

CHAPTER IV.

GIVING SOME ACCOUNT OF MR. WESLEY, FROM FEBRUARY, 1738, TILL APRIL, 1739, WHEN HE BECAME AN ITINERANT AND FIELD-PREACHER.

ON his arrival in England, he made some reflections on his own state of mind, and on the effects of his visit to America. "It is now," says he, "two years and almost four months, since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians, the nature of Christianity: but what have I learned myself in the mean time? Why, what I the least of all suspected, that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God. *I am not mad*, though I thus speak; but I speak the words of truth and soberness; if haply some of those who still *dream*, may *awake* and see, that as I am, so are they, &c."—He observes however, "Many reasons I have to bless God—for my having been carried into that strange land, contrary to all my preceding resolutions. Hereby I trust he hath in some measure *humbled me and proved me, and shown me what was in my heart*. Hereby I have been taught to *beware of men*.—Hereby God has given me to know many of his servants, particularly those of the church of Hernhuth. Hereby my passage is open to the writings of holy men, in the German, Spanish, and Italian tongues. All in Georgia have heard the word of God: some have believed and began to run well. A few steps have been taken towards publishing the glad-tidings both to the African and American heathens. Many children have learned *how they ought to serve God*, and to be useful to their neighbor. And those whom it most concerns, have an opportunity of knowing the state of their infant colony, and laying a firmer foundation of peace and happiness to many generations."

Mr. Wesley here supposes, that he was not converted to God, because he had not that faith which delivered him from the fear of death, and gave him victory over all sin, inward or outward. He does not seem to have any immediate reference to that notion of faith which he afterwards espoused and taught; for as yet he did not understand it. When the first Journal, in which this is said, was printed in his Works, in 1774, he doubted whether the severe sentence he here pronounced upon himself, was just. This ought not to be charged on Mr. Wesley, as a contradiction, but as a change in his opinion. This is certainly commendable, when an increase of knowledge gives a man sufficient reason for so doing. In 1774, he believed, that when he went to America, he had the faith of a servant, though not of a son.* Though he was far from being singular in making this distinction, yet the propriety of it has been doubted, or rather denied. It is of some importance in christian experience that the subject should be understood, and therefore it deserves to be examined.

The distinction is founded on what the Apostle has said, Rom. viii. 15, and further illustrated and confirmed, Gal. iv. 1—7. Mr. Wesley observes in a note on Rom. viii. 15, that, “*The Spirit of bondage*, here seems directly to mean, those operations of the Holy Spirit, by which the soul on its first conviction, feels itself in bondage to sin, to the world, to satan, and obnoxious to the wrath of God.” He has printed a sermon on the same text, in which he explains it in the same way. He was not singular in this interpretation, as might easily be shown from respectable authority. But, though it be most true, that a person under conviction for sin, is in a state of bondage and fear, it does not follow that this is the *direct* meaning of the Apostle, or that the distinction between a servant and a son of God, ought to be immediately fixed on this foundation. Many among the most learned and pious persons in the christian church, have understood the spirit of bondage to fear, as referring to that servile spirit, or spirit of servitude, which the whole Mosaic economy tended to produce.† And this seems most agreeable to the tenor of the Apostle’s discourse, and most conformable to his grand design of establishing and illustrating the truth and excellency of the gospel, as a more perfect dispensation of mercy and favor from God.

We must not however suppose, that, because the faithful under the Old Testament, had a spirit of bondage to fear, they were not therefore children of God; or that they had not the spirit of God. In every age of the world, since the first promise of a Redeemer, those who have placed their confidence in the mercy of God, manifested through a promised Saviour, have become children of God, heirs of the heavenly inheritance, and experienced some degree of divine grace. But under the Mosaic dispensation, the faithful themselves, were

* See the Errata to the 26th volume of his Works.

† See Doddridge; and Pole’s Synopsis.

children held in a state of servitude, which produced fear, rather than filial confidence, or the spirit of adoption, crying Abba, Father. The reason of this was, the nature of that economy under which they lived, which was wonderfully adapted to the state of the Israelites in that age of the world, and only preparatory to the introduction of a more perfect dispensation of the Divine favor.

The Mosaic economy, taking it in a loose and general sense, may be considered in three points of view, corresponding to the ends it was intended to answer. The first view of it, regards those laws it contained, which related *only* to external things, and were merely literal or carnal, as the Apostle calls them.* The intention of these was, to separate the whole body of the people from idolatry, and all mixture with other nations: to preserve the worship of the true God in the world: to make the Israelites the depositaries of the promises, prophecies, and the whole word of God: and to keep their own tribes and families distinct: that as the Messiah was to descend, according to the flesh, from the seed of Abraham, the tribe of Judah, and the family of David, his introduction into the world might be more strongly marked, the prophecies concerning him be distinctly fulfilled, and his character be clearly ascertained. These laws required no more than a mere external obedience, the reward of which was, the land of Canaan, with protection, prosperity, and long life.

The second view of it, is typical. The promise made to Abraham, being continued through this economy, the laws and institutions established for the purposes above mentioned, were so ordered as to become typical representations of Christ and the benefits of his kingdom. They gave a new modification to the promulgation of the promise of a Redeemer, the object of faith and hope in true believers, by which they obtained a foretaste of the grace and blessings of the gospel. All these laws and institutions were peculiar to Moses, purely external and temporary; being preparatory to the coming of Christ, when they were to be abolished.

The third view of this economy, regards those moral precepts introduced into it, to regulate the moral principles, as well as conduct of the people towards each other, for the well-being of the state: and also such other commands as tended to give them a higher and more spiritual notion of their duty to God, and of the nature of sin, than the Mosaic code suggested. These were intended to raise the minds of the people to something higher than the mere external economy of Moses: to awaken in them a sense of their depravity; to show them the spiritual nature of sin; its power, dominion, and guilt; that conscious of their wants, they might more ardently desire their great Deliverer, and be better prepared to receive him. These precepts and commands, being of a general and permanent nature, were not pecu-

* Heb. vii. 16; ix. 10.

liar to Moses, nor to be done away with his institution; but additions to his economy, that were highly necessary and useful.

That the promise before made, was continued through this dispensation, is manifest. For as circumcision was not of Moses, but of the fathers, so the promise of grace and life by Christ, was not given by him, but found by him already existing. It is not said, That the promise was added to the law; but, That the law was added to the promise.* The law of Moses, therefore, did not disannul, or do away the promise of salvation by a Redeemer, or any way alter the method of a sinner's justification before God, and acceptance to eternal life, as exemplified in the case of Abraham: nor yet change, or lessen the obligation to those duties men owe to God, and to one another, founded on the permanent relations of things. It follows, that these, and the law of Moses, though different in their nature, and designed for very different purposes, were associated together in this economy, until, "In the fulness of time," God should send forth his Son.

