



A
MONUMENT

TO THE PRAISE OF THE LORD'S GOODNESS, AND TO
THE MEMORY OF ELIZA CUNNINGHAM.

O death, where is thy sting? ... 1 Cor. xv. 55.

PREFACE.

IT is to be lamented that in this enlightened age, so signalized by the prevalence of a spirit of investigation, religion should, by many, be thought the only subject, unworthy of a serious inquiry. And that, while in every branch of science, they studiously endeavour to trace every fact to its proper and adequate cause, and are cautious of admitting any theory, which cannot stand the test of Experiment; they treat the use of the word **EXPERIMENTAL**, when applied to religion, with contempt. Yet there are many things connected with this subject, in which, whether we are willing, or unwilling, we are, and must be, nearly interested. Death, for instance, is inevitable. And if there be **AN HEREAFTER**, (and it is impossible to prove that there is not) the consequences of death must be important. Many persons die as they live, thoughtless and careless what consequences may await them. Others, whose characters and conduct do not appear to have been worse than those of the former, cannot die so. They have dark and painful forebodings, and leave this world with reluctance and terror. And there are others, who, though conscious that they are sinners, and sure that they are about to enter upon an unchangeable and endless state of existence, possess peace, composure and joy. These declare that they owe this happy state of mind, to their dependence upon Jesus the Saviour; on whose blood and mediation, they have built their hopes. And who can possibly disprove their words? Such an instance is now in the reader's hands. The fact is indubitable. **A** child under the age of fifteen did thus rejoice, in the midst of pains and agonies, to the admiration of all who beheld her. She was willing to leave all her friends, whom she dearly loved, and by whom she was tenderly beloved, for she knew whom she believed, and that when she should be absent from the body, she would be present with the Lord. With this assurance, she triumphed in the prospect of glory, and smiled upon the approach of death.

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It may be presumed, that whoever seriously considers this case, will not be able to satisfy himself, by ascribing such remarkable effects, in so young a subject, to the power of habit, example or system. If he does not account for them upon the principles of the gospel, he will be unable to assign any proportionable cause. And it is to be feared, that if he is not affected by a testimony, so simple and so striking, neither would he be persuaded, though one should rise from the dead.

Hoxton, Nov. 17, 1785.

A MONUMENT.

[Mrs. Cunningham, sister to Mrs. Newton, having buried two children and an affectionate husband, was left with one amiable daughter, Eliza. Lingered herself under a painful disorder, and expecting soon to enter on her eternal rest, she earnestly desired that Eliza might live or die with Mr. Newton. The mother lived long enough to have the comfort of knowing, not only that her daughter had safely arrived at her uncle's, but that she was perfectly pleased with her new situation. Previous to Eliza's removal from Scotland, she caught a violent cold, from the effects of which she never perfectly recovered. The following particulars of her amiable character, and happy death in the Redeemer, are extracted from the pamphlet published by Mr. Newton, and cannot fail to interest the young reader.]

AS I write not for the eye of the public, but chiefly to put a testimony of the Lord's goodness into the hands of my dear friends, who have kindly afforded us their sympathy and prayers, on the late occasion; I do not mean either to restrain the emotions of my heart, or to apologize for them. I shall write simply and freely, as I might speak to a person, to whose intimacy and tenderness I can fully entrust myself.

Soon after Eliza's arrival, I perceived that the Lord had sent me a treasure indeed. Her person was agreeable. There was an ease and elegance in her whole address, and a gracefulness in her movements, till long illness, and great weakness bowed her down. Her disposition was lively, her genius quick and inventive, and if she had enjoyed health, she probably would have excelled in every thing she attempted, that required ingenuity. Her understanding, particularly her judgment, and her sense of propriety, was far above her years. There was something in her appearance which usually procured her success at first sight. She was honoured by the notice of

several persons of distinction. But her principal endearing qualities, which could be only fully known to us who lived with her, were the sweetness of her temper, and a heart formed for the exercise of affection, gratitude and friendship. Whether, when at school, she might have heard sorrowful tales from children, who, having lost their parents, met with a great difference in point of tenderness, when they came under the direction of uncles and aunts, and might think that all uncles and aunts were alike, I know not; but I have understood since from herself, that she did not come to us with any highly raised expectations of the treatment she was to meet with.

