THE
EXPERIENCE
OF
Mrs. H. A. ROGERS.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED, SOME
SELECT LETTERS,
WRITTEN TO HER

By the Rev. JOHN WESLEY, A.M.

Which afforded her much Spiritual Consolation.

"Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul."

"SHE, BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH."

SECOND EDITION.

Bristol:
PRINTED BY R. EDWARDS;
AND SOLD AT THE METHODIST CHAPELS.
1796.

[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]
EXPERIENCE, &c.

I have ever found it an unspeakable blessing to look back on the rock from whence I was hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence I was digged.—To recount the wonders of redeeming love, is a pleasing and a profitable task.—I have ever proved my strength hereby renewed, my faith increased, my mercies and blessings redoubled.—I am hereby enabled to discern more truly, the progress of grace in my soul, and every recounted deliverance is written more deeply on my heart.—I see hereby into many devices of Satan, and can more clearly discover, and more gratefully adore the secret leadings of Providence and grace.—And how am I humbled with the view of the unbounded love and tender mercies of my God, contrasted with my great unworthiness, my ten-thousand short-comings, weaknesses, ignorances, and infirmities. So that I am constrained to sink in deepest abasement before him, and say, I am a brand plucked from the burning! a sinner saved by grace!—I am nothing! and Christ is all in all!

I was born at Macclesfield, in Cheshire, Jan. 31, 1756, of which place my father was Minister for many years; being a Clergyman of the Church of England. He was a man of strict morals, and as far as he was enlightened, of real piety. I was trained up in the observance of all outward duties, and in the fear of those sins, which, in these modern times, are too often deemed accomplishments. I was not suffered to name God, but with the deepest reverence; and once, for telling a lie, I was corrected in such a manner as I never forgot. We had constant family prayer; the Sabbath was kept strictly sacred; and as far as outward morality, my parents lived irreproachably, and in all social duties were regular and harmonious.
I was early drawn out to secret prayer. I believed God was the author of all good, of all happiness; and Sin the cause of all misery and pain. If, therefore, I wished for anything I had not, I asked God in secret to grant it to me. And in any pain of body, or in any of my childish griefs, I fled to him for ease and comfort: and it would be incredible to some, how often I have received manifold answers to prayer, when not more than four years old; and how my tender mind has been comforted. I was deeply affected, and had very serious thoughts of death, for some time after seeing the corpse of a little brother of mine, who died of the small-pox, when I was five years old. I took great delight in the Bible; and could at this time read any part either of the Old or New Testament, always asking questions, so as to obtain some understanding of what I read. My parents required that I should give an account every Sabbath evening, of the sermons and lessons I heard at church, and say my catechism to them, which they explained to my understanding. They also required that I should get off the collect for the day, and read it, with my other prayers every night and morning. These collects I also often repeated in secret, and with great sincerity before the Lord. I never remember going to bed without having said my prayers, except once: I was then diverted by a girl, who told me many childish stories, and took up my attention, that I forgot to pray till I was in bed: and then being alone, I recollected what I had done, and conscience greatly accused me; so that I began to tremble lest Satan should be permitted of God to fetch me away body and soul, which I felt I deserved! I soon after thought I saw him coming to the side of my bed; when I shrieked out in such a manner, as brought my parents up stairs to see what was the matter. This made a lasting impression: and I never after dared to neglect commending myself to the protection of God before I slept. I was at this time about six years old.

When about eight years of age, I heard my father say he had a very remarkable dream, in his recovery from a dangerous illness: That he stood before the throne of God, and saw his glory! But not being able to gaze upon it, fell on his face in raptures of joy. My Mother asked, if he could describe what he saw, but he answered, No! It was impossible to convey any idea of it; it seemed almost to deprive him of being. She asked if any thing was spoken to him; but he desired her to ask no more respecting it: nor would he ever tell her any more. I have often thought he received some notice in that dream of his approaching dissolution,
A material change was evident from that time, in all his conduct and tempers. Anger was ever before a besetting sin, but I never remember seeing him overcome by it after this. He was more vigilant in public and private duties; more humble and patient under little difficulties and trials; more watchful over the morals of all around him; and took more pains than ever, to inform my infant mind in all things which led to piety and virtue. He warned me against reading novels and romances; would not suffer me to learn to dance, nor to go on visits to play with those of my own age. He said, it was the ruin of youth to suppose they were only to spend their time in diversions. I believe I shall have reason to bless God for ever, for several lessons he then gave me, and to all which I listened with great delight.

In Feb. 1765, when I was a few weeks more than nine years old, he took his last sickness; a malignant fever, in which he lay three weeks; expressing through the whole of it, an entire submission to the will of God, and an assurance of a happy eternity. He sung psalms, repeated various scriptures, and praised God aloud; and was continually commending to his care, his dear wife and children. A few days before he died, he called aloud for me; and when I came, he took my hand in his very affectionately, and said, "My dear Hetty, you look dejected! You must not let your spirits be cast down; God hath ever cared for me, and he will take care of mine. He will bless you, my dear, when I am gone. I hope you will be a good child, and then you will be happy." Then laying his hand on my head, he lifted his eyes to heaven, and with a solemnity I shall never forget, he said—"Unto God's gracious mercy and protection I commit thee: the Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace; and make thee his child and faithful servant to thy life's end!" I cannot find words to express what were the feelings of my heart on this occasion. Love for my valuable and affectionate parent; grief to reflect I was now losing him, and gratitude that his dying lips had pronounced such a blessing on my head, quite overpowered me. I fell on my knees, gave vent to a flood of tears; and continued to weep till my eyes were almost swelled up. He died the tenth of April, 1765.

