, for years after the rest of the sermon, and the general subject were forgotten. Judicious hearers could easily excuse some escapes of

this kind, and allow, that though he had a singular felicity in bringing down the great truths of the gospel, to a level with the meanest capacity, he did not degrade them. The solemnity of his manner; the energy with which he spoke; the spirit of love which beamed in his eyes, and breathed through his addresses; were convincing proofs that he did not trifle with his people. I may give my judgment upon this point, something in his own way, by quoting a plain and homely proverb, which says, *That is the best cat which catches the most mice.* His improprieties, if he was justly chargeable with any, are easily avoided; but very few ministers have had equal success.

But if his language was more especially suited to the taste of his unpolished rustic hearers, his subject matter was calculated to affect the hearts of all, whether high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant; and they who refused to believe, were often compelled to tremble. He had acquired in the school of experience the tongue of the learned, and knew how to speak a word in season, both to the weary and to the wilful. He well knew the gall and bitterness of a state of bondage to sin and the powers of darkness, for it had long been his own. He knew, likewise, the terrors of the Lord; he had suffered for years the agonies and stings of a guilty awakened conscience, before he attained the peace which passeth understanding; he had likewise tasted that the Lord is gracious, yea, of a sense of his Saviour's love he had more than a taste, it was his daily food, his life, and his joy. His heart, thus prepared by grace, taught his mouth. His humiliation and gratitude being ripened by observation and reflection, and possessing an abiding, animated hope of glory, he spoke, not from books, or from hearsay, but from feeling; not with hesitation, but with confidence. He believed, and therefore he spoke. He set the Lord always before him, at his right hand, and therefore he was equally

unmoved and unaffected, either by the smiles or by the frowns of men. He hated sin universally in all its forms, and was skilful in detecting it in all its subtuges; his declarations against it were so pointed and searching, that he was often thought, especially by those whose consciences felt his words, to be personal in his preaching. Nor did he reprove outward sin only. He was strenuous in exposing the evil and danger of that specious, soul-deceiving, sin, self-righteousness. For, like the wise master-builder, Paul, he proposed Christ Jesus, the Lord, as the foundation of God's appointment, the only foundation on which a sinner can safely rest, or build his hope. To him, with the most tender and persuasive entreaties, he invited the weary and heavy laden to apply, that they might find rest for their souls. He was both a son of thunder to rouse and convince the inconsiderate, and a son of consolation to those who were of a broken and contrite spirit. The Lord, whom he served, owned his ministry to the conversion of many sinners, who knew little of God or of themselves, till they heard him; and who, under his instruction and care, grew in grace and in the knowledge of the Saviour, maintaining a conversation becoming the gospel. But it was thought that his success was not so visible and extensive in his own parish, as amongst the numbers who flocked to his church from other places: he had hearers who came stately from the distance of ten or twelve miles, for a course of years, and were seldom prevented either by severe weather, or bad roads.

In the summer season Haworth was frequently visited by people from a still greater distance. When Mr. Wesley or Mr. Whitfield, and other eminent ministers have been there, the congregation usually consisted of many thousands. The communicants, on these occasions, were more than the church (which was not a small one) could contain at once; and while divine service was repeatedly performed within the

walls, a succession of sermons, with some intervals, were preached in the course of the day to the people in the church-yard, who could not attend in the church for want of room. These exercises were confessedly irregular, but there was at that time a great dearth of gospel knowledge; the people were hungering for the bread of life; they met together for the Lord's sake, and in his name, and He who dwelleth not in temples made with hands, was pleased to afford them tokens of his presence and blessing.

But though Mr. Grimshaw often preached to great numbers, he was a no less attentive servant to a few. When any were willing to hear, he was ready to preach, and he often cheerfully walked miles in the winter, in storms of wind, rain, or snow, upon lonely unsheltered moors, to preach to a small company of poor, aged, decrepit people, in a cottage.

In a word, he was a burning and a shining light. His zeal was not an angry, unhallowed fire, nor the blind impulse of a heated imagination, nor was it ostentatious. It was the bright flame of that love, which his knowledge of the love of Christ had kindled in his heart. This love constrained him to such unusual and unwearied endeavours to make others as happy as he was himself, that perhaps he was thought beside himself by those whose religion consisted in a form of godliness, destitute of power. The apostle Paul incurred a like censure before him, and for the same cause. As he burnt with the fire of devotion, and devotedness to God, so he shone in that part of his conduct which came under the notice of men. His outward life was a bright exemplification of the proper effects of the gospel which he preached. He drank deeply into the spirit of his Lord and Master: and perhaps this century has not produced a man, who could say with more justice and propriety to his hearers, (if his great and undissembled humility would have permitted him) "Be ye followers of me

as I am of Christ." For though he had, in common with other believers, an habitual inward warfare, and was liable to mistakes and infirmities, his Lord and Master so supplied him with grace and wisdom, that I never heard that his most prying observers (and many eyes were upon him) could charge him with a single voluntary act, which could, in the common sense of the word, be deemed criminal, from the time of his entering upon his charge at Haworth to his death.

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## LETTER IV.

### *On the Subject-matter of his preaching.*

**ZEAL** without knowledge is like haste in the dark, who knows not whither he is going, what he may meet with, or what harm he may suffer himself, or bring upon those who may stand in his way. There are too many persons who are zealous in an evil way. They are ingenious and indefatigable, but the result of their labours is mischief and vanity. The prophet speaks of those who hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave spider's webs, Isaiah lix. 5. There is much apparent ingenuity and delicacy in the structure of a spider's web, but, when finished, it is of little worth; it is neither fit for ornament nor defence. Incubation implies diligence and perseverance; the hen hatches her brood by sitting closely and patiently upon her eggs, which would otherwise be spoiled; but she would be poorly paid for her attention and care if the egg produced only a poisonous serpent. We deny not the ingenuity of some preachers, the composition of their discourses is correct, and the style elegant; but we lament that they are so little calculated either to warm the hearts, or to amend the conduct of their hearers. We would give others due praise for their industry

and diligence, if the result of their investigations and researches, and their lucubrations from the press and the pulpit, had not a direct unhappy tendency to mislead the unwary, and to poison the minds of men with dangerous and unscriptural opinions, subversive of the truth as it is in Jesus.