We quickly found, that the seeds of our kindness could hardly be sown in a more promising and fruitful soil. I know not that either her aunt or I ever saw a cloud upon her countenance during the time she was with us. It is true, we did not, we could not unnecessarily cross her; but if we thought it expedient to over-rule any proposal she made, she acquiesced with a sweet smile; and we were certain that we should never hear of that proposal again. Her delicacy, however, was quicker than our observation; and she would sometimes say, when we could not perceive the least reason for it, 'I am afraid I answered you peevishly, indeed I did not intend it; if I did, I ask your pardon; I should be very ungrateful, if I thought any pleasure equal to that of endeavouring to please you.' It is no wonder that we dearly loved such a child!

Wonderful is the frame of the human heart. The Most High claims and deserves it all; yet there is room for all the charities of relative life, and scope for their full play; and they are capable of yielding the sincerest pleasures this world can afford, if held in subordination to what is supremely due to him. The marriage relation, when cemented by a divine blessing, is truly a union of hearts, and the love resulting from it will admit of no competition in the same kind. Children have the next claim, and whether there be one, or two, or many, each one seems to be the object of the whole of the parent's love. Perhaps my friends, who have children, may think that I, who never had any, can only talk by guess upon this subject. I presume not to dispute the point with them. But when it pleased the Lord to put my dear Betsey (a niece of Mrs. Newton) under my care, I seemed to acquire a new set of feelings, if not exactly those of a parent, yet, as I conceive, not altogether unlike them. And I long thought it was not possible for me to love any child as I did her. But when Eliza came, she, without being her rival, quickly participated with her in the same affection. I found I had room enough for them both, without prejudice to either. I loved the one very dearly, and the other no less than before; if it were pos-

sible still more, when I saw that she entered into my views, received and behaved to her cousin with great affection, and ascribed many little indulgences and attentions which were shewn her, to their proper ground, the consideration of her ill state of health, and not to any preference that could operate to her disadvantage. For God was pleased to answer my prayers in this respect, so graciously, that I could not perceive that any jealousy or suspicion took place between them, on either side, from first to last.

The Hectic fever, cough and sweats, which Eliza brought with her from Scotland, were subdued in the course of the summer, and there appeared no reason to apprehend that she would be taken off very suddenly. But still there was a worm preying upon the root of this pretty gourd. She had seldom any pain till within the last fortnight of her life, and usually slept well, but when awake she was always ill. I believe she knew not a single hour of perfect ease, and they, who intimately knew her state, could not but wonder to see her so placid, cheerful, and attentive when in company, as she generally was. Many a time when the tears have stolen silently down her cheeks, if she saw that her aunt or I observed her, she would wipe them away, come to us with a smile and a kiss, and say, "Do not be uneasy, I am not very ill, I can bear it, I shall be better presently," or to that effect.

Her case was thought beyond the reach of medicine, and for a time no medicine was used. She had air and exercise, as the weather and circumstances would permit.

In April, 1784, we put her under the care of my dear friend, Dr. Benamor. Dr. Allen of Dulwich also visited her, and met Dr. Benamor, on her case. Their joint prescription was carefully followed. But what can the most efficacious medicines, or the best physicians avail to prolong life, when the hour approaches in which the prayer of the great Intercessor must be accomplished. "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, may be with me, where I am, to behold my glory!" This was the proper cause of my dear Eliza's death. The Lord sent this child to me to be brought up for him, he owned my poor endeavours; and when her education was completed, and she was ripened for heaven, he took her home to himself. He has richly paid me my wages in the employment itself, and in the happy issue.

Dr. Benamor advising a trial of the salt-water, we passed the month of August, 1784, with her partly at Southampton, and partly at Priestlands. The bathing was evidently useful, so far as to give some additional strength to her very weak and relaxed frame. We were therefore encouraged and advised to repeat our visit to Southampton. But the success was not the same. However, the advantages of situation, air, and ex-

ercise being much greater than she could have in London, and as we were with friends whom she, as well as we, dearly loved, she continued at Southampton six weeks. The Almighty strengthened her to perform her journey home without inconvenience. She returned the 16th of September; then she entered our door for the last time, for she went out no more, till she was carried out to be put into the hearse.