But though the promise still existed under the law, which was intended to bring men ultimately to Christ; yet the Mosaic economy exhibited the Messiah, and the nature and benefits of his kingdom, through a kind of veil. These appeared in it, like objects placed in the back-ground of a picture, distant, obscure, and diminished from their natural size. This representation best suited that age of the world, the state and circumstances of the Israelites, and the future designs of Providence. The prophets, indeed, as the fulness of time when Christ should appear, drew nearer and nearer, often brought forward these important objects into a stronger light, and gave them a more bold and full appearance, directing the minds of the people to look through their external and temporary economy, to blessings more general, permanent, and satisfactory.

Under this economy, God assumed the character, and had the title of King of Israel, jealous of his prerogatives and glory. The people were prone to idolatry, which was rebellion against their King; and all the laws tended to produce a "spirit of bondage to fear," for their subjugation, that the external purposes of this dispensation might be obtained. So terrible was the appearance of the Divine majesty at the giving of the law, that the people said, "Let not God speak to us, lest we die."† And Moses himself said, "I exceedingly fear and quake."‡ The punishments under this government were exceedingly severe; so that an error through inadvertency was sometimes punished with immediate death, which made the most pious among them afraid.§ The body of the ceremonial law, was minute, expensive, and laborious, and required the most *servile* obedience. Peter calls it a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers could bear: || and

* Gal. iii. 19.

§ 2 Sam. vi. 7, 9.

† Exod. xx. 19.

|| Acts xv. 10.

‡ Heb. xii. 21.

Paul, a yoke of bondage.* The yearly sacrifices brought their sins to their remembrance, the repetition showing they were not expiated. † The people were kept at a distance from God in their worship; even from the symbol of his presence in the holiest of all, to which the high priest alone was admitted, and that but once a year. ‡ And even at the burning of incense morning and evening, the people stood praying without. § In their approaches to God in prayer, they addressed him as a Sovereign, under the title of God, or Lord; Jesus Christ being the first who taught us to say, “Our Father who art in heaven;” himself procuring for us this *παύρησία*, or *freedom* and *openness* of access to the presence of God. It was given in charge to Moses, that he should not let the priests, and the people, *βιάζεσθωσαν*, || *break through* the described limits in their approaches to God, nor invade a place deemed too holy for them to enter. This was never allowed under the *ceremonial* law. How different is our liberty! “From the days of John the Baptist,” says our Lord, ¶ “the kingdom of heaven, *βιάζεται*, suffereth violence,” or rather, is invaded by violence; that is, in *violation* of the commands and prohibitions of the *ceremonial* law: and the fences being broken down, which had shut out the Gentiles from it; and the formalities done away, which kept the Jews at a certain distance in bondage and fear, the *βιάσαι*, *invaders*, regardless of the solemnities and restrictions prescribed by the law, *ἀρπαξουσιν αὐτήν*, seize upon it with eagerness and confidence, having boldness to enter into the holiest by a new and living way.*—The very word which the Seventy had used with a negative particle expressing prohibition, our Lord uses in the affirmative, thereby showing the prohibition was taken off.—Indeed, the whole of the old economy was full of prohibitions, severities, and hardships; to which the most faithful and pious were subject, as well as the most wicked and profligate. It tended to produce bondage and fear, particularly the fear of death, to which the Jews were then, and are even now, remarkably subject. The apostle compares those under it, to persons shut up in a strong place of custody, †† like criminals who had not obtained the full privileges of a free pardon. Afterwards, comparing the condition of the faithful under the law of Moses, with the privileges of believers under the gospel, he finely illustrates what is said, Rom. viii. 15, and fully establishes the distinction between a servant and a son—“Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father: even so, when we were children”—that is, under the Mosaic economy—“we were in bondage under the elements of the world”—to which the ceremonial law may fitly be

* Gal. v. 1.

§ Luke i. 10.

** Heb. x. 19, 20.

† Heb. x. 3, 18.

|| The Septuagint, Exod. xix. 24.

†† Gal. iii. 23.

‡ Levit. xvi. 2. Heb. ix. 7.

¶ Matt. xi. 12.

compared.—“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son—to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son.”*—It appears then from what has been said, that the distinction Mr. Wesley made, is scriptural and just, so far as it relates to the different state of believers under the Old and New Testament. It must be observed however, that there is a low degree of christian experience, in which a person is in a state similar to the condition of believers under the Mosaic dispensation, subject to bondage and fear, particularly the fear of death; and in the latter part of life, he judged this to have been his own state when he went to America, and returned from it. The very learned Buddeus, has observed, that most professing Christians seem content to live in this state, without ever rising into the enjoyment of that full liberty wherewith Christ has made them free.†

After Mr. Wesley arrived in London, he waited on the trustees for Georgia, at several different times, and gave them an account of the colony; but his account was so different from what others had flattered them with, that he supposes they did not soon forgive him. Time however convinced them of Mr. Wesley’s fidelity, when complaints pouring in upon them from all sides, they thought it best to resign their charter into the hands of the king.

February 7, “A day much to be remembered,” says Mr. Wesley, he met Peter Bohler, and two other persons, teachers in the Moravian church. Hitherto he had reduced his religious principles to practice, in the most scrupulous and rigorous manner, and yet had not attained that victory over the evils of his own heart, and that peace and happiness which he saw the gospel promised. It seems as if he had always supposed, that bodily austerities, and a religious regard to the duties he owed to God and man, would produce in him the christian faith, and the true christian temper. After about ten years of painful labor, his experience convinced him, that his notions were not evangelical, that he had considered as causes, things that were only placed as the fruits of faith in the gospel economy; and therefore, that he neither possessed saving faith, nor had a right notion of it. Having observed, both at sea, and in America, that the Mora-

* Gal. iv. 1—7.

† In the above quotation from the Seventy, we may observe, that they translate the Hebrew word שָׁרַף by the Greek word $\text{\beta\rho\upsilon\lambda\omega}$, Exod. xix. 24. The Hebrew verb occurs, in one form or other, about thirty-two times in the Old Testament. It generally signifies to break, throw down, or destroy; and often in opposition to building up: but no where exactly in the connexion it is here used, in reference to the *limits prescribed to the people in their approaches to God*; and it is remarkable that the Seventy have no where rendered it by the Greek verb $\text{\beta\rho\upsilon\lambda\omega}$, but in this one place. Our Lord, by using the very same word without the negative particle, seems to intimate that a freedom of access to God, not allowed under the law, is allowed under the gospel, the prohibition being taken off. Walchius, has hinted at this interpretation of our Lord’s words, Matt. xi. 12. See Miscel. Sacra, p. 768.

vian brethren enjoyed a state of peace and comfort in their minds, to which he was almost wholly a stranger, he was well prepared to hear what these messengers of God had to say of faith as the means of obtaining it. He was determined that his conviction should be the result of knowledge; and therefore made continual objections to what Bohler said on the subject. This occasioned Bohler to say more than once, '*Mi frater, Mi frater, excoquenda est ista tua philosophia:*' My brother, my brother, that philosophy of yours must be purged away. We may observe however, that objections in such cases, are seldom the result of just reasoning, but the mere effects of prejudice, which a previous system had produced in his mind.