But the abilities and activity of Mr. Grimshaw were engaged in a good cause, and productive of great and salutary effects. The weapons of his warfare were not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down the strong holds of sin and Satan, 2 Cor. x. 4, and bringing many, who were under the dominion of the powers of darkness, into that light and liberty with which the Saviour makes his people from. It may be proper, after what I have said of his manner *how* he preached, to give some more particular account of *what* he preached, and what were his sentiments and views of the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

Perhaps the theory of the gospel was never better understood since the apostles' days, than it is at present; but many who preach it, or who profess it, seem to lay too much stress upon a systematic scheme of sentiments, and too little upon that life and power, that vital, experimental, and practical influence, which form the character, and regulate the conduct of an established Christian. Though without knowledge the heart cannot be good, Proverbs xix. 2; and though all the doctrines of the gospel are according to godliness, 1 Tim. vi. 3; yet the true religion that cometh from above is seated rather in the heart than in the head; and depends not so much upon a set of new opinions, as on a new birth and a new nature. Those who are born from above, who have felt the evil of sin, and the depravity of their hearts, and having therefore received a sentence of death in themselves, have been enabled to flee to Jesus, without any hope or plea but the warrant and command of God, to look to the Son

of his love for salvation, as the wounded Israelites of old looked to the brazen serpent; and have power given them to rely simply upon his person, blood, and righteousness, and his whole mediation; these persons are surely justified by faith, and united to Christ their living Head; and because he liveth they shall live also His power, promise, and faithfulness, are engaged to save them to the uttermost. Yet they may be, and they generally are, for a season, subject to many doubts and mistakes concerning points which, though not absolutely necessary to the safety of their state, are of great importance to their peace, comfort, and edification. Surely Peter was a blessed man, when our Lord himself pronounced him to be so! Peter had been taught of God, what flesh and blood could not have revealed unto him. He had obtained such satisfactory knowledge of the person of Christ, of his authority and ability to save, as induced him cheerfully to forsake all and follow him, whom the chief priests and rulers rejected and despised. He knew that Jesus had the words of eternal life, and that there was no other to whom he could go; and yet a well instructed child of ten years old, amongst us, knows more *doctrinally*, if I may so speak, of the way of salvation, than Peter at the time when Jesus pronounced him blessed. For when our Lord spoke of the atonement he was to make upon the cross, for sin, which was so essentially necessary to the salvation of a sinner, Peter neither understood him nor believed him, but in the natural warmth of his spirit, presumed openly to contradict him; his attachment to his Master prompted him to say, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this thing shall not be unto thee." Matt. xvi. 17, 22.

I believe it is not possible for us to determine how far, and in what degree, an explicit knowledge of the gospel doctrines is absolutely necessary to a state of grace; and I think it savours of presumption to attempt it. I have little doubt but Nicodemus was a

partaker of the new birth before he understood the nature of it. It was not by his own wisdom and goodness he discovered what he was at first afraid and ashamed to declare to his associates in the Jewish council,—that Jesus was a teacher sent from God. A ray of light, a spark of life from the Holy Spirit had reached his heart. And He who will not quench the smoking flax, in due time fanned the spark into a flame. Timid and ignorant as he was when he came to Jesus by night, he acquired such confidence in due time, that he appeared in open day to take down the dead body of his Lord from the cross, when Peter and all his disciples had forsaken him and fled.

The path of the just is like the light, which from the early dawn shineth more and more unto the perfect day. There is an analogy, in many respects, between the work of God in the creation, and his work of grace in the heart of a sinner; there is a growth in both. The stately oak, which rears its head so high, and shades so much ground with its branches, sprang from a small acorn. The good seed of the word, when sown in the heart, is hidden for a while, like the corn; and like the corn, it comes forward by degrees, first the blade, then the ear, and at length the ripe corn in the ear. But between the time of sowing and reaping it passes through many changes; wind, rain, and sun, yes, frost and snow, have their places and uses, and all concur to prepare a plentiful harvest. No less various are the dispensations which the great Husbandman employs to promote and perfect the good work he has begun in the heart of a sinner. Believers have their summer and their winter seasons; and both are necessary, and, though not equally pleasant, are perhaps equally profitable. At one time they are taught what the Lord can do *for* them, *in* them, or *by* them. At another time he is pleased to withdraw in a measure, and leave them to themselves, that they may learn how little they can do without him. Thus



they become more humble, attentive, and dependant, and more weaned from self and from the world, by means of the repeated disappointments and mortifications they meet with. These exercises, which form what may be called the outline of a Christian's experience, are like the features in the human face, as to the grand and leading points, universally the same in all, but so modified and diversified by constitution, education, situation, habits, and attachments, that each one may be considered as an original. We do not expect to meet with two faces so perfectly similar, as not to be distinguishable from each other; nor does it seem more probable that we shall find two Christians who have been led uniformly, and in all respects, in the same way, so as to have exactly the same views of every point of a secondary importance.

The promise to the church is, "All thy children shall be taught of God." Isa. liv. 13. We cannot suppose that the same Holy Spirit of grace and truth teaches different lessons to different persons. So far then as they are taught of the Lord, there can be no difference but in the degrees of their growth, and in the increase of spiritual light and sound judgment. Accordingly we find, whether they come from the east or west, from the north or south, they all agree that sin is the greatest evil; that Jesus is the necessary, the only, and the all-sufficient Saviour of sinners; that he is the chief object of their love, and that his loving-kindness is better than life. They all confess their own utter unworthiness and inability, and their dependance upon the influence of the Holy Spirit to work in them, first to will, and then to enable them to do, that which is well pleasing in his sight. Their conceptions of these doctrines are not equally strong and clear, but I believe none who are really taught of God will controvert them. Wherein they differ, I think they have been taught, not of God, but of man. The preachers they hear, or the books they read, espe-

cially those which are first, or most eminently made useful to them, give them perhaps too favourable, and too strong a bias to the instrument, and together with the truths of God which they receive, they are apt to imbibe the peculiarities of the minister, or of the author, taking it too hastily for granted, that the man who has been helpful to them in their chief concern, is worthy of their implicit confidence in all things. Thus their attachments are formed to the systems, shibboleths, and modes of those amongst whom their lot is cast, and their future arrangement as members of particular churches or denominations, is frequently owing to the circumstances under which they receive their first religious impressions.

Unhappily the spirit of SELF, which has too much influence even in good men, has often made them watchful and vehement in defending or enforcing the peculiarities of their party, greatly to the prejudice of that union and love, which our Lord thought fit to appropriate as the discriminating mark of his true disciples. From hence wars and fightings amongst those whose hopes are built upon the same foundation, and whose lives and aims are in the main, and in other respects, governed by the same rules. The combatants on both sides profess to engage in defence of the cause of God and truth; the pretence is specious, but even were the point in dispute of great importance, which has not often been the case among those who hold the Head, unless the mind of a dealer in controversy be powerfully guarded by humility and love, it soon becomes his own cause. The honour of God, and the cause of truth, are both wounded, and self alone is exalted and gratified by the contest. What fierce invective, what harsh censures, what gross misrepresentations, have we seen in print, in our own time, amongst those who supposed they were contending for the cause of God and truth! These things have made those of the truly godly, who had

no part in the fray, weep, and the world laugh. I remember to have met with a shrewd, but mortifying remark of the Monthly Reviewers some years since; after giving the titles of three or four controversial pamphlets, not very replete with moderation or candour, they added, "Will these spiritual gladiators never cease to cut and slash each other for the diversion of the public?"

They who avow the doctrines distinguished by the name of Calvinistic, ought, if consistent with their own principles, to be the most gentle and forbearing of all men, in meekness instructing them that oppose. With us it is a fundamental maxim, that a man can receive nothing but what is given him from Heaven, John iii. 27. If, therefore, it has pleased God to give us the knowledge of some truths, which are hidden from others, who have the same outward means of information, it is a just reason for thankfulness to him, but will not justify our being angry with them; for we are no better or wiser than they in ourselves, and might have opposed the truths which we now prize, with the same eagerness and obstinacy, if his grace had not made us to differ. If the man, mentioned in John ix. who was born blind, on whom our Lord graciously bestowed the blessing of sight, had then taken a cudgel, and beat all the blind men he met, because they *would not* see, his conduct would have greatly resembled that of an angry Calvinist. The faith of God's elect has three properties attributed to it in scripture; it purifies the heart, overcomes the world, and works by love. I believe no other cause can produce these effects, and therefore I would say of every person in whom I can perceive them, The same is my brother, or my sister, or my mother. If Jesus is precious to their hearts, if they walk according to his precepts; He who has begun a good work in them, will gradually free them from incidental mistakes, and will communicate to them such farther degrees of light and know-

ledge, as he sees necessary for their comfort or usefulness in that state of life, or line of service, which he assigns them.