My grief for some time would not suffer me to take recreations of any kind; but I would sit and read to my mother, or weep with her. But, after a season, I was invited to the
houses of relations and friends; and as I soon became a laugh-
ing-stock among them for my seriousness, and dislike to their
manners and their plays, I began to be ashamed of being so
particular! My mother was also now prevailed on to let me
learn to dance, in order to raise my spirits, and improve my
carriage. &c. This was a fatal stab to my seriousness, and di-
vine impressions: it paved the way to lightness, trifling, love
of pleasure, and various evils. As I soon made a proficiency,
I delighted much in this ensnaring folly. My pride was fed
by being admired, and began to make itself manifest with all
its fruits. I now aimed to excel my companions, not in
piety, but in fashionable dress! and could not rest long to-
gether, without being engaged in parties of pleasure, and es-
pecially in this (what the world calls) innocent amusement.
I also obtained all the novels and romances I possibly could,
and spent some time every day in reading them; though at
first it was unknown to my mother, who would not then
suffer it. After this, I attended plays also. In short, I fell
into all the vain customs and pleasures of a delusive world,
as far as my situation in life would admit; and even beyond
the proper limits of that station God had placed me in. Thus
was my precious time mispent, and my foolish heart wander-
ing far from happiness and God: yea, urging on to endless
ruin! Yet, in all this, I was not left without keen convic-
tions, gentle drawings, and many short-lived good resolutions;
especially till fifteen years of age. God often wrought strongly
on my mind, and that various ways, of which I come now
to speak. But O! how did I grieve and reft the Holy
Word! How justly might he have given me up; yea, and
sealed me over to eternal destruction.

At thirteen years old; namely, in the year 1769, the Bi-
shop of Chester, being to hold a confirmation at Macclesfield,
I resolved to attend that ordinance, though it was with many
fears and much trembling; for I believed, till persons were
confirmed, they were not alike accountable to God for their
own conduct. But when this solemn renewal of the baptis-
tal covenant was made in their own persons, then, whoso-
ever did not keep that covenant, must perish eternally! I
therefore endeavoured earnestly to understand the import
of it, and was fully convinced. I was neither inwardly nor
outwardsly what it required. The knowledge of this wrought
much sorrow: and I formed strong resolutions to lead a new
life. Yet sin had so blinded my eyes, that I could not at
once believe, or at least, I would not, that dancing,
and in attending plays was sinful. Thence, therefore, I
did not even resolve against. But I resolved against anger, pride, disobedience to my parent; also the neglect of secret prayer and church-going; with all wanderings of heart in those duties, and a variety of other evil tempers, &c. which I knew myself guilty of. Having humbled myself before God, fasted and prayed, and (as I vainly thought) fortified myself by these resolutions, of keeping all God’s commands in future, I ventured to take upon me the solemn vow. But which was my fear and trembling at the time, that when I approached the altar, I was near fainting; and when I returned to the pew, burst into a flood of tears. This was on Whit-Sunday: and I intended to receive the holy sacrament the Sunday following. But before it came, I was conscious I had already broken my solemn vows; and, on the reflection, my distress was great, and I had many doubts whether partaking of the Lord’s supper would not be sealing my own damnation. However, one day, as I was praying, it came into my mind, this holy sacrament is called a means of grace; surely, then, it is just what so sinful, so helpless a soul wants: I will go to it, then, as a means whereby to receive strength, and grace to conquer sin in future. In this view of that blessed ordinance I found much comfort; and I am now assured it was from the Lord, whom, ignorantly, I was feeling after. I approached the Lord’s table therefore, with renewed vows, and renewed hopes; But, alas! there also were as the Morning cloud, and as the early dew which passeth away. For several months I thus repented and sinned, resolved and broke all my resolutions; sinned and repented again. I dared not receive the Lord’s supper without resolving on a new life: neither dared I to fly from it; nor did I ever attend without being wrought on by the Spirit of God.

The latter end of this year I had a malignant fever, and believed I should die. I felt myself totally unprepared to appear before a holy God, and was in great distress: I earnestly entreated him to spare me a little longer, and resolved I would then lead a new life indeed. A patient forbearing God of love listened to my request, and did not cut the fig-tree down. One night, during this illness, I dreamed my soul was departed out of the body, and I, with three of my cousins* (with whom I had a close intimacy, and who I thought had

* These three cousins were, Robert Roe, whose experience and death is related in the Arminian Magazine; and two of his sisters, Mary and Frances. These are all now asleep in Jesus, and their happy spirits rejoicing before his throne; though, at the time of this dream, they were utterly unawakened.
left the body also, was waiting in dreadful expectation of being summoned to the bar of God: and we all believed our doom would be everlasting darkness! My sins all appeared as in array against me in the court of conscience, and my mouth was stopped; I had no plea whatsoever, no hope: for it seemed the justice of God must unavoidably sentence me to endless misery, which I felt to be my real desert; and was bewailing my own folly with bitter cries and lamentations. Their employ, I thought, was the same; each for ourselves, dreading the worm that dieth not, and the fire which never shall be quenched! When, suddenly there appeared a cloud of uncommon brightness, and soon after a glorious angel descended in the cloud, and flood before us, clothed in white, and displayed a majesty and beauty not to be described. We beheld his approach with trembling awe, and almost an agony of despair: believing he was sent to summon us to receive the deserved, but dreadful sentence, _Depart ye cursed!_ But, to our inconceivable surprise, he smiled on us with heavenly sweetness, and said, "The Lord Jesus Christ has forgiven all your sins, and washed you in his own blood, and I am come to bid you enter into the joy of your Lord, and to conduct you to his blissful presence!" Being now suddenly transported from depths of misery, into joy unspeakable, love beyond compare, and extreme delight; I thought I sprang up, and clapped my hands, and leaped for joy, and praised my God in extremities unknown before; so that it awoke me! Never did I feel any thing like what I felt in this dream, sleeping or waking, before or after, till the Lord did truly speak my sins forgiven. This made a deep impression on my mind for some time. For a month or two I was very serious and circumspect; and read all the religious books I could meet with. One of these, I remember, affected, that we are all to be judged according to our works. Therefore, if our good works are more than our evil ones, we are in a fair and sure way to heaven when we die: but if our evil works exceed our good, we may expect condemnation. I thought I would impartially examine myself by this rule, and see what hope I should have for my own soul in these terms. I therefore made a little day-book, in which I put down every good and bad action with great sincerity; at the same time, praying to God to show me if I was in the way to heaven or not. But then there were many things (as before observed) which I did not think sinful: and again, many things I accounted good actions, because, entirely ignorant that an impure motive, in the light of that
God who searcheth the heart, renders our actions, however splendid in the sight of men, abominable before him. Every act of obedience or my elders, or superiors, I accounted a good action; as also every prayer I offered, every ordinance I attended, every time I spoke the truth instead of denying a fault; and in order to swell the number of my good actions, I would sometimes refuse going to play, or to an entertainment, and read to my mother at home. Nay, with this view, I have fasted whole days from morning till evening: but, after all, I found my bad actions more than my good ones. Yet I went on resolving to be better; and still keeping the account, till being at a dance, I pulled out my day-book with my pocket-handkerchief, and it was found, and made the jest of the company. I was then so ashamed, that I resolved to follow this method no more.