Having put together in one view a brief account of what relates to her illness, till within the last three weeks of her pilgrimage, I now come to what is much more important and interesting. Her excellent parents had conscientiously endeavoured to bring her up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and the principles of religion had been infused into her from her infancy. Their labours were thus far attended with success, that no child could be more obedient or obliging, or more remote from evil habits, or tempers; but I could not perceive, when she first came to us, that she had any heart-affecting sense of divine things. But being under my roof, she of course, when her health would permit, attended on my ministry, and was usually present when I prayed and expounded the Scriptures, morning and evening, in the family. Friends and ministers were likewise frequently with us, whose character and conversation were well suited to engage her notice, and to help her to form a right idea of the christian principles and temper. Knowing that she was of a thinking turn, I left her to make her own reflections, upon what she saw and heard, committing her to the Lord, from whom I had received her, and entreating him to be her effectual Teacher. When I did attempt to talk with her upon the concerns of her soul, she could give me no answer but with tears. But I soon had great encouragement to hope that the Lord had both enlightened her understanding, and had drawn the desires of her heart to himself. Great was her delight in the ordinances. Exemplary her attention under the preaching. To be debarr'd from going to hear at our stated times, was a trial, which, though she patiently bore, seemed to affect her more than any other, and she did not greatly care what she endured in the rest of the week, provided she was well enough to attend the public worship. The judicious observations she occasionally made upon what had passed in conversation, upon incidents, books, and sermons, indicated a sound scriptural judgment and spiritual taste. And my hope was confirmed by her whole deportment, which was becoming the gospel of Christ. So that had she died suddenly, on any day within about a year and a half past, I should have had no doubt that she had passed from death unto life. But I could seldom prevail with her to speak of herself; if she did, it was with the greatest diffidence and caution.

Soon after her return from Southampton she became acquainted with acute pain, to which she had till then been much a stranger. Her gentle spirit, which had borne up under a long and languishing illness, was not so capable of supporting pain. It did not occasion any improper temper or language, but it wore her away apace. Friday, the 30th of September, she was down stairs for the last time, and then she was brought down, and carried up in arms.

It now became very desirable to hear from herself a more explicit account of the hope that was in her; especially as upon some symptoms of an approaching mortification, she appeared to be a little alarmed, and of course not thoroughly reconciled to the thoughts of death. Her aunt waited for the first convenient opportunity of intimating to her the probability that the time of her departure was at hand. The next morning (Saturday the first of October) presented one. She found herself remarkably better, her pains were almost gone, her spirits revived, the favourable change was visible in her countenance. Her aunt began to break the subject to her, by saying, 'My dear, were you not extremely ill last night?' She said, 'Indeed I was.' 'Had you not been relieved I think you could not have continued long.' 'I believe I could not.' 'My dear, I have been very anxiously concerned for your life.' 'But I hope, my dear aunt, you are not so now.' She then opened her mind and spoke freely. I cannot repeat the whole; the substance was to this effect: 'My views of things have been for some time very different from what they were when I came to you. I have seen and felt the vanity of childhood and youth.' Her aunt said, 'I believe you have long made a conscience of secret prayer.' She answered, 'Yes, I have long and earnestly sought the Lord with reference to the change which is now approaching. I have not yet that full assurance which is so desirable, but I have a hope, I trust a good hope, and I believe the Lord will give me whatever he sees necessary for me, before he takes me hence. I have prayed to him to fit me for himself, and then, whether sooner or later, it signifies but little.' Here was a comfortable point gained. We were satisfied that she had given up all expectation of living, and could speak of her departure without being distressed.

It will not be expected that a child at her age should speak systematically. Nor had she learnt her religion from a system or form of words, however sound. The Lord himself was her teacher. But from what little she had at different times said to me, I was well satisfied that she had received a true conviction of the evil of sin, and of her own state by nature as a sinner. When she spoke of the Lord, she meant the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd, who gathers such lambs in his arms,

and carries them in his bosom. She believed him to be God and Man in one person, and that hope of which she shall never be ashamed, was founded on his atonement, grace and power. As I do not intend to put words into her mouth which she never spoke, I mention this, lest any person should be disappointed at not finding a certain phraseology, which they may have been accustomed to.

Her apparent revival was of short duration. In the evening of the same day, she began to complain of a sore throat, which became worse, and before Sunday noon threatened an absolute suffocation. When Dr. Benamor, who the day before had almost entertained hopes of her recovery, found her so suddenly and greatly altered, he could not, at the moment, prevent some signs of his concern from appearing in his countenance. She quickly perceived it, and desired he would plainly tell her his sentiments. When he had recovered himself, he said, 'You are not so well as when I saw you on Saturday.' She answered, that 'she trusted all would be well soon.' He replied, 'that whether she lived or died, it would be well, and to the glory of God.' He told me that he had much pleasing conversation with her that morning, some particulars of which he had committed to writing, but he lost the paper. From that time she may be said to have been dying, as we expected her departure from one hour to another.