Feb. 27. He took coach for Salisbury, to see his mother; intending also to visit his brother Samuel, at Tiverton. But March 2, he received a message that his brother Charles was dying at Oxford, and immediately set out for that place. He now renewed and set down his former resolutions respecting his own behavior. 1. To use absolute openness and unreserve, with all he should converse with. 2. To labor after continual seriousness, not willingly indulging himself in any the least levity of behavior, or in laughter, no, not for a moment. 3. To speak no word which did not tend to the glory of God; in particular, not to talk of worldly things. "Others may, nay must," said he; "but what is that to me." 4. To take no pleasure which did not tend to the glory of God, thanking God every moment for what he did take, and therefore rejecting every sort and degree of it, which he felt he could not so thank him in and for it.

At Oxford, Mr. Wesley again met with Peter Bohler; "by whom," says he, "in the hand of the great God, I was on Sunday the 5th, clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved,"—he afterwards added—"with the full christian salvation." He was now fully convinced, that his faith had hitherto been faith in God, too much separated from an evangelical view of the promises of a free justification, or pardon of sin, through the atonement and mediation of Christ alone; which was the reason why he had been held in continual bondage and fear. It immediately occurred to his mind, "Leave off preaching; how can you preach to others, who have not faith yourself?" He consulted his friend Bohler, who said, "By no means. Preach faith *till* you have it, and then *because* you have it, you *will* preach faith."

On the 15th of this month he set out for Manchester, accompanied by Mr. Kinchin of Corpus-Christi College, and a Mr. Fox. In this journey, they lost few opportunities of speaking on matters of religion to those they met with, either on the road, or at the inns. The practice was new, and the success various; some staring with silent astonishment, and others appeared thankful and ready to receive instruction. On the 22d they returned to Oxford, and next day Mr. Wesley observes, "I met Peter Bohler again, who now amazed me

more and more, by the account he gave of the fruits of living faith, the holiness and happiness which he affirmed to attend it. The next morning I began the Greek Testament again, resolving to abide by *the law and the testimony*, being confident, that God would hereby show me whether *this doctrine* was of God."

About this time he began to pray extempore. March 27, Mr. Kinchin went with him to the castle, where, after reading prayers, and preaching on, "It is appointed for men once to die," "We prayed," says he, "with the condemned man, first in several forms of prayer, and then in such words as were given us in that hour. He kneeled down in much heaviness and confusion, having 'no rest in his bones by reason of his sins.' After a space he rose up, and eagerly said, 'I am now ready to die. I know Christ has taken away my sins, and there is no more condemnation for me.' The same composed cheerfulness he showed when he was carried to execution; and in his last moments was the same, enjoying a perfect peace in confidence that he was accepted in the beloved." Mr. Wesley again observes, "that on Saturday, April 1, being at Mr. Foxe's society, he found his heart so full, that he could not confine himself to the forms of prayer they were accustomed to use there. Neither," says he, "do I propose to be confined to them any more; but to pray indifferently, with a form or without, as I may find suitable to particular occasions."

A few observations have already been made on the propriety and usefulness of extemporary prayer; * and here I shall transcribe the words Dr. Watts† has quoted from the Marquis of Halifax, who being a courtier in the reigns of the two brothers, king Charles and James II. cannot be supposed to have any partiality for deviation from the forms of the established church. This noble writer, it seems, in a little book under a borrowed character, has expressed his own sentiments on this subject. "He tells us," says Dr. Watts, "he is far from relishing the impertinent wanderings of those who pour out long prayers upon the congregation, and all from their own stock, too often a barren soil, which produces weeds instead of flowers, and by this means they expose religion itself rather than promote men's devotion: on the other side, there may be too great a restraint put upon men whom God and nature have distinguished from their fellow laborers, by blessing them with a happier talent, and by giving them not only good sense, but a powerful utterance too; this has enabled them to gush out upon the attentive auditory with a mighty stream of devout and unaffected eloquence. When a man so qualified, endued with learning too, and above all adorned with a good life, breaks out into a warm and well delivered prayer before his sermon, it has the appearance of a divine rapture: he raises and leads the hearts of the assembly in another manner than the most composed or best studied

* Vol. I. page 108.

† See his *Humble Attempt toward the Revival of Practical Religion*, p. 161.

form of set words can ever do; and the *Pray we's*, who serve up all their sermons with the same garnishing, would look like so many statues, or men of straw in the pulpit, compared with those who speak with such a powerful zeal, that men are tempted at the moment to believe that heaven itself has dictated their words to them."—We may observe that no man will pray with the energy and force here described, unless his own heart be animated and powerfully quickened, with the most lively sentiments of true devotion: and if this be the case, a man will attain to it by constant habits of prayer and reading the Scriptures, although he have but little learning, and his understanding not improved above mediocrity.

April 21. He met Peter Bohler, once more. "I had now," says he, "no objection to what he said of the nature of faith; that it is, to use the words of our church, a sure trust and confidence which a man has in God, that through the merit of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favor of God. Neither could I deny, either the happiness or holiness which he described as fruits of this living faith. 'The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and he that believeth hath the witness in himself,' fully convinced me of the former: as, 'whatsoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; and whosoever believeth is born of God,' did of the latter. But I could not comprehend what he spoke of an *instantaneous work*. I could not understand how this faith should be given in a moment; how a man could *at once*, be thus turned from darkness to light; from sin and misery to righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost. I searched the Scriptures again touching this very thing, particularly the Acts of the Apostles. But to my utter astonishment, found scarce any instances there, of other than *instantaneous* conversions; scarce any so slow as that of St. Paul. I had but one retreat left, viz. Thus, I grant, God wrought in the *first* ages of Christianity: but the times are changed. What reason have I to believe, he works in the same manner now? But on Sunday 22, I was beat out of this retreat too, by the concurring evidence of several living witnesses; who testified God had so wrought in themselves; giving them in a moment, such a faith in the blood of his Son, as translated them out of darkness into light, and of sin and fear into holiness and happiness. Here ended my disputing. I could now only cry out, 'Lord, help thou my unbelief!'"