I met with another book, which affirmed, it was impossible to conquer all sins at once; and if ever we could obtain victory, it must be by overcoming first one, and then another. Pride and anger I felt to be my most besetting sins, and therefore set myself against these in particular. But I was foiled in every attempt, and it seemed, as the poet says, “The more I strove against its power, I sinned and stumbled but the more.” So that this trial, only made a more clear discovery that pride was interwoven with my every thought, and word, and action. I was now quite discouraged, and thought it was all in vain to strive for a victory, so impossible again! I then looked round, and considered the conduct of others: and when I saw them more trilling, more wicked than myself, and some of them, who passed for amiable characters, guilty of things which my soul shuddered at; I began to conclude, I was very good, compared with these: and surely all these would not be doomed to hell and damnation! That God was merciful, Christ died for sinners, and therefore, if I lived a tolerable moral life, he would pardon the rest, and accept me through the merits of Christ in the hour of death, or at least I had as good a chance as others; and therefore would cast away fear, and live like the rest of my moral neighbours. I was some time, however, before I had so relished the convictions of the Spirit of God, as to remain at ease: he strove with me various ways, till I was a little more than fifteen. But I so repeatedly grieved and quenched the motions of that Holy Spirit, that I was then, in some measure, given up to my own foolish, rebellious heart. Drees, novels, plays, cards, assemblies, and balls, took up most of my time, so that my mother began to fear that
consequence of my living so much above my station in life. But I would not now listen to her admonitions. I loved pleasures, and after them I would go.

What encreated my vanity and pride was, that I was much beloved by my Godmother, a lady of very considerable fortune, and often spent most of the summer months at Adlington with her; where I was always treated as if she intended to bestow a handsome fortune on me. She introduced me into the company of those in high life, and enabled me, by large presents, to dress in a manner suitable to such company. O! how fatal, in general, are such prospects to a young mind! Yet, in all this, I still wished to preserve a religious appearance. I still frequented Church and Sacraments, still prayed night and morning; fasted some times, and especially in Lent; and because I did these things, esteemed myself a far better Christian than my neighbours. Yes, so blind was I, that I had a better opinion now of my own goodness than formerly, when I was far more earnest about salvation. What a proof that sin darkens the understanding!

In the summer of 1773, I was at Adlington with my Godmother abovementioned: when I heard various accounts of a Clergyman, whom my Uncle Roe had recommended to be Curate at Macclesfield, and who was said to be a Methodist. This conveyed to my mind an unpleasing idea of him, as if he had been a Romish Priest: being fully persuaded that to be a Methodist was to be all that is vile, under the mask of piety. These prejudices were owing to the false stories, which, from time to time, I heard repeated to my father, when about seven or eight years old; and also many more, which my mother heard after his death, and to the present time: so that I believed their teachers were the false prophets spoken of in Scripture; that they deceived the illiterate, and were little better than common pick-pockets; that they filled some of their hearers with presumption, and drove others to despair; that, with respect to their doctrines, they enforced chiefly, that whoever embraced their tenets, which they called faith, might live as they pleased, in all sin, and be sure of salvation; and that all the world besides must be damned without remedy. That they had dark meetings, and pretended to cast out devils, with many other things equally false and absurd; but all which I believed. I heard also, that this new Clergyman preached against all my favourite diversions, such as going to plays, reading novels, attending balls, assemblies, card-tables, &c. But I resolved
he should not make a convert of me; and that if I found him, on my return home, such as was represented, I would not go often to hear him.