I apprized you, my friend, in my first letter, that I did not purpose to confine myself to facts and narrative, but to interweave reflections and observations of my own, as occasions might offer. My digression here, if it be one, will, I hope, not be thought impertinent by those who are sensible that a dry uniformity of sentiment is but a poor substitute for that unity of spirit in the bond of peace, which it is the duty, honour, and interest of Christians to cultivate and maintain, and of which Mr. Grimshaw was an eminent exemplar.

It may be truly affirmed of him, that he received not the gospel from men. His first abiding conviction of the evil of sin, and of the danger of his own state as a sinner, was about the year 1734.\* It was not the effect of preaching or conversation, for his situation in that respect was solitary; he had no faithful monitor to warn him of the evil of his way. After he had resisted and overcome several successive checks of conscience, after he had broken through, and forgotten, many repeated, half-formed vows and resolutions of amendment, and at a time when his mind was wholly engaged in scenes of dissipation and folly, he was suddenly and deeply impressed with a sense of guilt, and alarmed with awful apprehensions of its deserved consequences. Struck, like Belshazzar in the midst of his banquet, when he saw the hand-writing upon the wall, he was filled with terror and distress, and thought himself marked out as a signal object of the displeasure of the great God. A visible outward reformation immediately took place; for the trifling vanities which a little before had engrossed his thoughts, as the chief sources of his pleasure, were

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\* See Note, Letter I. p. 9.

no longer pleasing; the recollection of them was bitter, and to abstain from them was no longer an act of self-denial, for his heart was set against them. The great inquiry which now possessed his mind, by night and by day, alone or in company, and to which it was long before he obtained a satisfactory answer, was, "What shall I do to be saved?" If doings of his own could have relieved him, he would have been sooner relieved. He not only left off all his former amusements, as hunting, cards, and the company of the jovial, but he applied himself with earnestness and assiduity to the duties incumbent on him as a minister. Being alarmed himself, his preaching was suited to alarm his hearers; he pressed upon them the necessity of a holy and devout life; he catechized the children, and exhorted his parishioners from house to house; knowing the terrors of the Lord, and he then knew little more, he laboured to persuade men.

But Mr. G. had received a wound which only He who had inflicted it could heal. Though he prayed and wept, and watched, and fasted, and laboured, he found no ease: rather his misery and anguish increased. The Lord permitted the enemy of souls to shoot his fiery poisonous darts into his wounds. He was assaulted with dreadful, horrid, unspeakable temptations, so that the evil of his past outward misconduct seemed but small in comparison of what he felt within. Outward sin is like the eruption of a volcano, which, though sufficient to alarm and ruin the adjacent country, bears but a small proportion to the combustible matter which still remains hidden in the bowels of the earth. So the heart of man, when agitated by furious temptations of Satan, discovers more evils and abominations than the most profligate life can express. These hard and blasphemous thoughts against the sovereignty and holiness of God, and despairing thoughts of his own salvation, oppressed him, though not always with equal violence, with little or

no intermission, for the space of about three years; and his troubles were aggravated by his keeping them to himself, for he durst not acquaint any one with his distresses, lest he should be accounted mad. And perhaps if he were inclined to speak of them, he knew of no person near him who was capable either of sympathizing with him, or advising him. But by these deep and abiding convictions he was delivered from the dominion of pride and self-righteousness, and made willing to be saved in God's appointed way, as a sinner without hope or plea in himself, as a brand plucked out of the fire by the arm of mercy, without money and without price.

He, and only He, who can say to the raging waves, in the height of a storm, Peace, be still; whose voice smooths the waves, and hushes the winds into a calm, was pleased, in due time, to speak peace to Mr. Grimshaw's troubled mind. He gradually opened Mr. G.'s understanding to understand the scriptures, which now appeared to him as a new book. He had been long harassed by the strictness and sanctions of the holy law; he now began to see that the Lord Jesus Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, Romans x. 4; that his sacrifice, righteousness, and obedience, even to the death of the cross, was the sole and sufficient cause of a sinner's justification before God; and that in and through him, there were many, sure, great, and precious promises of pardon, sanctification, and eternal life, to all who believe in his name. The Holy Spirit, whose office it is to take of the things of Jesus, and shew them to the weary and heavy laden, enabled him to believe; and as his faith advanced, his fears and temptations were removed, and his mind was filled with love, gratitude, joy, and peace. Thus he himself speaks of this happy change.\* "I was now willing to renounce myself,

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\* See Venn's Funeral Sermon for the Rev. W. G.

every degree of fancied merit and ability, and to embrace Christ wholly, as my all in all. Oh, what light and comfort did I enjoy in my own soul, and what a taste of the pardoning love of God!"

Being thus taught of God in the school of the cross, and from his own experience, his preaching before his removal to Haworth in the year 1748, became more clear, experimental, and profitable. All this time he was an entire stranger to the people called Methodists, whom afterwards he thought it his duty to countenance, and to preach in their connexions in his neighbourhood. He was equally unacquainted with all their writings, except a single sermon on Galatians iii. 24, and a letter to the People of England by the Rev. Mr. Seagrove. And he was much surprized when he first read these publications, to find the same views and sentiments in all material points, which he himself had been taught from the word of God.

In the dedication or engagement which I have inserted in my second letter, I think the judicious reader will observe, that Mr. Grimshaw's views and sentiments, as expressed in an act of peculiar solemnity, and while appealing in secret to the Searcher of hearts, were truly evangelical. He confesses man's depravity to be total; that he is not only dead in law, as a transgressor, but dead in sin, destitute of all spiritual life, and incapable, as a dead body, of any spiritual act, having in and of himself, neither power, will, nor desire to turn to God. Consequently he ascribes the whole of his conversion to the distinguishing grace of God. He places all his hope of acceptance on the atonement and mediation of the Son of God, the Saviour of men. He depends entirely upon the influence of the Holy Spirit for his perseverance in grace. He owns that his best services and warmest efforts were defective and defiled, and needed forgiveness; yet while conscious that he was still a sinner, a pensioner on mercy, that he could

do no good thing of himself, nor stand, unless upheld by the strong everlasting arms of his Lord; he looks up to God in Christ as his father, with a humble, but unshaken confidence. He styles himself a child of God with an unwavering tongue, and maintains a sure persuasion of his final perseverance in grace. Such were his own personal views, and such was the general tendency of his preaching, enforcing from these principles the absolute necessity of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

If the doctrine which ascribes the whole of a sinner's salvation, from the first dawn of light, the first motion of spiritual life in the heart, to its full accomplishment in victory over the last enemy, be Calvinism, I think Mr. Grimshaw was a Calvinist. But I am not sure that he thought himself so. And many Calvinists would scarcely have acknowledged his claim to that name, if he had made it, for two reasons :

1. His first religious acquaintances were among that branch of the Methodists so called, who were connected with the late Mr. John Wesley. He and the most of his preachers certainly were not Calvinists. But as in general they preached repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; were evidently instrumental in turning many from darkness to light; were despised by the world for the sake of the gospel, and for their singularity; though Mr. Grimshaw's preaching and theirs did not in all points accord, he, who had a mind too noble and benevolent to be fettered by a regard for names and parties, believing that there were great numbers among that people who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, overlooked smaller differences, and thought it his duty to unite with them in supporting the common cause: this attachment to a people whom the Calvinists considered as very erroneous, led many of them to suppose that he was wholly and fully on that side. And, on the other hand, those of the Methodists who were



more zealous for the peculiarities of their leader, considered him but as a half brother, because he did not go all their lengths. It is frequently the lot of wise and moderate men, who avoid the extremes of parties, dislike contention, and speak the truth in love, as it was his, to be misunderstood and misrepresented by the bigots of all parties.