He now began to declare, 'the faith as it is in Jesus,' which those that were convinced of sin gladly received. A day or two following he was much confirmed in the truth by hearing the experience of Mr. Hutchins, of Pembroke College, and Mrs. Fox: "Two living witnesses," says he, "that God *can* at least, if he *does* not always, give that faith whereof cometh salvation, in a moment, as lightning falling from heaven."

May 1. They began to form themselves into a religious society,

which met in Fetter-Lane. This has been called the first Methodist society in London. Mr. Wesley distinguishes the origin of Methodism, into three distinct periods. "The first rise of Methodism," says he, "was in November, 1729, when four of us met together at Oxford: the second was at Savannah, in April, 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at my house: the last was at London, on this day, when forty or fifty of us agreed to meet together every Wednesday evening, in order to free conversation, begun and ended with singing and prayer.* This is hardly accurate; as Mr. Wesley, his brother, and their friends, retained little but the exterior, of their former character. Having changed their doctrines, they were now Moravians, rather than the Methodists of Oxford, and Savannah. When some of the Moravian teachers, afterwards introduced innovations into their doctrines, Mr. Wesley and his friends separated from them, and formed a distinct society, as will soon appear; and this, I apprehend, was the true origin of the present economy of Methodism. In the society now formed, the old Methodists and the Moravians were indiscriminately blended together in one body. Their rules were printed under the title of, "Orders of a Religious Society, meeting in Fetter-Lane; in obedience to the command of God by St. James, and by the advice of Peter Bohler:" It was then agreed,

1. That they would meet together once in a week, to confess their faults one to another, and to pray one for another that they might be healed.

2. That others, of whose sincerity they were well assured, might, if they desired it, meet with them for that purpose. And May 29, it was agreed,

3. That the persons desirous of meeting together for that purpose, should be divided into several bands, or little companies, none of which should consist of fewer than five, or more than ten persons.

4. That some person in each band, should be desired to speak to the rest in order, who might be called the leader of that band. And on Monday, September 26, it was further agreed,

5. That each band should meet twice in a week; once on Monday evening and the second time when it was most convenient for each band; every meeting to be begun and ended with singing and prayer.

6. That every one in order, should speak as freely, plainly, and concisely as he could, the state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances since the last time of meeting.

7. That all the bands should have a conference at eight every Wednesday evening, begun and ended with singing and prayer.

8. That any who desired to be admitted into this society, should be asked, What are your reasons for desiring this? Will you be entirely open, using no kind of reserve? Have you any objection to any of our orders? (which may then be read.)

* See his Ecclesiastical History, vol. iv. page 175.

9. That when any new member was proposed, every one present should speak clearly and freely whatever objection he had against him.

10. That those against whom no reasonable objection appeared, should be, in order for their trial, formed into one or more distinct bands, and some person agreed on to assist them.

11. That after two months' trial, if no objection then appeared, they might be admitted into the society.

12. That every fourth Saturday should be observed as a day of general intercession, which might continue from twelve to two, from three to five, and from six to eight.

13. That on the Sunday seven-night following, there should be a general love-feast, from seven till ten in the evening.

14. That no particular person should be allowed to act in any thing, contrary to any order of this society; but that every one without distinction should submit to the determination of his brethren; and that if any person or persons did not, after being thrice admonished, conform to the society, they should no longer be esteemed as members.

15. That any person whom the whole society should approve might be accounted a corresponding member, and as such be admitted to the general meetings, provided he corresponded with the society, at least once a month.

The fourteenth rule, to which the ministers were subject as well as the common members, was an excellent preservative against the abuse of power; and some of the others are good guards against the admission of improper members. It would have been happy for the Methodist societies if these rules had been preserved among them, and rigorously kept: the work would in that case have been more pure than it has been, and much confusion would have been prevented.

Wherever Mr. Wesley was now invited to preach in the churches, he boldly offered to all, a free salvation through faith in the blood of Christ. At most of these, he was soon told, "Sir, you must preach here no more." To illustrate the reason of the offence which this doctrine gave, he has inserted in his own Journal, part of a letter written by Mr. Gambold to Mr. Charles Wesley, a little after this time. This letter abounds with fine thoughts on the subject, and contains some excellent advice. Mr. Wesley has inserted but a small part; I shall transcribe a little more of it.

"I have seen upon this occasion, more than ever I could have imagined, how intolerable the doctrine of faith is to the mind of man: how peculiarly intolerable to the most religious men. One may say the most unchristian things, even down to deism; the most enthusiastic things, so they proceed but upon mental raptures, lights and unions; the most severe things, even the whole rigor of ascetic mortification; and all this will be forgiven. But if you speak of faith, in such a manner as makes Christ a Saviour to the utmost, a most uni-

versal help and refuge; in such a manner as takes away glorying, but adds happiness to wretched man; as discovers a greater pollution in the best of us, than we could before acknowledge, but brings a greater deliverance from it, than we could before expect: if any one offers to talk at this rate, he shall be heard with the same abhorrence as if he was going to rob mankind of their salvation, their mediator, or their highest happiness. I am persuaded, that a *Montanist*, or a *Novation*, who from the height of his purity should look with contempt upon poor sinners, and exclude them from all mercy, would not be thought such an overthrower of the gospel, as he who should learn from the author of it to be a friend to publicans and sinners, and to sit down upon the level with them as soon as they begin to repent. But this is not to be wondered at. For all religious people have such a quantity of righteousness, acquired by much painful exercise, and formed at last into current habits, which is their wealth both for this world and the next. Now all other schemes of religion are either so complaisant as to tell them they are very rich, and have enough to triumph in; or else only a little rough, but friendly in the main, by telling them their riches are not sufficient, but by such arts of self-denial and mental refinement they may enlarge the stock. But the doctrine of faith is a downright robber; it takes away all this wealth, and only tells us, it is deposited for us with somebody else, upon whose bounty we must live like mere beggars. Indeed they who are truly beggars, vile and filthy sinners till very lately, may stoop to live in this dependent condition; it suits them well enough: but they who have long distinguished themselves from the herd of vicious wretches, or have even gone beyond moral men; for them to be told that they are either not so well; or but the same needy, impotent, insignificant vessels of mercy with others, this is more shocking to reason than transubstantiation. For reason had rather resign its pretensions to judge what is bread or flesh, than have this honor wrested from it, to be the architect of virtue and righteousness.—But where am I running? My design was only to give you warning, that wherever you go, this *foolishness* of preaching will alienate hearts from you, and open mouths against you. What are you then to do, my dear friend? I will not exhort you to courage; we need not talk of that, for nothing that is approaching is evil. I will only mention the prejudice we shall be under, if we seem in the least to lay aside universal charity, and modesty of expression. Though we love some persons more than we did, let us love none less: and the rather, because we cannot say any one is bad, or destitute of divine grace, for not thinking as we do. Indignation at mankind, is a temper unsuitable to this cause. If we are at peace with God in *Christ*, let it soften our demeanor still more, even towards gainsayers.—What has given most offence hitherto, is what perhaps may best be spared: as some people's confident and hasty triumphs in the grace of God; not by way of humble thank-