On Monday the 3d, she was almost free from any complaint in her throat, but there was again an appearance of a mortification in her legs, which was again repelled by the means which Dr. Benamor prescribed. I recollect but little of the incidents of this day. In general she was in great pain, sometimes in agonies, unable to remain many minutes in the same position. But her mind was peaceful; she possessed a spirit of recollection and prayer; and her chief attention to earthly things seemed confined to the concern she saw in those who were around her. That she might not increase their feelings for her, she strove to conceal the sense of her own sufferings. It pleased God wonderfully to support my dear Mrs. Newton, and she had a tolerable night's rest, though I did not expect the child would live till morning. On Tuesday the 4th, about nine in the morning, we all thought her dying, and waited near two hours by her bed-side for her last breath. She was much convulsed, and in great agonies. I said, 'My dear, you are going to heaven, and I hope by the grace of God, we in due time shall follow you.' She could not speak, but let us know that she attended to what I said by a gentle nod of her head, and a sweet smile. I repeated to her many passages of scripture, and verses of hymns, to each of which she made the same kind of answer. Though silent, her looks were more expressive than words. Towards eleven o'clock, a great quan-

tity of coagulated phlegm, which she had not strength to bring up, made her rattle violently in the throat, which we considered as a sign that death was at hand; and as she seemed unwilling to take something that was offered her, we were loth to disturb her in her last moments (as we supposed) by pressing her. I think she must have died in a quarter of an hour, had not Dr. Benamor just then come into the room. He felt her pulse and observed, that she was not near death by her pulse, and desired something might be given her. She was perfectly sensible, though still unable to speak, but expressed her unwillingness to take any thing by very strong efforts. However, she yielded to entreaty, and a tea-spoonful or two of some liquid soon cleared the passage, and she revived. Her pain however was extreme, and her disappointment great. I never saw her so near impatience as upon this occasion; as soon as she could speak she cried, 'Oh cruel, cruel to recal me, when I was so happy and so near gone! I wish you had not come; I long to go home.' But in a few moments she grew composed, assented to what the Doctor said, of her duty to wait the Lord's time; and from that hour, though her desires to depart and to be with her Saviour were stronger and stronger, she cheerfully took whatever was offered her, and frequently asked for something of her own accord. How often, if we were to have our choice, should we counteract our own prayers! I had entreated the Lord to prolong her life, till she could leave an indisputable testimony behind her, for our comfort. Yet when I saw her agony, and heard her say, O how cruel to stop me! I was for a moment almost of her mind, and could hardly help wishing that the Doctor had delayed his visit a little longer. But if she had died then, we should have been deprived of what we saw and heard the two following days. The remembrance of which is now much more precious to me than silver or gold.

When the doctor came on Wednesday, she entreated him to tell her how long he thought she might live. He said, 'are you in earnest, my dear?' She answered, "indeed I am." At that time there were great appearances that a mortification was actually begun. He therefore told her, he thought it possible she might hold out till eight in the evening, but did not expect she could survive midnight at farthest. On hearing him say so, low as she was, her eyes seemed to sparkle with their former vivacity, and fixing them on him with an air of ineffable satisfaction, she said, 'Oh, that is good news indeed.' And she repeated it as such to a person who came soon after into the room, and said with lively emotions of joy, 'The doctor tells me I shall stay here but a few hours more.' In the afternoon she noticed and counted the clock, I believe, every time it struck, and when it struck seven, she said,

‘ Another hour, and then’—But it pleased God to spare her to us another day.

She suffered much in the course of Wednesday night, but was quite resigned and patient. Our kind servants, who from their love to her, and to us, watched her night and day, with a solicitude and tenderness which wealth is too poor to purchase, were the only witnesses of the affectionate and grateful manner, in which she repeatedly thanked them for their services and attention to her. Though such an acknowledgment was no more than their due, yet coming from herself, and at such a time, they highly valued it. She added her earnest prayers that the Lord would reward them. To her prayers my heart says, Amen. May they be comforted of God in their dying hours, as she was, and meet with equal kindness from those about them!

