

BIOGRAPHY.

THE LIFE OF THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.*

It is written that "the Lord hath made all things for himself;" and it is for his pleasure that they are and were created: and among the things created, man stands out "the noblest work of God." It would appear that a council of the sacred Trinity was held respecting his formation. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and in the image of God man was created." But, alas! the creature fell—sin marred all his fair proportions. Hence it is now the work of redemption that mainly demands our contemplation, as the mirror in which the glory of God our Saviour is most fully unveiled.

The "new creation" on the heart of man is one grand division of this perfect work of God; and often does its display of "the beauty of holiness" constrain the world to a reluctant acknowledgment, and excite the Church to a joyful exclamation, "What hath God wrought!" For not only will the Redeemer's glory be manifested in his saints at the blissful era of his coming—not only will they then be seen as the jewels of his everlasting crown,—but even now they are "the glory of his inheritance," set forth for the conviction of the world, "that they may see, and know, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and that the Holy One of Israel hath created it."

It is the object of the following sketch of the life of an eminent servant of the Lord Jesus, to shew forth one of those striking manifestations of Divine power and grace, in the new creation of the soul of man, bringing it out of darkness into his marvellous light, from the power of Satan unto God.

The Rev. John Newton having himself drawn up an account of his early life, and his conversion from the path of sin to the service of God, some extracts from the highly interesting "Narrative" will afford a better view of his history than any matter that can now be put together. He thus commences:—

"I can sometimes feel a pleasure in repeating the grateful acknowledgment of David,—'O Lord, I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bands.' The tender mercies of God towards me were manifest in the first moment of my life: I was born, as it were, in his house, and dedicated to him in my infancy. My mother (as I have heard from many) was a pious and experienced Christian. I was her only child; and as she was of a weak constitution, and a retired temper, almost her whole employment was the care of my education. At a time when I could not be more than three years old, she taught me English, and with so much success (as I had something of a forward turn), that when I was four years old, I could read with propriety in any common book that offered. She stored my memory, which was then very retentive, with many valuable pieces, chapters, and portions of Scripture, catechisms, hymns, and poems. How far the best education may fall short of reaching the heart, will strongly appear in the sequel of my history; yet, I think, for the encouragement of pious parents to go on in the good way of doing their part faithfully to form their children's minds, I may properly propose myself as an instance. Though in process of time I sinned away all the advantages of these early impressions, yet they were for a great while a restraint upon me; they returned again and again, and it was very long before I could wholly shake them off; and when the Lord at length opened my eyes, I found a great benefit from the recollection of them. Further, my dear mother, besides the pains she took with me, often commended me with many prayers and tears to God; and I doubt not but I reap the fruits of these prayers to this hour.

"My mother observed my early progress with peculiar pleasure, and intended from the first to bring me up with a view to the ministry, if the Lord should so for an unusual proof of his patience, providence, and grace; and therefore overruled the purpose of my friends by depriving me of this excellent parent when I was something under seven years old. I was

* See his own Narrative, Letters to a Wife, &c.; also his Life in the Christian's Family Library, and Memoirs by Cecil.

born July 24, 1725: and she died the 11th of that month, 1732. My father was then at sea: he was a commander in the Mediterranean trade: he came home the following year, and soon after married again. Thus I passed into different hands. I was sent to a boarding-school in Essex (having been previously resident in London); but at eleven years of age I was taken to sea, and made several voyages till the year 1742."

During this period, Mr. Newton describes himself to have undergone various religious convictions. Before the age of twelve years, he met with "Bennet's Christian Oratory," and endeavoured to walk religiously by means of its guidance. Several remarkable incidents occurring in succession, each aroused his conscience; but were one after the other soon forgotten. At another time, the perusal of the "Family Instructor" put him upon a partial and transient reformation. He thus seems to have taken up and laid aside a religious profession three or four different times before the age of sixteen.

Of his last reform at this age, he thus writes:—"It was the most remarkable both for degree and continuance. Of this period, at least of some part of it, I may say, in the apostle's words, 'After the strictest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee.' I did every thing that might be expected from a person entirely ignorant of God's righteousness, and desirous to establish his own. I spent the greatest part of every day in reading the Scriptures, meditation, and prayer: I fasted often: I even abstained from all animal food for three months. I would hardly answer a question for fear of speaking an idle word. I seemed to bemoan my former miscarriages very earnestly, sometimes with tears. In short, I became an ascetic, and endeavoured, so far as my situation would permit, to renounce society, that I might avoid temptation. I continued in this serious mood (I cannot give it a higher title) for more than two years, without any considerable breaking off. But it was a poor religion; it left me, in many respects, under the power of sin, and, so far as it prevailed, only tended to make me gloomy, stupid, unsocial, and useless."