fulness to him for looking upon them, or acknowledgment of some peace and strength unknown before, which they hope will be increased to them; but insisting on the completeness of their deliverance already from all sin, and taking to them every *apostolical* boast in the strongest terms.—Let us speak of every thing in such manner as may convey glory to Christ, without letting it glance on ourselves by the way.—Let us profess, when we can with truth, how *really* the christian salvation is fulfilled in us, rather than how *sublimely*.”—This is certainly most important advice, and ought to be daily considered and attended to in practice both by every minister, and by every private Christian, who has any experience of the grace and blessings of the gospel.

Mr. Wesley now hungered and thirsted more and more after righteousness, even the righteousness which is of God by faith. He saw the promise of justification and life was the free gift of God through Jesus Christ. The nearer he approached to the enjoyment of it, the more distinctly he perceived, and more strongly felt, his own sinfulness, guilt, and helplessness, which he thus expressed in a letter to a friend. “I feel what you say, though not enough, for I am under the same condemnation. I see that the whole law of God, is holy, just, and good. I know every thought, every temper of my soul, ought to bear God’s image and superscription. But how am I fallen from the glory of God! I feel that I am sold under sin. I know, that I too deserve nothing but wrath, being full of all abominations, and having no good thing in me to atone for them, or to remove the wrath of God. All my works, my righteousness, my prayer, need an atonement for themselves. So that my mouth is stopped. I have nothing to plead. God is holy, I am unholy. God is a consuming fire. I am altogether a sinner, meet to be consumed.

“Yet I hear a voice (and is it not the voice of God) saying, ‘Believe and thou shalt be saved. He that believeth, is passed from death unto life. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.’

“O let no one deceive us by vain words, as if we had already attained this faith! By its fruits we shall know it. Do we already feel peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost? Does his Spirit bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God? Alas! with mine he does not. Nor I fear with yours. O thou Saviour of men, save us from trusting in any thing but *Thee!* Draw us after *Thee!* Let us be emptied of ourselves, and then fill us with all peace and joy in believing, and let nothing separate us from thy love in time or eternity.”

Mr. Wesley continued in this state, till Wednesday, May 24. “I think,” says he, “it was about five this morning, that I opened my Testament on those words, ‘There are given unto us, exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the

divine nature.' 2 Pet. i. 4. Just as I went out, I opened it again on those words, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, 'Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If thou Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? But there is mercy with thee; therefore thou shalt be feared. O Israel, trust in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.

"I began to pray with all my might, for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me, and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, 'This cannot be faith, for where is thy joy.' Then was I taught, that peace and victory over sin, are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation: but, that as to the transports of joy, that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of his own will."

Mr. Wesley's confidence was often interrupted with doubts and fears, which however lasted but a short time, generally vanishing away in prayer. When we consider the constant vicissitude of things around us, the occasions of temptation continually presented to our senses, and the nature of the human constitution, liable to receive various impressions from external things and circumstances against our will; we may pronounce it impossible that we should always enjoy an uniformity, or perpetual sameness of agreeable sensations, and consequently not the same degree of religious joy. Properly speaking, the whole set of sensations arising from the sources just mentioned, with the imaginations of the mind arising from them, whether agreeable, or painful, even to melancholy, are no evidences of our christian state. And therefore the changes in these sensations, however frequent, or painful, are no evidences of any change in our relation to God, because not imputed to us as sin, while the christian temper is preserved. They are, indeed, totally different both in their source, their nature, and their tendency, from those internal feelings of the mind which inseparably accompany convictions for sin, and true justifying faith in Christ. These are produced by the truths of

revealed religion proposed to the understanding, clearly understood, firmly believed, and by the influence of a divine agency accompanying them, applied with energy to our own individual state. Their nature and tendency are equally distinct from the sensations above mentioned. Yet these sensations arising from external causes, and out of our own power to prevent, may in some circumstances rise to that height, as to produce for a season, a cloudiness and heaviness upon the most sincere mind; in which case, the comfort or joy generally following a justified state, will not be so strongly felt, nor so distinctly perceived as before. This is the reason why young converts so generally fall into doubts and perplexities concerning their state, merely through ignorance of the distinction they ought to make, between the effects of sensations on the human constitution occasioned by external objects or circumstances, and the true evidences of their acceptance with God. Hence also we see the principle on which we may safely maintain, that doubts and fears are consistent with justifying faith.

Perhaps it may be said, without incurring the charge of censoriousness, that few preachers of the gospel, have sufficiently studied the present state of human nature, to be able to clear the difficulties which sometimes accompany christian experience. Mr. Wesley was, at present, but a young convert; and therefore we cannot wonder at his perplexities. June 6. He tells us, "I received a letter from Oxford, which threw me into much perplexity. It was asserted therein, 'That no doubting could consist with the least degree of true faith: that whoever at any time felt any doubt or fear, was not *weak in faith*, but had *no faith* at all: and that none hath any faith, till the law of the spirit of life has made him *wholly* free from the law of sin and death.'—Begging of God to direct me, I opened my Testament on 1 Cor. iii. 1, where St. Paul speaks of those whom he terms babes in Christ, who were not able to bear strong meat: nay, who were, in a sense, carnal: to whom he nevertheless says, 'Ye are God's building, ye are the temple of God.' Surely then these men had some degree of faith, though it is plain their faith was but weak."

June 7. "I determined if God should permit, to retire for a short time into Germany. I had fully proposed before I left Georgia, so to do, if it should please God to bring me back to Europe. And I now clearly saw the time was come. My weak mind could not bear to be thus sawn asunder. And I hoped the conversing with those holy men, who were themselves living witnesses of the full power of faith, and yet able to bear with those that are weak, would be a means under God of so establishing my soul, that I might go on from faith to faith, and from strength to strength."