When I came back to Macclesfield, the whole town was in an alarm. My Uncle Roe, and my cousins, seemed very fond of Mr. Simpson, and told me he was a most excellent man; but all the rest of my relations were exasperated against him. I asked, is it true he preaches against dancing? and said, I was resolved to take the first opportunity of conversing with him, being certain I could easily prove such amusements were not sinful. Being told what arguments he made use of, I revolted them in my mind; fully determined, if I found upon reflection, I could answer them, I would. I first considered if any Scripture example could be brought. I remembered to read of Miriam's dancing; but it was to express her pious joy to the Lord, and as an act of worship, accompanied by a hymn of praise. David danced also, but it was in like manner, and from like motives. Herod's daughter danced, but she was a heathen, and the cause of beheading a servant of God. Nothing, therefore, which I found in scripture, countenanced dancing in any measure. I then began to consider the objections urged against it. One of these was, That, as it tends to levity and trifling mirth; so it enervates the mind, dissipates the thoughts, weakens, if not stilles, serious and good impressions; and quite dissipates the mind for prayer. I asked my own heart, is not this a truth? confidence answered in the affirmative. Mr. Simpson pleads farther, What good is promoted hereby? I would gladly have had it to urge, it promotes health: but many instances of those who have lost health, and even life, within my own knowledge, through attending this very diversion, would not permit this. Among others, I had a recent proof in Miss H. who, by a violent cold and furor, got at an assembly, was thrown into a galloping consumption; and in a few months, fled to an awful eternity. Again, he pleads, are you made better Christians, better Husbands, better children hereby? Better Christians, I was conscious none could be, for having the mind dissipated, and unfitted for prayer. Some husbands I knew who were not made better, and some wives, who, to support extravagant darts on such occasions, had greatly injured their families. For my own part, I was conscious it had led me to darts, and to expenses, not suited to my present situation in life. These thoughts brought powerful convictions to my mind, notwithstanding my desire to resist them. I could not deny that
truth in particular: that those who habitually attend such pleasures, lose all relish for spiritual things: God is shut out of their thoughts and hearts, prayer, if they use any, is full of wanderings, or perhaps wholly neglected; and death put as far as possible out of sight, left the thought should spoil their pleasures. I was conscious, beyond a doubt, these were the fruits this delusive pleasure had wrought in my own soul: and comparing my present state of mind with what it was before I entered upon this diversion, so mistakenly called innocent, I found cause to be deeply ashamed. But then, it this be really true, (said I to myself) I ought not to follow this amusement any longer: and can I give it up? My vile heart replied, I cannot, I will not! The Spirit of God whispered: "Will you then indulge yourself in what you know to be sin? Would you wish to be struck dead in the ball-room?" My conflict was great; yet I was resolved to run all hazards rather than give up this pleasure. Therefore I stifled these convictions with all my might; and after this, ran more eagerly than ever, into all pleasurable follies. O! my patient, long-suffering God, tears of grateful love and praise overflow mine eyes, when I consider my deep rebellion, and thy sparing mercy!

About this time, I grew tired of novels, and took great delight in reading history. I went through several English and Roman histories, Rollins's Ancient History, Stackhouse's History of the Bible, intending to go through the Universal History also. And now I believed myself far wiser than any person of my age: upon the whole, I believe I was at this time on the pinnacle of destruction! and had a just and Holy God, then cut the brittle thread of life, I know I should have sunk into hell. But love had swifter wings than death, and mercy to my rescue flew!

In Oct. 1773, a neighbour of my mother's being very ill, and very poor, I went to visit her, and found her, to my great surprise, joyfully triumphing over death, yea, longing to be gone. This affected me much; for I felt I was in a quite different state; that if death should approach me, he would be a King of Terrors! And I had no hope of happiness beyond the grave. About this time, also, Mr. Simpson's sermons began to sink more deeply into my heart. So great was my obstinacy and folly, that I would come out of Church weeping, and with the next person I met, would ridicule the sermon that affected me; lest I should be thought, or called a Methodist! I began, however, in my serious moments, to resolve again, and again, I would break off my
fins by true repentance; and especially, that I would dance
no more. Yet, time after time, I was prevailed on by my
carnal friends, and broke the promise I had made to my God.

Jan. 1st, 1774, I was deeply wrought upon by a sermon
preached on, What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole
world, and lose his own soul? And soon after, under ano-
other, on the Epistle to the Church of Laodicea. Again,
while Mr. Simpson preached on the New Birth, from John
iii. 3. I saw, and felt, as I had never done before, that I
must experience that divine change, or perish.—But I had
still one great hindrance, which I have not yet mentioned,
namely, a young person, for whom I had a sincere affec-
tion: He, and two of his sisters, with whom also I had
formed a strict intimacy from the death of my father, were
my constant companions; and were more seriously dispo-
sed than any of the rest. However, I was sensible, if I re-
nounced my pleasures, and became what God; and my own
conscience now required, I must, in the first place, give
him up, and that fully; or he would be the means of draw-
ing me back: for he was yet unawakened, though outwardly
moral.

But I could not yet make this sacrifice. Therefore I con-
tinued to go to assemblies, though conscience bled; and
often in the midst of the dance, I felt as miserable as a crea-
ture could be, with a sense of guilt, and fears of death and
hell. Sometimes those words were applied, It is hard for
thee to kick against the pricks. And indeed so I felt it. Yet
I would not acknowledge my unhappiness to any, but car-
rried it off with the appearance of gaiety; and at the last
assembly I ever attended, never sat down the whole night;
but danced till four o’clock in the morning. Soon after this,
however, the Lord wrought a much deeper work upon my
soul.

In April, 1774, on the Sunday before Easter, Mr. Simp-
son preached from John vi. 44. No man can come unto me,
except the Father which hath sent me draw him. Explain-
ing the drawings of the Father, he related his own experience
under the name of Eusebius, brought up in all moral duties,
an attendant on Church and Sacrament, and one who said
many prayers. Yet, when twenty-two years old, was deeply
convinced he had never been a Christian: Could then say
feelingly, what he had often repeated in words only,
The remembrance of my sins is grievous unto me: the burden
of them is intolerable. (All this sunk into my very soul;
this was just my case.) He mourned, and wept, and prayed!
And one day as he was in prayer, and had such a view of his
past sinfulness, and present guilt and pollution, as almost
deprived him of all hope; the Lord suddenly removed his
burden, and spoke pardon and peace to his soul; so that he
felt his sins were all forgiven. Lord, said I, if this be truth,
(and I cannot disbelieve it) never let me rest till I obtain a
like blessing. He went on to observe the nature of this
change, and the objections made in our day to this doctrine
of the New Birth. One of these objections he dwelt upon,
viz. "We are born again when baptized;" but proved, if it
were even so, we must still repent anew, and be forgiven,
since all have broken the baptismal vow. Then he appealed
to each; "Have you renounced the devil and all his works,
the pomp and vanities of this wicked world, with every sin-
ful desire?" While I could only plead, guilty, guilty.
"Have you never taken the name of God in vain? never
profaned his Sabbaths? never set up idols in your heart? If
you have done these things, you have broken the first four
commandments of God." I pleaded guilty here also; for,
though with respect to the third, I could not accuse myself
of profanely swearing, or even naming my Maker in con-
versation as many do; yet, this prohibition also condemned
me in having taken the name of God in vain into my pollu-
ted lips in his house of worship; and appearing before men en-
gaged in devotion, while my heart was wandering to the ends
of the earth. As he passed through the rest of the command-
ments, I could still plead nothing but guilty. And when, in
the application of his sermon, he asked, "Now, what think
you of the state of your souls before God?" I felt myself,
indeed, a lost, perishing, undone sinner; a rebel against
repeated convictions and drawings; a rebel against light and
knowledge, a condemned criminal by the law of God, who
deserves to be sentenced to eternal pain! I felt I had broken
my baptismal vow; my confirmation vow; my sacramental
vows; and had no title to claim any mercy, any hope, any
plea! I wept aloud, so that all around me were amazed;
nor was I any longer ashamed to own the cause. I went
home, ran up stairs, and fell on my knees; and made a so-
lemn vow to renounce and forgo all my sinful pleasures,
and trifling companions.
I slept not that night; but arose early next morning, and
without telling my mother, took all my finery, high-dressed
caps, &c. and ripped them all up, so that I could wear them
no more. Then cut my hair short, that it might not be in
my own power to have it dressed; and in the most solemn manner, vowed never to dance again! I could do nothing now but bewail my own sinfulness, and cry for mercy. I could not eat, or sleep, or take any comfort. The curses throughout the whole Bible seemed pointed all at me; and I could not claim a single promise. I saw my whole life had been nothing but sin and rebellion against my Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; and I feared it was now too late to seek mercy.