2. Though he preached the doctrines of grace, he avoided the discussion of some high points, which engage, and perhaps too much engross, the attention of minds of a speculative turn. He kept nothing back from his people that he thought profitable; but he did not think it for their profit to insist upon subjects of controversy, which, as they are usually managed, rather alienate the minds of religious professors from each other, than promote love, peace, or holiness. His zeal was too ardent, his time too precious, the objects of his ministry too important, to afford him leisure to offer to his hearers, cold critical nicety of expression, or metaphysical subtleties; or to amuse them with distinctions, which, however ingenious, may, for their nicety and usefulness, be well compared to splitting of hairs. He spoke with authority as a messenger from God. The sense he had of the evil of sin, the worth of souls, the nearness of eternity, and the love of the Saviour, filled his heart, and raised him far above a scrupulous systematic accuracy; and therefore, though a preacher of free grace, he was not numbered among the Calvinists. But judicious and spiritual hearers of various denominations, who were not biassed by a favourite Shibboleth, were ready to acknowledge him a scribe, well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom of God; and the Lord himself bore testimony to his doctrine, faithfulness, and diligence, by giving him many seals to his ministry, who were his glory and his joy.

The last time I was with him, as we were standing together upon a hill near Haworth, and surveying the

romantic prospect around us, he expressed himself to the following purport, and I believe I nearly retain his very words, for they made a deep impression upon me while he spoke: "When I first came into this country, if I had gone half a day's journey on horse-back towards the east, west, north, and south, I should not have met with or heard of one truly serious person—and now, through the blessing of God upon the poor services of the most unworthy of his ministers, besides a considerable number whom I have seen or known to have departed this life, like Simeon rejoicing in the Lord's salvation; and besides five dissenting churches or congregations, of which the ministers, and nearly every one of the members were first awakened under my ministry; I have still at my sacraments, according to the weather, from three hundred to five hundred communicants, of the far greater part of whom, so far as man who cannot see the heart (and can therefore only determine by appearances, profession, and conduct) may judge, I can give almost as particular an account, as I can of myself. I know the state of their progress in religion. By my frequent visits and converse with them, I am acquainted with their several temptations, trials, and exercises, both personal and domestic, both spiritual and temporal, almost as intimately as if I lived in their families." A stranger who had stood upon the same spot, from whence he could see little but barren mountains and moors, would scarcely think this declaration credible. But I knew the man well, and of all the men I ever knew, I can think of no one, who was less to be suspected of boasting than Mr. Grimshaw.

## LETTER V.

*His Conduct as Minister of a Parish.*

ABUNDANT and laborious as Mr. Grimshaw was in preaching, both at home and abroad, he was no less strenuous in his exertions for the suppression of vice, and the maintenance of good order and sobriety in his own parish. And though he was not himself a magistrate, nor supported or backed by legal authority, his success was wonderful. His irreproachable character, his resolution and firmness, his impartiality, his known benevolence, gave him an authority and influence, within his own circle, superior to what is often derived from titles, wealth, or official importance; he had not been long in Haworth, before he was almost universally respected, and the most vicious and profligate of his parishioners were restrained and awed by his presence.

He was very earnest and persevering in enforcing a due observance of the Lord's day. At church, in prayer time, if he observed any careless behaviour, he would often stop, rebuke the offender, and not proceed till he saw the whole congregation upon their knees. For with him, the reading prayers was not a matter of custom or form, to be hurried over merely as a prelude to preaching; he really prayed, and the solemnity of his tone and gesture induced the people, at least apparently, to pray with him. Exhortations to attention were seldom necessary from the pulpit, for the animated manner of his preaching, usually kept the eyes of his hearers fixed upon him, while he was speaking; and frequently almost the whole congregation, by turns, were in tears, during different parts of his discourses, as they were differently affected, either by a sense of guilt and danger, or by his pathetic representations of the love of the Saviour, and his readiness to receive sinners.

It was his frequent and almost constant custom, to leave the church, while the psalm before sermon was singing, to see if any were absent from worship, and idling their time in the church-yard, the street, or the ale-houses, and many of those whom he so found, he would drive into the church before him. A friend of mine passing a public-house in Haworth, on a Lord's day morning, saw several persons making their escape out of it, some jumping out of the lower windows, and some over a low wall: he was at first alarmed, fearing the house was on fire, but upon enquiring what was the cause of the commotion, he was told, that they saw the parson coming. They were more afraid of their parson than of a justice of peace. His reproofs were so authoritative, and yet so mild and friendly, that the stoutest sinners could not stand before him.

One Lord's day, as a man was passing through Haworth on horseback, his horse lost a shoe; he applied to a blacksmith, who told him that he could not shoe a horse on the Lord's day, without the minister's leave. They went together to Mr. Grimshaw, and the man satisfying him that he was really in haste, going for a midwife, Mr. Grimshaw permitted the blacksmith to shoe the horse, which otherwise he would not have done for double pay.

He endeavoured likewise to suppress the generally prevailing custom in country places, during the summer, of walking in the fields on a Lord's day, between the services, or in the evening, in companies. He not only bore his testimony against it, from the pulpit, but reconnoitered the fields in person, to detect and reprove the delinquents. One instance of this kind, which shews both his care of his people, and his great ascendancy over them, and which is ascertained by the testimony of many witnesses, some of whom I believe are still living, I shall relate. There was a spot at some distance from the village, to which

many young people continued to resort ; he had often warned them in his preaching against this custom, and at last, he disguised himself one evening, that he might not be known till he was near enough to discover who they were. He then spoke and charged them not to move. He took down all their names with his pencil, and ordered them to attend him on a day and hour which he appointed. They all waited upon him accordingly, as punctually as if they had been served with a judge's warrant. When they came, he led them into a private room, where, after he had formed them into a circle, and commanded them to kneel down ; he kneeled down in the midst of them, and prayed for them with much earnestness for a considerable time, and concluded the interview, when he rose up, by a close and affecting lecture. He never had occasion afterwards to repeat his friendly discipline. He entirely broke the custom, and my informant assures me, that the place has never been resorted to on a Sunday evening, from that time to the date of his communication.