Having taken leave of his mother, he embarked on Tuesday the 13th, accompanied by Mr. Ingham and three others, English, and three Germans. In passing through Holland, he met with great hos-

pitality and friendship, particularly from Dr. Koker, a physician of Rotterdam. The German formalities in admitting strangers into their towns, even in times of peace, gave him and his friends a great deal of trouble, and were peculiarly disagreeable; as they always are to Englishmen, nothing of the kind being known with us. July 4. He arrived at Marienborn, where he found Count Zinzendorf, and others of the brethren, whose Christian conversation greatly refreshed his mind. He was present at their conferences for strangers; at one of which the Count was asked, "Can a man be justified and not know it?" He answered to the following effect. 1. Justification is the forgiveness of sins. 2. The moment a man flies to Christ, he is justified: 3. And has peace with God, but not always joy: 4. Nor perhaps may he know he is justified, till long after: 5. For the assurance of it is distinct from justification. 6. But others may know he is justified by his power over sin, by his seriousness, his love of the brethren, and his hunger and thirst after righteousness, which alone prove the spiritual life to be begun.

In giving this statement, Mr. Wesley has not made any remark on the fourth proposition, which seems to imply that he did not disapprove of it. But certainly it ought not to stand in so unguarded a manner. We know, 1. That if a man be really justified, a very great change has taken place in the state of his mind, which will show itself in his life and conversation. 2. That a man must necessarily be conscious of what has passed within himself, whether the change was instantaneous or gradual. 3. If, therefore, a man do not know that he is justified, when he really is so, it is because he does not understand the true scriptural evidence of a state of justification. This has sometimes been the case; when a man truly convinced of sin, and trusting in Christ for salvation, has not had the happiness to sit under a gospel minister; or, when he has sat under a minister, who, though he preached the doctrines of the gospel, did not rightly divide the word of truth, nor point out to his hearers, the order to be observed in the gradations of christian experience, evidently founded on Scripture and the nature of the human faculties. Such a preacher, will never give his hearers clear and distinct views of the evidences of their state, whatever that state may be.

From Marienborn, Mr. Wesley wrote to his brother Samuel, as follows, "God has given me at length the desire of my heart. I am with a church whose conversation is in heaven, in whom is the mind that was in Christ, and who so walk as he walked. As they have all one Lord and one faith, so they are all partakers of one spirit, the spirit of meekness and love, which uniformly, and continually animates all their conversation. O how high and holy a thing Christianity is! And how widely distant from that—I know not what—which is so called, though it neither purifies the heart, nor renews the life, after the image of our blessed Redeemer.

“I grieve to think how that holy name, by which we are called, must be blasphemed among the heathen, while they see discontented Christians, passionate Christians, resentful Christians, earthly-minded Christians. Yea, to come to what we are apt to count small things, while they see Christians judging one another, ridiculing one another, speaking evil of one another, increasing, instead of bearing one another’s burdens. How bitterly would Julian have applied to these, ‘See how these Christians love one another.’ I know, I myself, I doubt *you* sometimes, and my sister often, have been under this condemnation. O may God grant, we may never more think to do him service, by breaking those commands which are the very life of his religion! But may we utterly put away all anger, and wrath, and malice, and bitterness, and evil-speaking.”—O that Mr. Wesley could rise from the dead, to enforce these reproofs on those who have succeeded him in the government of the Methodist societies!

July 19. Mr. Wesley left Marienborn, and August 1, arrived at Hernhuth. Here he staid a fortnight; during which time he had frequent opportunities of conversing with the most experienced of the brethren in that place, of hearing several of them preach, and of acquainting himself with their whole economy. “I would gladly,” says he, “have spent my life here; but my Master calling me to labor in another part of his vineyard, on Monday the 14th, I was constrained to take my leave of this happy place—O when shall this Christianity cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.” He adds in another place, “I was exceedingly comforted and strengthened by the conversation of this lovely people; and returned to England more fully determined to spend my life in testifying the gospel of the grace of God.”

Sept. 16. He arrived again in London, having no intention but to preach the gospel in the churches; and accordingly wherever he was invited, he boldly declared, ‘By grace ye are saved through faith.’ This doctrine, branched into all its parts, was opposed by most of the clergy; and in most places, the genteel part of the congregation was offended at the crowds that followed him, so that he was frequently told after preaching, that he must preach there no more. This at length became so general, that it amounted to an exclusion from almost all the churches in London. October 9. He met with the Narrative of the revival of the work of God about the town of Northampton, in New England. He sent an extract of this to a friend, whose answer threw him into some perplexity, and occasioned him to enter into a very close examination of himself; which he describes as follows.

“‘Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.’ Now the surest test whereby we can examine ourselves, whether we be indeed in the faith, is that given by St. Paul, ‘If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are past away: behold all things are become new.’

“First, His judgments are new : his judgment of himself, of happiness, of holiness.

“He judges himself to be altogether fallen short of the glorious image of God. To have no good thing abiding in him ; but all that is corrupt and abominable, &c.—Thus by the grace of God in Christ, I judge of myself. Therefore I am, in this respect, a new creature.

“Again. His judgment concerning happiness is new. He would as soon expect to dig it out of the earth, as to find it in riches, honor, pleasure, so called, or indeed, in the enjoyment of any creature : he knows there can be no happiness on earth, but in the enjoyment of God, and in the foretaste of those rivers of pleasure which flow at his right hand for evermore.—Thus by the grace of God in Christ, I judge of happiness. Therefore I am, in this respect, a new creature.

“Yet again. His judgment concerning holiness is new. He no longer judges it to be an outward thing : to consist either, in doing no harm, in doing good, or in using the ordinances of God. He sees it is the life of God in the soul ; the image of God fresh stamped on the heart ; an entire renewal of the mind in every temper and thought, after the likeness of him that created it.—Thus by the grace of God in Christ, I judge of holiness. Therefore I am, in this respect, a new creature.

“Secondly, His designs are new. It is the design of his life, not to heap treasures upon earth, not to gain the praise of men, not to indulge the desires of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life ; but to regain the image of God ; to have the life of God again planted in his soul : and to be renewed after his likeness in righteousness and all true holiness.—This, by the grace of God in Christ, is the design of my life. Therefore I am, in this respect, a new creature.

“Thirdly, His desires are new, and indeed all the whole train of his passions and inclinations. They are no longer fixed on earthly things. They are now set on the things of heaven. His love and joy, and hope ; his sorrow and fear, have all respect to things above. They all point heavenward. Where his treasure is, there is his heart also. I dare not say I am a new creature in this respect. For other desires often *arise* in my heart. But they do not *reign*. I put them all under my feet through Christ who strengtheneth me. Therefore I believe he is creating me anew in this also, and that he has begun, though not finished his work.

“Fourthly, His conversation is new. It is always seasoned with salt, and fit to minister grace to the hearers. So is mine, by the grace of God in Christ, therefore, in this respect, I am a new creature.