Thus I continued till Good-Friday. My mother thought I was losing my senses, and all my friends endeavoured to comfort me in vain. After many conflicts and strong fears, I ventured however once more, to approach the Lord's table; encouraged by those words, *A broken and a contrite heart, O God thou wilt not despise.* As Mr. Simpson was reading that sentence in the communion service, *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins, a ray of divine light and comfort was darted on my soul, and I cried, Lord Jesus, let me feel thou art the propitiation for my sins. I was enabled to believe, there was mercy for me; and I, even I should be saved!* I felt love to God spring up in my heart, and in a measure, could rejoice in him, so that I would have given all the world to have died at that moment. But, alas, this was only for a short season! In the evening, one of my cousins calling on me, who had been a witness to my late distress, I told her of the comfort I had received; and added, I am now not afraid to die. She immediately exclaimed, it would be great presumption to say so, for even Mr. Simpson, whom she believed the best man on earth, said, he deferred to go to hell. My joy was damped immediately; and Satan telling me I had deceived myself, I gave up my confidence, lost my peace, and became again very unhappy.

It had been well for me, if I had then known the Methodists: but I had none to instruct me. Yet my distress was not the same as before. I had now a ray of hope in God, that he would make me a new creature by grace; and those horrible and flavius fears of hell, were removed. I felt my nature all depraved, and my soul full of wounds, and bruised by sin. Yea, and I abhorred myself, truly repenting before my God, and seeking him with my whole heart, in every mean of grace. I had never yet heard the Methodists; nor had I lost all my prejudices against them.
but a neighbour who had lately found peace with God, advised me strongly to go; and assured me they had been the means of great blessing to his soul. I would not promise, but resolved to go privately, so that the Preacher, nor any other person should know of it till afterwards. I soon after went at five o'clock one morning, and got into a private seat. Mr. Samuel Bardsley preached from, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. I thought every word was for me! He spoke to my heart, as if he had known all the secret workings there; and pointed all such sinners, as I felt myself to be, to Jesus Crucified. I was much comforted: my prejudices were now fully removed, and I received a full and clear conviction, These are the people of God, and these, in truth, the way of salvation.

But now I had new difficulties to encounter: I knew, if I persisted in hearing the Methodists, I must literally give up all. My mother had already threatened, if ever she knew me to hear them, she would disown me. Every friend and relation I had in the world, I had reason to believe, would do the same. I had no acquaintance then among the Methodists to take me in; nor knew any refuge to fly to but my God. I used much prayer, and entreated him to shew me his will; when those words were powerfully applied, Did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded? I answered, No Lord; and I will trust thee! But Satan suggested, “Thou hast no right to trust God; thou art not his child, but a sinner, a rebel!” I fell on my knees, and cried, Lord I am a repenting sinner, and thou knowest I have laid down my weapons of rebellion! If I perish, I will perish at thy feet! only shew me thy will, and here I am. It was then applied, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. I cried, Lord, I will forsake all and follow thee: I will joyfully bear thy cross; only give me thyself. From that time I resolved, I would at all hazards, attend the preaching. I did so at all opportunities, and it was a great comfort to me.

But when my mother heard of it, a flood-gate of persecution opened upon me! In this time of need, God raised me up a friend, in my Uncle Roe, which prevented my mother turning me out of doors. Yet, what I suffered, sometimes through her tears and entreaties, and at other times, her severity, is known only to God. But he strengthened a feeble worm, and enabled me to endure all with meekness, as seeing him who is invisible. For eight weeks, however, I was closely confined. My Godmother came
to talk with me; so did my mother's brother, and my father's sister; also a clergyman, and several others: but the Lord gave me a mouth and wisdom to plead my own case, with arguments from his word, so that they were in some measure all put to silence.

In August, my mother took me with her to Adlington, on our usual summer's visit; though now quite contrary to my inclination; for I found it a great grief to be separated from the means of grace, and from the dear people of God. Yet I dared not to refuse her all obedience, which I could render with a safe conscience. And though I believed she hoped to wean me from (what she called) my melancholy and enthusiasm hereby; yet the Lord kept me steadfast and immovable. The deep sense I had of my own weakness and inability to resist evil, or follow that which is good; and the great fears I had of ever again grieving the Holy Spirit, lest he should strive with me no more for ever; convinced me of the absolute need of using much and constant prayer. I therefore left all company many times in a day to retire in secret. I refused to conform in dress; or in any thing my conscience disapproved; and when called upon, gave reasons for my conduct as the Lord enabled me; but always with meekness, and often with tears of self-abasement. So that in a little time, finding all their efforts vain, they began to let me alone: Only I was made to understand, I had now nothing to expect from my God-mother, as to temporal things. This, however, weighed nothing with me, for all my language was,

"None but Christ to me be given,
None but Christ in earth or heaven."