In the year 1743, he was appointed to a post of considerable trust in Jamaica; but on the very eve of starting, an event occurred which changed the whole current of his ideas, and gave rise to the series of uncommon dispensations which distinguished his after-life. He formed a sudden and violent attachment to a young lady residing in Kent, near Maidstone, then under fourteen, "which," again to use his own words, "never abated or lost its influence a single moment in my heart from that hour. In degree, it actually equalled all that the writers of romance have imagined; in duration it was unalterable. I soon lost all sense of religion, and became deaf to the remonstrances of conscience and prudence; but my regard for her was always the same: and I may perhaps venture to add, that none of the scenes of misery and wickedness I afterwards experienced ever banished her a single hour together from my waking thoughts for the seven following years." He thus gave up all idea of proceeding to Jamaica; and having thereby highly displeased his father, he went a voyage before the mast to Venice.

To be continued.

SCRAPS.

RICHES.—An immoderate desire of riches is a poison lodged in the soul. It contaminates and destroys every thing that was good in it. It is no sooner rooted there, than all virtue, all honesty, all natural affection, fly before the face of it. If you are industrious to procure gold, be generous in the disposal of it. Man never is so happy as when he giveth happiness unto another.

No man rejects a minister of God who faithfully performs his office, till he has rejected God.—*Cecil*.

It is always a sign of poverty of mind, where men are ever aiming to appear great; for they, who are really great never seem to know it.—*Ibid*.

If there is any person to whom you feel dislike, that is the person of whom you ought never to speak.—*Ibid*.

sick. Every countenance has looked sad and sorrowful. When I first went upon deck this morning, I saw that the last vestige of land had faded from our view. Nothing but one expanse of wide waters stretched around us. We shall see the land no more till the shores and hills of our own native country meet our view. I soon felt the motion of the ship, and lay stretched deadly sick on the quarter deck, during almost the whole day. But those deadly sensations are now gone, and I feel quite like myself again. There was so much sea-sickness to-day it was impossible to have divine service, although several clergymen were on board.

Monday evening, July 23d.—I am obliged to write in the grand saloon, as my state room, which I share with a fellow passenger, is so small, that I can hardly turn around in it. Indeed there is nothing about this great ship, save its size, strength, majestic machinery, and grand saloon, in keeping with its name. The cuddy state rooms built on the deck, though well ventilated, are very small. Those opening out of the grand saloon are perhaps the most eligible.—The berths in the forward cabin are on several accounts far from desirable. And those in the catacombs, as they are called, from their being under the saloon and so far in the depth of the ship, that the light of heaven reaches not there, are horrible both from their want of fresh air, and of the cheerful light of day.

One of the disadvantages connected with an attempt to write in the saloon, is the confusion that is likely to seize upon one's brain, amid the distracting and bedlam-like hubbub around you. Here are drinking, swearing, card playing, loud laughing, cracking of jokes, and sharp disputing all going on at the same time; you must not be surprised, therefore, if my thoughts are not very connected. We have a very large number of passengers—probably more than ever before crossed the Atlantic as cabin passengers in one ship. We number one hundred and thirty, or nearly that, who are to meet three times a day in the grand saloon, and sit down in the same company around two extended tables. I need scarcely say that at such times we present a motley group. The inhabitant of almost every land on the globe would find his fellow countrymen among us. We are truly the world in miniature. Every trade, profession, and calling are among us; and I fear every description of moral character, from the best to the worst.

We have clergymen, merchants, lawyers, stage-players, and opera dancers among our number. At the foot of one of our tables we form quite a pleasant, sober, clerical group. The Rev. Mr. Walker of Beaufort, S. C., the Rev. Mr. Quarrels of Cheltenham, England, and the Rev. Mr. Gunnet, the associate of Dr. Channing of Boston, have their place at meals near me. Our table is made up principally of Americans, at the head of which Col. James W. Webb has his seat, and around him are a group of young merchants, whose superabounding merriment and gaiety often draw all eyes if not in admiration, in astonishment towards them. Perhaps it may form some clew by way of explanation to the boundless mirth that seems continually to gather around that point, to mention that Mr. Power, of comic and humorous memory, forms one of the party. Not far from us at the other table are the places of two French opera dancers—young Mathews, the Comedian, and his bride, Madame Vestris. These are the apostles of virtue which are coming over to instruct our countrymen and countrywomen in 'the school of morals.' These are the persons under whose tuition the chaste matrons of our land are going to place their young daughters, sending them to the admired theatre night after night!! Is there a spot in this wide world from which there emanates deadlier streams of moral pestilence than the stage? And with all the facts, which ages have developed, will Christians still advocate attendance upon the theatre?

But I must stop, as my sheet is full. She weather continues pleasant, and we are going on most marvelously.—*Epis. Rec.* J. A. C.

CHRIST.—We cannot build too confidently on the merits of Christ, as our only hope; nor can we think too much of the mind that was in Christ, as our great example.—*Cecil*.