But his attention to the people of his more immediate charge, was not confined to the Lord's-day. He was the same man every day in the week. His religion was not by fits and starts, but habitual and constant, like the beating of his pulse. It was, as water is to a fish, the very element in which he lived. He had a meeting for prayer and exhortation, every morning when he was at home, in the summer season at five o'clock, and in the winter at six. These exercises were short and at an early hour, that the people might not be detained from following the duties of their callings, whether in the shop or in the field. For he was an enemy to idleness, and gave no encouragement to those who would plead religious saunterings, as an excuse for neglecting their proper business in civil life. But he thought, likewise, that to begin the day with prayer and praise, was the best means to sweeten

labour, to prepare the mind for unforeseen trials, and to guard it against the influence of the snares and temptations of the world.

His diligence in his own particular line was exemplary and unusual. The exertions of the most industrious man in trade, could not exceed his in promoting the cause of God, the practice of Christian morality, and in discountenancing and suppressing vice. In all the actions of common life, in his most familiar and common conversations, he intermingled a savour and tincture of the spirit of his Lord and Master which governed him. He had a happy skill in teaching those around him spiritual lessons from the incidents of daily occurrence, and the objects which were before their eyes. His mind was fertile and prompt in improving these occasions, and, like his Lord, instructing his hearers and friends from the birds of the air and the flowers of the field.

He painted sin and its deserved consequences in such strong colours, from the pulpit, as to make even the profane and profligate tremble. He was not content with inveighing against sin in general terms, but he descended to particulars; and if any thing notoriously wrong was done in the course of the week, and known in the parish, the offender might expect to hear of it the next Lord's-day, if he went to church. For as he rebuked sin with all authority, so likewise without partiality or respect of persons. The fear of the Lord raised him above the fear of man; so that he was not only faithful in his public preaching, when he could speak without interruption, but he was equally zealous and bold in expostulating with the guilty, wherever he met them. Thus, when once a man, who had been often guilty of adultery, came into a shop where Mr. Grimshaw was, he charged him with his crime upon the spot, and said to those who were present, "The devil has been very busy in this neighbourhood; I can

touch with my stick a man guilty of adultery : the end of these things will be death, the ruin of body and soul for ever."

He was particularly watchful over those of his flock who made an open profession of religion, to see if they adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and maintained a consistent character ; and he was very severe in his censures, if he found any of his communicants guilty of wrong practices. Being told of a tradesman, who they said was *hard* and *honest*, he said, I suppose you mean to say, *hardly honest* ; for he would not allow that a professor of religion, whose honesty was only concerned to keep free from the penalty of human laws, could be really an honest man. When he suspected hypocrisy, he sometimes took such methods to detect it, as perhaps few men but himself would have thought of. He had a suspicion of the sincerity of some persons, who made great pretences to religion, and being informed of their several dispositions, he applied to one, as a poor man, and begged for a night's lodging ; and this person, who had been willing to pass for very charitable, treated him with some abuse. He then went to another house, to a woman who was almost blind ; he touched her gently with his stick, and persisted to do so, till she, supposing it was from some children in the neighbourhood, began not only to threaten them, but to swear at them. Thus he was confirmed in his apprehensions, for he had no good opinion of the religion of those, who were not, at least, gentle to the poor, or of those who did not bridle their tongues.

In these, and similar attempts, I do not propose him for imitation, though he was generally successful and useful. His character, motives, and aims, were well known, and he always acted like himself. What was unstudied and natural in him, might appear affectation in another, and affectation is always

disgusting, and defeats its own purposes. But these specimens may suffice to shew his constant attention to his charge, his desire of promoting integrity and holiness, and how little he regarded the form and appearance of godliness where he found it destitute of power.

I can scarcely think of his minute attention to his own parish, and his unremitted labours abroad, without wondering how he could find time for both. But the Lord was eminently with him; therefore, being influenced by the wisdom that is from above, he acted wisely, and prospered. 1 Sam. xviii. 14. He was parsimonious of his time, and prudent in his arrangements. And as he had good health, a strong body, and a vigorous mind, though some of the places he visited were at a considerable distance, the severest weather caused no alteration in his plan. He was sure to be where, and at the time, he was expected. And he was so beloved, and so useful, that many people were not prevented from coming ten or twelve miles, when they heard he was to preach. He seldom staid longer in a place than to deliver his message; and that he might not be burdensome to the house that received him, and to avoid loss of time, he frequently took some refreshment in his hand, and posted away to further services. He was often entertained by the poor; for a cottage, if they who feared the Lord dwelt in it, was as welcome to him as a palace. He has often, when travelling over moors and mountains, feasted upon a bit of bread, or bread and butter, if the house afforded butter, and an onion. The plainest fare that was set before him, he accepted with thankfulness, both to the Lord and to his poor friends. He was with justice compared to an instrument which is never out of tune. He cared not for himself, so that he might do the will of his Lord, and be instrumental to the conversion of sinners, and the comfort and



edification of believers. Whether abroad or at home, with the rich or the poor, he was always the same man.

Night and day were the same to him when he was desired to visit the sick. He has been known to walk several miles in the night, in storms of snow, when few people would venture out of their doors, to visit a sick person. He found his reward in his work, and would rejoice in such opportunities of speaking a word for his Lord to a dying creature.

There are at Haworth two feasts annually. It had been customary with the innkeepers, and some other inhabitants, to make a subscription for horse-races at the latter feast. They exhibited a scene of the grossest and most vulgar riot, profligacy, and confusion. Mr. Grimshaw had frequently attempted, but in vain, to put a stop to this mischievous custom. His remonstrances against it were little regarded; and perhaps any other man would have been ill-treated, if he had dared to oppose with earnestness, an established practice, so agreeable to the depraved taste of the thoughtless multitude. But his character was so revered, that they heard his expostulations with some degree of patience, though they were determined to persist in their old course. Unable to prevail with men, he addressed himself to God, and for some time before the races began, he made it a subject of fervent prayer, that the Lord would be pleased to stop these evil proceedings in his own way. When the race time came, the people assembled as usual, but they were soon dispersed. Before the race could begin, dark clouds covered the sky, which poured forth such excessive rains, that the people could not remain upon the ground; it continued to rain incessantly during the three days appointed for the races. This event, though it took place nearly forty years since, is still remembered and spoken of at Haworth, with the same cer-

tainty as if it had happened but a few months past. It is a sort of proverbial saying among them, that old Grimshaw put a stop to the races by his prayers.

I have lived too long myself in the comfortless region of infidelity, not to be sensible, that if an infidel or sceptic should read this narration, he will either pity or despise me for believing it. If I know him, I would return pity for pity, and prayer for his contempt. There was a time when his language would have expressed the very sentiments of my heart.

Permit me, my dear friend, to digress a little upon this occasion. I know the heart of an infidel. I remember the gall and bitterness of that disposition of mind. It pushed me upon the very brink of ruin, and had not mercy snatched me as a brand out of the fire, I should have been long before now where there are no infidels, where all believe beyond a doubt, but also tremble without a hope. To those who have read the narrative of the early part of my life, I may offer myself as an unsuspected witness and proof, that the power which can raise the dead, can soften the heart of the most determined infidel. I shall therefore close this letter with a few remarks suited to obviate the objection I have above stated.

I readily allow, that three days of incessant rain might have coincided with the time of the Haworth races, though Mr. Grimshaw had never been born. But the inference from, *it might have been so*, to *it certainly would have been so*, is not conclusive.