In October we returned home; and I now reasoned with my mother, and entreated her not to confine me any more, telling her in humility, and yet plainness, I must seek salvation to my soul whatever be the consequence! and in order to obtain the end, I must use the means. I am therefore determined to leave you, and go to be a servant, rather than be kept from the Methodists. Yet, if you will consent to it, I should greatly prefer continuing in your house, though it should be as your servant: and I am willing to undertake all the work of the house, if you will only suffer me to attend preaching. She listened to my proposals; and, after consulting with her friends, consented to comply on this last condition: for she and they were agreed, that I, who had never been accustomed to hard labour, would soon be weary.
and give it up. But they knew not the power and goodness of that God, who strengthened me in all my tribulation.

Nov. 18. I entered upon my new employments joyfully, undertaking my every labour for his sake, who bled for me on Calvary! And began to feel, at times, much comfort, and reviving hopes, that my redemption drew near; and the happy hour, when I should praise a pardoning God. Mr. Wesley's Sermon on Justification, was a great encouragement to me, on those words; To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is imputed to him for righteousness. This sermon I read many times over with prayer, and could sometimes almost embrace the promises.

Monday 19. I had strong conflicts with Satan, who told me I had as good give up all, for I should never obtain a pardon! I had sinned beyond hope! I felt my heart very hard, and he suggested, "This is a proof God has given thee up to hardness and impenitence: Where is thy repentance, and tears, and brokenness of heart? If thou couldst repent, and weep, and mourn like others, there would be hope! But where is thy sorrow for sin? Thou canst not shed a tear." I was so burdened and distressed that day, that I could not go forward with my work, and my mother reproached me. But I besieged the throne of grace with strong crying and supplications to him that was able to save; and who well knew the Spirit's groanings in my heart.

My Cousin Charles Roe, then much devoted to God, put into my hands a little pamphlet, entitled, "The great Duty of believing on the Son of God." Jesus was here set forth in all his loveliness of free grace, towards a poor returning prodigal, as every way suited to the sinner's wants, and all-sufficient to save the vilest of the vile! As willing now; even as willing as when he hung on Calvary, bleeding and dying to save sinners; yea, his very murderers! I was much encouraged in reading this, and would gladly have spent the night in prayer. But my mother (with whom I slept) would not suffer it. I therefore went to bed, but could not sleep; and at four in the morning, rose again, that I might wrestle with the Lord. I prayed; but it seemed in vain! I walked to and fro, groaning for mercy, then fell on my knees; but the heavens appeared as brists; and hope seemed almost sunk into despair! When suddenly, the Lord spake that promise to my heart, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. I reviv'd, and cried, Lord, I know this is thy word, and I cou
depend on it. But what is faith? O shew me how to believe; shew me what is the Gospel faith, or I am yet undone! I desire not deliverance, except in thy own way: I desire no happenings, but thy favour. What shall I do? O teach me, O help me, or I am lost! That word came with divine evidence and sweetnees to my heart, Cast all thy care upon him, for he careth for thee. I said, Lord, dost thou care for me! and is this faith, to cast all my care, even all my sins (for I have no other care) upon thee? May I? Doft thou bid me? a poor hell-defering sinner; a sinner against light, and conviction, and repeated vows; can such love dwell in thee? Is it not too early a way? May I, even I be saved, if I only cast my soul on Jesus: my burden of sin, my load of guilt; my every crime? What! saved from all this guilt; saved into the favour of God! the Holy God! and become his child; and that now—this moment!—O it is too great;—it cannot, surely it cannot be! (O what a struggle had Satan and unbelief with my helpless, sinful soul!) But the Lord applied, Fear not, only believe. Satan suggested, take care! suppose Jesus Christ should fail thee; suppose he be not God! What if he were an imposter, as the Jews believe? O the agony my soul felt at that moment! But I cried, If this be so, I am undone without remedy! None but such a Saviour as Jesus declares himself to be, (God as well as man) can save my guilty, polluted soul! The blood of God Man alone, can atone for me! His power alone can change my rebel heart; my diseased is too deep for any other. I can only perish, nothing can be worse, so there is no hazard. If he be God, he is able; and he will save me according to his promise; Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. If he be God, he must be truth, and cannot deceive me. And if not, a Holy God will be a consuming fire to the sinner! and there is no Saviour, no way of salvation:—I must endure the desert of my sins—I must endure everlasting burnings; and therefore, here I will lie and perish at his feet! Again it came, Only believe. Lord Jesus, said I, I will, I do believe: I now venture my whole salvation upon thee as God! I put my guilty soul into thy hands, thy blood is sufficient! I cast my soul upon thee, for time and eternity. Then did he appear to my salvation. In that moment my fetters were broken, my bands were loosed, and my soul set at liberty. The love of God was shed abroad in my heart, and I rejoiced with joy unspeakable. Now, if I had possessed ten thousand souls, I could have ventured them
all with my Jesus—I would given have them all to him! I felt a thousand promises all my own; more than a thousand scriptures to confirm my evidence; such as, He that believeth shall be saved—shall not perish—is not condemned—hath everlasting life—is passed from death unto life—shall never die:—There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, &c. I could now call Jesus Lord by the Holy Ghost; and the Father, my Father. My sins were gone, my soul was happy, and I longed to depart and be with Jesus. I was truly a new creature, and seemed to be in a new world! I could do nothing but love and praise my God; and could not refrain continually repeating, Thou art my Father! O God, Thou art my God! while tears of joy ran down my cheeks.