“Fifthly, His actions are new. The tenor of his life, singly points at the glory of God. All his substance and time are devoted thereto. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, it either springs from, or leads to the glory of God and the good of man.—Such, by

the grace of God in Christ, is the tenor of my life. Therefore, in this respect, I am a new creature." He concludes thus, "Upon the whole, although I have not yet that joy in the Holy Ghost, nor the full assurance of faith, much less am I, in the full sense of the words, in Christ a new creature: I nevertheless trust that I have a measure of faith, and am 'accepted in the beloved.' I trust the hand-writing that was against me is blotted out, and that I am reconciled to God through his Son."

The whole of this examination of himself plainly shows, that however credulous Mr. Wesley might be, with respect to the reports of others, and credulous he certainly was, yet in judging of his own state, he placed no confidence in visions, dreams, or sudden impressions on the mind; but calmly and rationally examined, whether he had true scriptural evidence, that he was passed from death unto life.

October 13. Being at Oxford, he found leisure to write to a few of his friends in Holland and Germany. These letters show us something of the state of his mind, how he was employed, and the success of his labors. To Dr. Koker, of Rotterdam, he wrote as follows: "I have delayed writing till now, in hopes I might have had an opportunity of transcribing the papers you desired, before I wrote. But I find I cannot have time for this yet; it having pleased God to give me full employment of another nature. His blessed Spirit has wrought so powerfully both in London and Oxford, that there is a general awakening, and multitudes are crying out, 'what must we do to be saved?' So that till our gracious Master sendeth more laborers into his harvest, all my time is much too little for them.

"May our blessed Lord repay seven-fold into your bosoms, the kindness showed to us for his name's sake! that, you may be found in him, not having your own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, is the earnest prayer of, dear sir, your unworthy brother in Christ."

"TO MR. INGHAM, AT HERNHUTH.

"O my dear brother, God hath been wonderfully gracious to us, ever since our return to England. Though there are many adversaries, yet a great door and effectual is opened; and we continue, through evil report and good report, to preach the gospel of Christ to all people, and earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Indeed he hath given unto us many of our fiercest opposers, who now receive with meekness the ingrafted word. One of the bitterest of them could have no rest in his spirit, till on Saturday, the 30th of September, O. S. he was compelled to send for me, who knew him not, so much as by face, and to tell me the secrets of his heart. He owned with many tears, that in spite of all his endeavors, he was still carnal, sold under sin: that he continually did the thing he would

not, and was thereby convinced of the entire corruption of his whole nature: that the very night before, after the most solemn resolutions to the contrary, he had been guilty of gross drunkenness, and had no hope of escaping, having neither spirit nor strength left in him. We fell on our knees, and besought our Lord to bring this sinner unto God, who through his blood justifieth the ungodly. He arose, and his countenance was no longer sad; for he knew, and testified aloud, that he was passed from death unto life, and felt in himself, that he was healed of his plague. And from that hour to this, he hath had peace and joy in believing, and sin hath no more dominion over him.

“Mr. Stonehouse hath at length determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified; and to preach unto all, remission of sins through faith in his blood. Mr. Sparkes also, is a teacher of sound doctrine. Mr. Hutchins is strong in the faith, and mightily convinces gainsayers, so that no man hitherto hath been able to stand before him. Mr. Kinchin, Gombold, and Wells, have not yet received comfort but are patiently waiting for it. Mr. Robson, who is now a minister of Christ also, is full of faith, and peace, and love. So is Mr. Combes, a little child, who was called to minister in holy things two or three weeks ago. Indeed I trust our Lord will let us see, and that shortly, a multitude of priests that believe. My brother and I, are partly here, and partly in London, till Mr. Whitefield, or some other, is sent to release us from hence.

“Pray for us continually, my dear brother, that we may make full proof of our ministry; and may ourselves stand fast in the grace of our Lord Jesus: and as soon as you can, send word of what he is doing by and for you.”

“TO COUNT ZINZENDORF, AT MARIENBORN.

“May our gracious Lord, who counteth whatsoever is done to the least of his brethren, as done to himself, return seven-fold to you and the Countess, and to all the brethren, the kindnesses you did to us! It would have been a great satisfaction to me, if I could have spent more time with the Christians who love one another. But that could not be now; my Master having called me to work in another part of his vineyard. Nor did I return hither at all before the time: for though a great door and effectual had been opened, the adversaries had laid so many stumbling-blocks before it, that the weak were daily turned out of the way. Numberless misunderstandings had arisen, by means of which the way of truth was much blasphemed: and thence had sprung anger, clamor, bitterness, evil-speaking, envyings, strifes, railings, evil-surmises; whereby the enemy had gained such an advantage over the little flock, that of the rest durst no man join himself to them.

“But it has now pleased our blessed Master to remove, in great

measure, these rocks of offence. The word of the Lord again runs and is glorified; and his work goes on and prospers. Great multitudes are every where awakened, and cry out, 'What must we do to be saved?' Many of them see, that there is only one name under heaven whereby they can be saved: and more and more of those who seek it, find salvation in his name: and these are of one heart and one soul. They all love one another, and are knit together in one body, and one spirit, as in one faith, and one hope of their calling. The love and zeal of our brethren in Holland and Germany, particularly at Hernhuth, has stirred up many among us, who will not be comforted till they also partake of the great and precious promises. I hope, if God permit, to see them at least once more, were it only to give them the fruit of my love, the speaking freely on a few things which I did not approve, perhaps because I did not understand them. May our merciful Lord give you a right judgment in all things, and make you to abound more and more in all lowliness and meekness, in all simplicity and godly sincerity, in all watchfulness and seriousness: in a word, in all faith and love, particularly to those that are without; till you are merciful as your father which is in heaven is merciful! I desire your constant and earnest prayers, that he would vouchsafe me a portion of the same spirit."

"To the Church of God which is in Hernhuth, John Wesley, an unworthy presbyter of the Church of God in England, wisheth all grace and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ. October 14.

"Glory be to God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for his unspeakable gift! for giving me to be an eye-witness of your faith, and love, and holy conversation in Christ Jesus. I have borne testimony thereof with all plainness of speech, in many parts of Germany, and thanks have been given to God by many on your behalf.

"We are endeavoring here also, by the grace which is given us, to be followers of you, as ye are of Christ. Fourteen were added to us since our return, so that we have now eight bands of men, consisting of fifty-six persons, all of whom seek for salvation only in the blood of Christ. As yet we have only two small bands of women, the one of three, the other of five persons. But here are many others who only wait till we have leisure to instruct them, how they may most effectually build up one another in the faith and love of him who gave himself for them.