Though infidels boldly deny the authenticity of the scripture, we are certain that they cannot disprove it. And though they affect to treat those who derive their motives and hopes from the scripture, as visionaries or hypocrites, they can assign no good reason why our testimony, when we speak seriously on the subject of religion, is not as worthy of credit as their own; especially if what we say is supported by such a line of

practice and conduct, as they always expect from our principles, while they pretend to treat those principles as chimerical. It is not easy to reason with them, while we can find no common ground to stand upon, no indisputable acknowledged point from which to proceed. Nor can we reasonably hope to succeed in a way of disputation; for an authority, which we are sure is decisive, has declared, that they who believe not Moses and the prophets, would not be persuaded though one should rise from the dead.

Some of us have really more cause to suspect the ingenuousness and veracity of their assertions, than they can have of ours. Because we have travelled in both roads, and they have been only in one. When *we* speak of peace of conscience, and fellowship with God, through his Son Jesus Christ, we know what we say, and whereof we affirm, just as we can tell whether we are hot or cold, in the house or in the street. If they know nothing of these things, we do not wonder that they disbelieve them. If a man, born blind, refuses my testimony, I cannot convince him by argument, that the sun shines at noon day. But when *they* speak of satisfaction in their principles, or happiness in their pursuits, we have reason to hesitate from assenting, because we have been in the same road before them. We likewise have spoken great swelling words of vanity, when our inward feelings have contradicted our language. We can remember that when we presumed to charge religious people with hypocrisy, we ourselves were hypocrites. We endeavoured, under the mask of forced smiles, to conceal the anguish that preyed upon our hearts; and if we succeeded in deceiving others, we could not deceive ourselves. For we often envied the condition of the brutes, who feel neither regret for the past, nor anxieties for the future; while we were tortured by remorse, if we looked back, and with distressing forebodings, if we looked forward. We

immersed ourselves in business, or amusements, for relief, and kept as much as possible in a throng, to hide ourselves from ourselves; but our vacant hours were painful. How often has conscience awakened us, or kept us awake in the night! and yet we tried to persuade others that we were happy!

Should any one say, "Indeed it is not thus with me. I live as I please, and do what I please, excepting so far as the laws of the land restrain me; I can ruminate with pleasure on those past transactions, which you think fill me with terror; nor do the thoughts of futurity give me any disturbance:" I answer, You must have laboured hard before you attained this insensibility; you must have stifled many a check of conscience before you gained such a complete mastery over it. This likewise was my own case. I could not at once forget the religious impressions I had received in my childhood, they often returned upon me, but still fainter and fainter; after every rebuke, I hardened myself more, till at length I was so possessed with a spirit of strong delusion, that I believed my own lie. But I obtained mercy!

The Bible informs us that God governs the earth, that he invites us to put our trust in him, to cast our cares upon him, to call upon him in the time of trouble, with an assurance that he will answer the prayers of those who seek him in the ways of his appointment. This Mr. Grimshaw believed. The time of the horse-race was a time of trouble to him. They who live in the spirit of self, and propose the gratification of their own selfish desires as the highest end of life, cannot conceive how this devoted servant of God was grieved by the evil conversation of the wicked. He had no heavy personal trouble, his health was good, his temporal wants were well supplied, he had peace of conscience: but when he beheld the transgressors he was grieved; he was jealous for the Lord of hosts; he could not be an indifferent

spectator, when he saw the laws of God broken with impunity, the name of the Saviour profaned, and the glorious gospel of the blessed God either rejected or abused. He had likewise a deep-felt compassion for the souls of men; he saw multitudes thronging the broad road that leadeth to destruction, he faithfully and tenderly warned them, and when his entreaties could not prevail with men, he addressed his prayer to God, and besought him to put a stop to the races, which, by bringing so many dissolute and idle people together, increased and multiplied in public the abominations for which he daily mourned in private. The event proved, that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. The rains fell at a critical time that year, and the races were discontinued.

Though we do not compare ourselves with the prophets and apostles, nor expect new revelations, nor the power of working miracles, we avow a humble confidence that the Lord God of Elijah is our God. That he who made atonement for our sins upon the cross, and who now in our nature exercises all power and authority in heaven and in earth, is mindful of us. Unworthy as they who believe in him are, he is not ashamed to call them brethren; his eye is always upon them, and his ear is open to their prayers.

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## LETTER VI.

### *His personal and more private Character, and his Death.*

HAVING thus far considered Mr. Grimshaw chiefly in his public life, as a minister of the gospel, and of a parish, I shall proceed to delineate some of the most striking features of his more private character.

The graces or fruits of the Holy Spirit, of which true

christian zeal is one, are not solitary. They spring from the same stock, and grow together, though, in different persons, the effects of one may be more conspicuous than those of the rest. The apostle intimates that it is possible a man may have the gift of tongues, and of working miracles, the powers of an angel, and the zeal of a martyr, (1 Cor. xiii.) and yet however admired of men, for his abilities, diligence, and success, for want of that love which he there describes by its properties, he may be in the sight of God no better than sounding brass, or a noisy cymbal. After preaching, and not without effect, to others, he may himself be a castaway! This thought should be much upon our minds, if we are honoured of the Lord with usefulness to his church and people; for he assures us, that when he shall appear as judge at the great day, there will be some to whom he will say, "Depart from me, I never knew you;" though they will have to plead, that they had cast out devils, and done many wonderful works in his name.

But the zeal of Mr. Grimshaw was humble, simple, disinterested, and benevolent. The accompanying graces with which it was attuned, proved it to be the genuine result of the love of Christ reigning in his heart, and producing a cordial love and good-will to his fellow-creatures.

In proportion to the views we have of the majesty and holiness of the great God, of our dependance upon him, and our obligations to him, as creatures, our conduct and natural disposition towards him as sinners, combined with a sense of his pardoning love, and our acceptance in the Beloved, such will be the measure of our humility. In Mr. Grimshaw these views were strong and habitual, and that humble contrite frame of spirit in which the Lord delights, cost him no study, but seemed almost as natural as his breathing. It was apparent in all that he said, and in all that he did. It is easy to say, I am a poor

unworthy creature; and the acknowledgment is often made in a manner which shews that the person very faintly believes what he says; but the man who really feels himself to be an unworthy sinner, will prove that he is humble before God, by his submission to his will, and by a meek and unassuming deportment towards his fellow-creatures, especially towards his inferiors, dependants, or servants. He will not be haughty, or desirous of pre-eminence, nor dogmatical, positive, or overbearing, because he knows he is a sinner and not infallible. A stranger might be in company with Mr. Grimsbaw from morning till night, without observing any thing that might lead him to suppose he was a minister; he would only think he saw and heard a pious, intelligent, plain man.

I have not heard that he ever visited London, though he had a great name and many friends there; and his talents as a preacher would soon have made him popular; I believe he seldom passed the boundaries of his own county, and not often those of the circle of his more immediate and stated services. He was not like the peacock that spreads his plumes, admires himself, and is pleased with being admired by others; but rather like the pheasant, which, though a beautiful bird, is content to live unseen and unnoticed in its native woods.

In one thing I have thought the low opinion he had of himself, led him to an extreme. If a man possesses a large estate, humility will not require him to think that he is poor, but it will teach him moderation and thankfulness. Mr. Grims'aw seemed not sensible of the abilities God had given him. He was rather unwilling to preach when he could hear. If an unlettered lay-preacher, far inferior to himself in every respect, was earnest in his manner, and spoke the truths of the gospel from his heart, he thought his sermons better than his own. He freely admitted such into his parish, saying, he wished that real good

might be done by any person. He had been taught, like the apostle Paul, and in the same school, in lowliness of heart to esteem others better than himself.