My mother was astonished at the change which appeared in my countenance and whole deportment; and I soon told her the happy cause—that I, a poor sinner, had received forgiveness, and could call God my Father and my Friend. Now, said I, I am repaid a thousand times for all I have suffered. One hour’s experience of what I now feel is, in itself, rich amends for all! But I see an eternity of bliss before! and added, O that you knew what I feel! My words and flowing tears made her weep; but she said little, being all wonder. With what joy and gratitude did I now undergo the most servile of all my employments; yea, and it seemed with double strength of body; though I could neither eat or sleep much for many days and nights. The love of God shed abroad in my heart was now my meat and drink; and the thoughts of the amazing depths of grace, which had plucked me as a brand from the burning, quite overcame me!—Me, the most obstinate offender, who had to long, and so repeatedly resisted and grieved his Holy Spirit! This love of my God and Saviour, so unmerited and free, overflowed my soul; nor had I for eight months, any interruption to my bliss.

"Not a cloud did arise to darken the skies,
Or hide for a moment, my Lord from my eyes."

Yet I had daily crosses to take up and endure: but I rejoiced in being accounted worthy to bear a cross for him, who died to purchase my peace. The word of God was sweeter than honey, or the honey-comb. I generally read it on my knees; ever receiving light, strength, and comfort to my hungry soul hereby.

About six months after this, my Cousin Robert Roe came from Manchester, to go to the college in Oxford; being
intended for a Clergyman. The great change in me, was matter of much grief to him. But what most astonished him, was to find me, instead of being melancholy and morbid, always happy and rejoicing in God: resigned to sufferings and labours, which he well knew, I could not once have submitted to. He saw my pride laid in the dust; and my soul sunk into humility. In short, he saw me the reverie of all I had been before; and comparing my present conduct with the scriptures, he was constrained to own the power of changing grace; was convinced by the Spirit of God that I was right, and of consequence, that he was not what he ought to be, and what he must be, if ever he were saved. He soon became so unhappy, that he had no rest; and at last wrote to me, entreati ng, for his soul’s sake, I would answer him the following questions: “How did you obtain the happiness you speak of?—Are you certain it is real and from God; and not a delusion, or imagination only?—Does it arise from an express declaration from God; or a conscientious of having performed your duty?—Is it some visible manifestation you enjoy; or some hoped happiness?—I know I am a great sinner! I am miserable beyond expression: and can hardly hope for anything but misery in time, or in eternity! I would give up all the world to obtain the favour of God you speak of; but I know not which way to attain it. If you can lead me in the heavenly path, you will render me happy indeed. O! pray for your unhappy friend, &c. R. R.”

These lines appearing the genuine language of sincerity, I wrote immediately in answer, a brief relation of all the Lord’s dealings with my soul; inviting him to the same loving and all-sufficient Saviour. I advised him to hear the Methodists, and go to class-meeting; in which he found much comfort, and advanced in grace daily; desiring and seeking nothing, but Jesus crucified: And, on October the 17th, 1775: a few weeks only before he went to Oxford, the Lord let his soul at liberty; and he rejoiced in a clear sense of his pardoning love. (The reader may find a more particular account of the life, trials, experience, and triumphant death of this Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile, in the Arminian Magazines for the years 1783 and 1784, Vol. 6. and 7.) But to return:

About seven months after I undertook to be servant to my mother, she was seized with a fever; and, when just recovering, had a relapse which threatened to be fatal; so that for near six weeks, I had to fat up with her every other night; till at last my body began to fail. Indeed it was no wonder;
for besides all my labour and fatigue, I used rigorous fasting. The doctor who attended my mother was moved with compassion, and insisted I should no longer go on with, what he called, sacrificing my life. He spoke to Mrs. Legh, my God-mother, who came next day in her chariot to see my mother; and to see that a proper servant, and all needful attendants should be got immediately. I was now freed from my happy toil, about eight months after I undertook it; namely, in August, 1775. But it was then nearly too late: my health had received such a wound, as it did not recover of many years.

My outward oppositions now began to abate; and many of my enemies were at peace with me. And now, also, the Lord began to reveal in my heart, that sin was not all destroyed; for, though I had constant victory over it, yet I felt the remains of anger, pride, self-will, and unbelief often rising, which occasioned a degree of heaviness and sorrow. At first, I was much amazed to feel such things, and often tempted to think, I had lost a measure of grace: yet, when I looked to my Lord, or whenever I approached him in secret, he shed his precious love abroad; and bare witness also with my spirit, that I was still his child. Yea, and at this time I received many remarkable answers to prayer; many proofs of his undoubted love and goodness to my soul; and I ever felt, I would rather die than offend him; so that I was a mystery to myself! I resolved, however, to use more self-denial of all kinds; and (whatever it cost me with respect to health or life) more fasting and prayer; for I hoped by these means, to mortify and starve the evil tempers and propensities of my nature, till they should exist no more; and if my body expired in the combat, I thought I was certain of endless life. I met with some also who told me, nothing but death would end this strife! That this is the Christian's warfare, which cannot end but with the life of the body. After some time, I began to believe these miserable comforters, and of consequence, longed for nothing so much as to die: yea, I was impatient to be gone, that I might be freed from sin; for I truly felt, and more so every day, "'Twas worse than death my God to love, and not my God alone." My body was reduced now to a very weak state; and I was pronounced far gone in a consumption, which I esteemed blessed tidings. I looked on myself as one that had done with earth, and cried, O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest. Yea, so desirous was I to quit the vale of sin (as I called it) here below, that I could not be prevailed
on to take any thing which I believed would tend to restore my health, and therefore, continued to decline very swiftly. In the latter end of December, I was brought so weak, that I could not walk about the room without help, and soon after took my bed, seeming apparently on the verge of eternity. One day, after sitting up a little, I felt myself so weak, that I believed I should rise no more, till my soul took its flight to the bosom of Jesus. My joy on this occasion was inexpressible! I begged of the Lord strength to go on my knees once more; and in holy triumph committed body and soul to him for eternity. I believed my work on earth quite finished; and was filled with assurance that the moment of death, would be to me the beginning of endless glory. A taste of which I then felt; a drop out of the ocean; a beam darted from the unclouded sun of righteousness, which quite penetrated and overwhelmed my soul, and left me in speechless rapture at his feet! Yes, I have ever believed, that what I then felt, was what those feel and experience on leaving the body, who are really dying in the Lord! But infinite wisdom law good to lengthen out the thread of life; and I have often believed, it was in answer to the prayers of his dear children.