"Though my brother and I, are not permitted to preach in most of the churches in London, yet, thanks be to God, there are others left, wherein we have liberty to speak the truth as it is in Jesus. Likewise every evening, and on set evenings in the week at two several places, we publish the word of reconciliation, sometimes to twenty or thirty, sometimes to fifty or sixty, sometimes to three or four hun-

dred persons, met together to hear it. We begin and end all our meetings with singing and prayer: and we know that our Lord heareth our prayer, having more than once or twice, and this was not done in a corner, received our petitions in that very hour.

“Nor hath he left himself without other witnesses of his grace and truth. Ten ministers I know now in England, who lay the right foundation, ‘The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.’ Over and above whom, I have found one Anabaptist, and one, if not two of the teachers among the Presbyterians here, who, I hope, love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and teach the way of God in truth.

“O cease not, ye that are highly favored, to beseech our Lord that he would be with us even to the end; to remove that which is displeasing in his sight, to support that which is weak among us, to give us the whole mind that was in him, and teach us to walk even as he walked! And may the very God of peace fill up what is wanting in your faith, and build you up more and more in all lowliness of mind, in all plainness of speech, in all zeal and watchfulness; that he may present you to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that ye may be holy and unblameable in the day of his appearing.”

We should not do justice to Mr. Wesley, were we to suppose, that he meant in this letter to insinuate, there were only ten clergymen in England who preached the gospel. He particularly refers to those he personally knew, who had been lately awakened out of sleep, and now saw the way of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. And his principles and connexions, as a high churchman, had separated him from all denominations of Dissenters, so that he could have had very little acquaintance with them. Perhaps the three to whom he refers, were all he could speak of from his own personal knowledge; though no doubt many others taught the way of God in truth.

Mr. Wesley pursued his labors with unremitting diligence, spending his time from an early hour in the morning, till night, in preaching, exhorting, praying, or conversing with the people, on subjects that related to christian experience. November 22. He again wrote to three or four of his religious friends, and spake more freely than before, of the state of his own mind.

“TO DR. KOKER, AT ROTTERDAM.

“My desire and prayer to God is, that the glorious gospel of his Son, may run and be glorified, among you as it doth among us; and much more abundantly! I should rejoice to hear, what our Lord hath done for you also. Is the number of believers multiplied? Do they love one another? Are they all of one heart and one soul? Do they build up one another, in the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ? May he multiply your little flock a thousand fold, how many soever you be! May he fill you with all peace and joy in believing! May he preserve you in all lowliness of spirit! And

may he enable you to use great plainness of speech, both toward each other, and toward all men; and by manifestation of the truth, to commend yourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God!

"Even to this hour, I have not had one day's leisure, to transcribe for you the papers I brought from Hernhuth: the harvest here also, is so plenteous, and the laborers so few; and it increases upon us daily. Verily the spirit of the Lord hath lift up his standard against the iniquity which had overspread our land as a flood! O pray ye for us, that he would send more laborers into his harvest! And that he would enable us whom he hath already sent, to approve ourselves faithful ministers of the New Covenant, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report! In particular let all the brethren and sisters who are with you, pray that God would warm with his love, the cold heart of, dear sir, your much obliged and very affectionate brother in Christ, J. Wesley."

"TO MR. VINEY, AT YSSELSTEIN.

"After a long sleep, there seems now to be a great awakening in this place also. The spirit of the Lord hath already shaken the dry bones, and some of them stand up and live. But I am still dead and cold; having peace indeed, but no love or joy in the Holy Ghost. O pray for me, that I may see and feel myself a sinner, and have a full interest in the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world!" &c.

"TO ISAAC LE-LONG, AT AMSTERDAM.

"Do not think my dear brother that I have forgotten you. I cannot forget you, because I love you: though I cannot love any one yet, as I ought, because I cannot love our blessed Lord, *as I ought*. My heart is cold and senseless: it is indeed a heart of stone. Pray for me, and let all your household pray for me, yea and all the brethren also, that our God would give me a broken heart; a loving heart; a heart wherein his spirit may delight to dwell.

"May our good Lord repay you all a thousand fold for the love you showed to us. How does his gospel prosper at Amsterdam? Are believers multiplied? and is his grace mighty among you? Is their name yet cast out as evil (for that must be the next) and do men spitefully use you, and persecute you? I want you to say a great deal to me of it. But above all, I want you to pray a great deal, for your poor, weak brother, John Wesley."

We see by these letters, that Mr. Wesley was not carried up on high as on eagles' wings, by any extatic joy which obliterated the common feelings of human nature: he walked in the valley, humble and low, bemoaning his condition, and struggling against the dulness and sluggishness of his own heart. Had he been actuated in his labors, only by a religious fervor of mind, his diligence would not have been so uniform as it was, nor his perseverance so lasting. Our

passions and inward feelings are necessarily variable; and if we are impelled only by these, in a religious course of life, or in any other laudable pursuit, our diligence will remit, and our perseverance be short, especially when temptation and interest draw another way. Mr. Wesley acted on a different principle. He had a strong conviction, founded on cool reflection, that he was every day doing what God required him to do: he considered his success in turning sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God, as a testimony of the divine approbation of his conduct; and therefore believed, that he was laboring for the best interests of his fellow mortals. This conviction was so strong that no persecution or opposite interest could ever divert him from his pursuits.

December 11. Hearing Mr. Whitefield was returned from Georgia, he went to London to meet him, and they again took sweet counsel together. January 1, 1739. He was present at a love-feast in Fetter-Lane, together with Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and his brother Charles; and about sixty of the brethren. "About three in the morning," says he, "as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His majesty, we broke out with one voice, 'We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.'"—How little does the world know; how little do merely speculative and formal Christians know, of these refreshing, invigorating seasons which come from the presence of the Lord, and give to the true worshippers a demonstrative evidence of the truth of Christianity!

In the spring Mr. Whitefield went down to Bristol, and there first began to preach in the open air, to incredible numbers of people. Mr. Wesley continued his labors in London and Oxford alternately, and occasionally in the neighboring places without any intention of altering his usual manner of proceeding. But in the latter end of March, he received a letter from Mr. Whitefield, who entreated him in the most pressing manner to come to Bristol, evidently with intention that he might step into this new path which now lay open before him. At first he was not at all forward to comply with the request; and his brother Charles, and some others, warmly opposed his going; from an unaccountable apprehension that it would prove fatal to him.* At length Mr. Wesley freely gave himself up, to whatever the Lord should appoint. It was a rule of the society, "That any person who desired, or designed to take a journey, should first, if it were possible, have the approbation of the bands:" so entirely were the ministers, at this time, under the direction of the people! Accordingly on the 28th, the matter was laid before them, and after some debate they determined that he should comply with Mr. Whitefield's request. He left London the next day, and on the 31st came to Bristol.

* See vol. i. page 128.