Humility will shew itself in small things. Mr. Grimshaw was an economist, that he might be the more able to impart to the needy; yet he was a lover of hospitality, and had occasionally many visitants in the summer season. The house was sometimes full: it was his frequent practice to lodge as many of his guests as he could, to give up his own bed, and then he would retire to sleep in the hay-loft, without giving his friends the least intimation of his purpose.

A friend of mine who often lodged with him, surprised him early one morning, and was not a little astonished himself to find Mr. Grimshaw cleaning the boots of his guest, whom he supposed to be still asleep.

One mark or effect of true humility, is simplicity. The humble man has no occasion for the address, subtlety, and caution, which are necessary to promote or conceal the purposes of self and pride. He does not wish to pass for more than he is, he affects no disguise, nor is afraid of detection. There is therefore an air of openness, and undesigning simplicity in his whole conduct. This was very observable in Mr. Grimshaw. His words and his actions were natural, prompt, and easy, because they flowed from an upright and honest heart. Many instances of this might be adduced; I shall confine myself to two, which are strongly characteristic of his spirit.

The late Mr. Whitfield, in a sermon he preached at Haworth, having spoken severely of those professors of the gospel, who by their loose and evil conduct caused the ways of truth to be evil spoken of, intimated his hope, that it was not necessary to enlarge much upon that topic to the congregation before him, who had so long enjoyed the benefit of an able and



faithful preacher, and he was willing to believe that their profiting appeared to all men. This roused Mr. Grimshaw's spirit, and, notwithstanding his great regard for the preacher, he stood up and interrupted him, saying, with a loud voice, "Oh, sir, do not speak so; I pray you do not flatter them; I fear the greater part of them are going to hell with their eyes open."

He was in company with a late nobleman, who unhappily employed his talents in the service of infidelity; he had some time before been engaged in a long dispute with two eminent clergymen, in which, as is usual in such cases, the victory was claimed by both sides. Meeting afterwards with Mr. Grimshaw, he wished to draw him likewise into a dispute, but he declined it nearly in these words: "My lord, if you needed information, I would gladly do my utmost to assist you; but the fault is not in your head, but in your heart, which can only be reached by a divine power; I shall pray for you, but I cannot dispute with you." His lordship, far from being offended, treated him with particular respect, and declared afterwards that he was more pleased, and more struck by the freedom, firmness, and simplicity of his answer, than by any thing he had heard on our side of the question.

I will only subjoin on this head, an extract of a letter now before me, from a judicious and respectable dissenting minister who still lives in the neighbourhood of Haworth. "I have often heard Mr. Grimshaw with great astonishment, and I hope with profit. In prayer before his sermon, he excelled most men I have ever heard. His soul was carried out in that exercise, with such earnestness, affection, and fervour, as indicated most intimate communion with God. His love and compassion for the souls of poor sinners, and his concern for their salvation, were manifested in the strongest manner in all his proceedings. Yet,

though his talents were great, his labours abundant, and his success wonderful, he had the meanest and most degrading thoughts of himself, and of all that he did. Humility was a shining feature in his character."

His disinterestedness was very exemplary. He sought neither patronage nor preferment. He was not rigorous in exacting his dues, but was contented with what his parishioners brought him; he would say to them, "I will not deserve your curses when I am dead for what I have received for my poor labours among you. I want no more of you than your souls for my God, and a bare maintenance for myself." For himself he needed no more than a bare maintenance, for all that he could spare was appropriated for the good of others. His food and his clothing were very plain; he seldom allowed himself a change of raiment, and sometimes had not a second pair of shoes. In his last widowhood, for he was twice married, he was careful to retrench all superfluities in himself, that he might have the more wherewith to relieve the real necessities of the poor.

This leads me to take notice of his benevolence. I would rather term it his philanthropy, for he was a lover of mankind: he was a follower of Him whose tender mercies are over all his works, who is kind to the unthankful and the evil, causing his sun to shine, and his rain to fall, upon the just and upon the unjust. After the example of his Lord, who manifests himself to his own people, as he does not to the world, he had an especial regard to the household of faith; and his idea of this household comprehended all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and was not limited by a regard to denominations, parties, or systems. If they acknowledged Jesus as their King and their Lord, if they built their hopes upon his mediation and obedience unto death, and if their conversation was becoming the gospel they professed,

he overlooked all subordinate distinctions, and could cordially unite in affection with those whose sentiments in all points he could not adopt.

His disposition was tried and manifested by the defection of many of his people, who, as I have formerly observed, in the course of his ministry, withdrew from him and became dissenters. Many faithful servants of God have found this a very tender point; they have felt the workings of corrupt self, of jealousy and resentment, when those whom they loved, watched over, and rejoiced in, have forsaken them. But if Mr. Grimshaw had reason to think, that, though they had departed from him, they still cleaved to the Lord with purpose of heart, and walked in the paths of truth and holiness, their change of conduct towards himself seemed not in the least to abate his regard and affection for them. He saluted them with the same kindness when he met them in the street or on the road, and received them at his house, if they called to see him, with the same cordiality as formerly. I thought this one of the most distinguishing and admirable parts of his character. If good was done, he cared not who was the instrument; and his humility led him to hope that the ministers they preferred to him were more useful to them than he had himself been, or would have been, if they had continued with him.

But, though his regard was in the first place directed to true believers, it was not confined to them. His bowels yearned over careless, thoughtless sinners, even the most profligate; he beheld them, not with indignation, but with grief and compassion. He embraced every favourable opportunity of speaking to strangers whom he met or overtook upon the road, and if they were disposed to hear him, he would alight, when on horseback, address them with a serious and pathetic exhortation, commend them to the blessing of the Lord by prayer, and then resume his journey.

It will not be known till the great day how many persons received their first religious impressions from these contingent and unexpected interviews; when, like the woman of Samaria, they met with a man who brought home to their hearts an important subject, of which they had no thoughts when they left their home. But some were known to himself and his people, in whom the good seed of the word, thus sown upon the highway, took deep root and brought forth fruit unto life.

Our Lord and Saviour left his glory, and assumed our nature, to deliver sinners from guilt and the bondage of sin, and to save them with an everlasting salvation. But though this was his great design, he did not overlook the temporal distresses of those among whom he conversed; he felt for them, exerted his divine power in their favour, and sometimes dropped a tear of sympathy over those whom it was his gracious purpose to relieve. Multitudes came unto him, and he healed them all: he gave sight to the blind, enabled the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. He had compassion for the multitude which followed him into a desert place, where they had nothing to eat, and he fed them bountifully before he dismissed them. Mr. Grimshaw studied the pattern, followed the steps, and drank largely into the spirit of his Lord and Master. He had not the gift of miracles, but he had a tender fellow-feeling for the poor and afflicted. I have observed before, that he denied himself many lawful gratifications for their sakes. His income was not large, but he did what he could. He was not only ready to subscribe for the support of poor or sick persons or families, but he undertook their cause, and employed his influence with people of better circumstances, to procure them further help. It was not unusual with him to beg old shoes of his friends, and to have them repaired for the use of his poor. When his clerk was disabled by age

and infirmities from going round the parish to collect his salary, Mr. Grimshaw undertook the business and did it for him. He could cheerfully submit to any service, and thought nothing too low or mean to engage in, if thereby he could benefit either the souls or the bodies of his people.