A few weeks after this, I felt a degree of disappointment and sorrow, on finding a measure of returning strength; just like a mariner, who got within sight of a desired port, is beat back again into a tempestuous ocean. One of my cousins coming to see me, recommended a strengthening medicine, which I was unwilling to use; and told him, I would rather die than live. He sharply rebuked me for this, saying, "You set up your own will, while you pretend to submit to the will of God; and, by not taking proper medicines, you are a murderer!" I wept, and said, I think I am resigned. He asked, "Are you willing to live forty years, if the Lord please?" I found a shrinking at the thought, and felt I could not at the moment say, I was willing. He left me, but his words made a deep impression. I fell on my knees, as soon as left alone, and cried, Lord, perfectly subdue my will. That promise was applied with much sweetness, Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto thee. I felt assuredly, my Lord permitted me to ask, life or death, and was brought to a stand. I felt a thousand fears suggested, that if I lived, I might lose what I now enjoyed of the love of God; and, perhaps, be one day a dishonour to his cause. But I said, Lord, thy grace is ever sufficient; thou art as able to keep me a thousand years, as one day! Again, it was
suggested, if thou livest, it will be to suffer. I cried, Lord thou canst give me suffering grace; and if, by suffering, I can in any wise glorify thee, Not as I will, but as thou wilt. I know to die now would be instant glory! But here I am, do with me whatever thou wilt! Thou knowest all things, and seest at one glance, past, present, and future. One request only, therefore, will I make: If thou knowest my life would glorify thee, I submit to thy will; willing to suffer, or to do! But, if thou foreseest I should, in living, lose any measure of what thou hast bestowed; Lord, suffer me not to live any longer: or, if hereafter, at any time, thou seest a danger of my heart departing from thee, O snatch me away to thy bosom; and let me not live a moment longer than I live wholly for thee!—And now, O Lord my God, I vow and promise unto thee, I will henceforth entirely renounce my own will, respecting life or death! I leave it fully in thy hands, and to thy pleasure, to take me now, or to spare me twenty, thirty, yea forty years; or, as long as thou seest my life will bring glory to thee, and profit to immortal souls; relying on thy faithful promise, given me this day, that what I ask shall be done: and accounting it a solemn covenant betwixt me and thee! that whensoever thou seest me about to be overcome by trials, by temptations, or snares; so that I shall in heart, or life, depart from thee, or wound thy cause! that then thou wilt put in thy sickle and gather me home: yea, if even at that time, I should be so foolish as to desire life! Amen and Amen. What I felt of heaven, of God, of love, at that season, cannot be expressed. I had communion with my Lord, as if face to face; and could henceforth choose nothing but his will.

From this day forth, I speedily recovered strength; and in a few weeks, was enabled to attend some of the means of grace. The Lord was pleased to make the preaching of Mr. D. Wright, a great blessing to me. He clearly explained the nature of salvation from inbred sin; shewed it to be as freely promised in scripture, and as fully purchased by the blood of Jesus, as pardon. Also, that, though sanctification in believers be a gradual work, yet, the death of sin, is instantaneous, and to be obtained by faith alone; just in like manner as justification. He recommended Mr. Wesley's Plain Account, and Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection; and Mr. Fletcher's Polemical Essay, especially his Address in the end of it, to imperfect believers. These yet farther opened my eyes respecting that great salvation; and for reading them, I shall praise God to all eternity. I now
was powerfully convinced, that whenever sin is totally destroyed, it is done in a moment. From hence I could not rest, but cried to the Lord night and day, to cast out the strong man, and all his armour of unbelief and sin: assured that the power of the living God, and not death, must be the executioner! The blood of Jesus, the procuring cause; and faith the only instrument. I had a deeper tenie of my impurity than ever; and though by grace I was restrained from giving way outwardly, yet I felt such inward impatience, pride, fretfulness, and in short, every evil temper, that at times, I could truly say, I was weary and heavy laden.

I here transcribe a brief extract from my journal, kept at that time, as it will most clearly describe the language of my heart.

Thursday, Jan. 18, 1776, I was much comforted by a manifest answer to prayer. Afterwards, reading three of Mr. Fletcher's Letters to his Parishioners, was a great blessing. Yet, in the evening, I found many wanderings, and much deadness: I felt unsatisfied with myself, and all around me, and knew not why. It might, in some measure, be owing to the indisposition of my body, but I fear it is more owing to the evil of my corrupt heart. O when shall I be holy!

Friday 19. I have been greatly tried inwardly and outwardly, though I have had some refreshing visits of love; but I feel many evil tempers, much self-will that would not be contradicted; (though none saw it but the Lord) pettiness, pride, and unbelief greatly disturbed me. My cry was this evening. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. And in private prayer, I was blessed in a wonderful manner. I lay at the feet of my Lord, as clay in the hands of the potter; only beseeching him to stamp me with his lovely image.

Thursday 25. The Lord shews me more than ever, I must be made holy before death; and this day I can say, As the hart panteth after the water-brook, so thirsteth my soul for the perfect love of God. O may I never rest till I have received this blessing! Lord, I have in this respect been a tripler; I have been too easy, too lukewarm, while thy enemies have had a lurking place in my heart! O forgive me, and help me to be more in earnest. Those words were applied, while engaged in wrestling prayer, All I have is thine! And is not this salvation from sin his gift? It is, and shall be mine. C