The care of rebuilding and enlarging the church at Haworth, was entirely committed to him; the parish expressly stipulating, that there should be no tax or rate for the service, and that he should expect nothing from the inhabitants but from their voluntary contributions. He cheerfully undertook the affair, and by his exertions and influence, it was completed.

He was a hearty friend of the established church, though his extra-parochial labours exposed him to the charge of irregularity. Besides proving and enforcing the doctrines he preached by the Holy Scriptures, he very frequently appealed for their confirmation to the articles, liturgy, and homilies of the church. Though he was no bigot, though his arms and his house were open to persons of all denominations, who hold the Head, he expressed and shewed a decided preference for the church of which he was a member and a minister.

He was likewise firmly attached to the constitution, laws, and government of his country. He feared God, and he honoured the king. I am informed, that soon after he came to Haworth, I suppose about the time of the rebellion (in 1745) he encouraged the recruiting service, by countenancing the officers, and exhorting proper persons to enlist and fight for their God, their king, and their country. He learnt from the word of God, from the example and precept of our Lord and his apostles, submission to the powers that be; to pray for kings and all in authority under them; not to speak evil of dignities, nor to intermeddle with affairs of state, of which few persons in private life have a competent knowledge, either of matters of fact,

or matters of right. He belonged to a kingdom which is not of this world, and which, unlike the kingdoms of the earth, cannot be shaken. He knew that all human events were under the direction and control of an all-wise providence. He considered himself as a passenger in a ship, bound to pray for the safety of the vessel, to promote to his power the peace and comfort of all on board; but as having neither appointment nor skill to interfere in the navigation of the ship. May all who respect his memory, and who profess to believe that he was a man eminently endowed with the wisdom and grace of the Holy Spirit, be like minded with him!

Had the life of Mr. Grimshaw been written soon after his removal to a better world, by a person of competent information and ability, and while the most of his intimate friends were living, many interesting particulars might have been recorded, which now, after a lapse of thirty-five years, and the death of most of his more intimate acquaintance, cannot be recalled; I have availed myself as well as I could of what is already in print concerning him, and of the authentic materials which you kindly procured me; some things I have added from my own personal knowledge of him, and repeated conversations with him, during the four or five years I had the pleasure of knowing him. I number it amongst the many great mercies of my life, that I was favoured with his notice, edified (I hope) by his instruction and example, and encouraged and directed by his advice, at the critical time when my own mind was much engaged with a desire of entering the ministry. I saw in him, much more clearly than I could have learnt from books or lectures, what it was to be a faithful and exemplary minister of the gospel, and the remembrance of him has often both humbled and animated me. And I hope, while I live, to be thankful to the Lord, that he has preserved and inclined me to raise this monument, imperfect as it is, to his

memory, I hope the detached particulars which I have collected and arranged, as well as I am able, will suffice to give the reader a just, though not an adequate idea, of this truly great and wonderful man, who, notwithstanding his uncommon diligence, abilities, and success as a minister, and his accurate and exemplary conduct as a Christian, accounted himself, to the end of his life, a chief sinner, and less than the least of all saints.

Though he was not a young man, the strength and vigour of his constitution was such, that he might be said to be in the prime of life, when he was called home to enter into the joy of his Lord. He was a stranger to sickness and pain, nor was there any visible abatement either of his mental or bodily powers. It seemed not improbable that he might have continued to be a burning and a shining light for twenty years longer.

In the spring of 1763, Haworth was afflicted by a putrid fever, of which many persons died; Mr. Grimshaw had a strong presage upon his mind that some one of his own family would be added to the number, and he repeatedly exhorted them all to be ready, as he knew not which of them it might be. As to himself, it was not for a man of his views and spirit to decline the calls of duty and affection, from an apprehension of danger. The fever was highly infectious, and in visiting his sick parishioners, he caught the infection. From the first attack of the fever, he expected and welcomed the approach of death. He knew whom he believed, and felt his supports in the trying hour. "While death pointed his javelin to his heart, he beheld the face of this king of terrors, as it were the face of an angel. He said, 'Never had I such a visit from God since I knew him.'"<sup>\*</sup> We have but brief accounts of him during his illness; for knowing that

his fever was infectious, he was rather unwilling that his friends should visit him. But to one of them who saw him, and asked him how he did, he answered, "As happy as I can be on earth, and as sure of glory as if I was in it." He is reported likewise to have said to his housekeeper, "O, Mary, I have suffered last night what the blessed martyrs did: my flesh has been, as it were, roasting before a hot fire. But I have nothing to do but to step out of my bed into heaven. I have my foot upon the threshold already!"

In the season of health, Mr. Grimshaw had thus expressed to a friend his humble views, and the feelings with which he wished to quit this world:

"I think we are both agreed to pull down man, and when we have the proud chit down, to keep him down. For this is the main; and never let him recover so much as his knees, till with a broken heart, and contrite spirit, the dear Redeemer raises him. He ought to be convinced, that a good life will no more conduce, than a wicked life, to his justification. That all that is not of faith, and is consequently *before* faith, is sin. Nor will I allow, that it is any more by good works after grace received, than before, that the believer is saved. For however our Lord may graciously consider them at the last day, eternal life is certainly *the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Christ alone has purchased for us, what grace in heart and life makes us meet for. What have we to boast of? Or what have we that we have not received? Surely, by grace we are saved. When I die I shall then have my greatest grief and my greatest joy. My greatest grief, that I have done so little for Jesus; my greatest joy, that Jesus has done so much for me. My last words shall be '*Here goes an unprofitable servant.*'"

I am not sure that "Here goes an unprofitable servant," were actually his last words; but he spoke to the same purport frequently during his illness. To



the physician who attended him he expressed, in strong terms, the humiliating sense he had upon a retrospect of his whole life; how little he had done for his Redeemer, and how disproportionate, defective, and defiled his best services had been, if compared with the obligations under which he felt himself, and the importance of the cause in which he had been engaged; and that he hoped, if the Lord should prolong his days, and raise him up again, he should be much more active and diligent than formerly. These sentiments from a man on the verge of eternity, and from a man whose labours were more abundant than those of his cotemporaries, and whose character had been in all points irreproachable, strongly intimate, that they who with a single eye, and from right motives, do the most for the Lord who bought them with his blood, will, at the close of life, have the lowest opinion of themselves and their best performances, and will, without the least affectation, confess themselves to have been unprofitable servants. Let who will think of giving their account at the last day, with decency and propriety, many of us know, with Mr. Grimshaw; that we shall then have nothing to plead but that Jesus lived, and died, and rose, and reigns in behalf of sinners; and that we were warranted by his word, and enabled by his Holy Spirit, to put our whole and sole trust in Him for salvation. Nor do we wish for any other plea! We are complete in him, Colos. ii. 10, who is our representative and head.

I know not how long he was confined, but he was released from sickness, sorrow, and sin, and was admitted into the unclouded presence of the Lord, whom he loved and trusted, and whose service had been long his delight, on the 7th of April, 1763, in the fifty-fifth year of his age; and in the twenty-first from his settlement at Haworth.