I was surprised on Thursday morning to find her not only alive, but in some respects better. The tokens of mortification again disappeared. This was her last day, and it was a memorable day to us. When Dr. Benamor asked her how she was; she answered, ‘ Truly happy, and if this be dying, it is a pleasant thing to die.’ She said to me about ten o’clock, ‘ My dear uncle, I would not change conditions with any person on earth; O how gracious is the Lord to me! O what a change is before me!’ She was several times asked, if she could wish to live, provided God should restore her to perfect health; her answer was, ‘ Not for all the world,’ and sometimes, ‘ not for a thousand worlds.’* Do not weep for me, my dear aunt, but rather rejoice and praise on my account. I shall now have the advantage of dear Miss Patty Barham (for whom she had a very tender affection, and who has been long in a languishing state) for I shall go before her.’ We asked her if she would choose a text for her own funeral sermon. She readily mentioned, “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” ‘ That,’ said she ‘ has been my experience; my afflictions have been many, but not one too many; nor has the greatest of them been too great; I praise him for them all.’ But after a pause she said, ‘ Stay, I think there is another text, which may do better; let it be, “Blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord.” That is my experience now. She likewise chose a hymn to be sung after the sermon. Olney hymns, book II, hymn 72.

But I must check myself, and set down but a small part of the gracious words which the Lord enabled her to speak in the course of the day, though she was frequently interrupted by pains and agonies. She had something to say either in the way of admonition or consolation as she thought most suitable.

* The last time she was asked this question, she said, (as I have since been informed) ‘ I desire to have no choice.’

ble, to every one whom she saw. To her most constant attendant she said, 'Be sure you continue to call upon the Lord, and if you think he does not hear you now, he will at last, as he has heard me. She spoke a great deal to an intimate friend, who was with her every day, which I hope she will long remember, as the testimony of her dying Eliza. Amongst other things, she said, 'See how comfortable the Lord can make a dying bed! Do you think you shall have such an assurance when you come to die?' Being answered, 'I hope so, my dear,' she replied, 'But do you earnestly and with all your heart pray to the Lord for it? If you seek him you shall surely find him.' She then prayed affectionately and fervently for her friend, afterwards for her cousin, and then for another of our family who was present. Her prayer was not long, but her every word was weighty, and her manner very affecting; the purport was, that they might all be taught, and comforted by the Lord. About five in the afternoon she desired me to pray with her once more. Surely I then prayed from my heart. When I had finished, she said, Amen. I said, 'My dear child, have I expressed your meaning?' she answered, 'Oh yes!' and then added, 'I am ready to say, Why are his chariot wheels so long in coming? But I hope he will enable me to wait his hour with patience.' These were the last words I heard her speak.

Mrs. Newton's heart was much, perhaps too much, attached to this dear child, which is not to be wondered at, considering what a child she was, and how long and how much she had suffered. But her Master graciously supported her in this trying season. Indeed there was much more cause for joy than for grief; yet the pain of separation will be felt. Eliza well knew her feelings, and a concern for her was, I believe, the last anxiety that remained with her. She said to those about her, 'Try to persuade my aunt to leave the room, I think I shall soon go to sleep, I shall not remain with you till the morning.' Her aunt, however, was the last person who heard her speak, and was sitting by her bed when she went away. A little past six, hearing that a relation who dearly loved her, and was beloved by her, and who had come daily from Westminster to see her, was below stairs, she said, 'Raise me up that I may speak to him once more.' Her aunt said, 'My dear, you are nearly exhausted, I think you had better not attempt it.' She smiled and said, 'it is very well, I will not.' She was then within half an hour of her translation to glory, but the love of her dear Lord had so filled her with benevolence, that she was ready to exert herself to her last breath, in hopes of saying something that might be useful to others after she was gone.

Towards seven o'clock, I was walking in the garden, and earnestly engaged in prayer for her, when a servant came to me and said, 'She is gone.' O Lord, how great is thy power! how great is thy goodness! A few days before, had it been practicable and lawful, what would I not have given to procure her recovery: Yet seldom in my life have I known a more heart felt joy, than when these words, *She is gone*, sounded in my ears. I ran up stairs, and our whole little family were soon around her bed. Though her aunt and another person were sitting with their eyes fixed upon her, she was gone perhaps a few minutes, before she was missed. She lay upon her left side, with her cheek gently reclining upon her hand, as if in a sweet sleep: and I thought there was a smile upon her countenance. Never surely did death appear in a more beautiful, inviting form! We fell upon our knees, and I returned (I think I may say) my most unfeigned thanks to our God and Saviour, for his abundant goodness to her, crowned in this last instance by giving her so gentle a dismissal. Yes, I am satisfied. I am comforted. And if one of the many involuntary tears I have shed, could have recalled her to life, to health, to an assemblage of all that this world could contribute to her happiness, I would have laboured hard to suppress it. Now my largest desires for her are accomplished. The days of her mourning are ended. She is landed on that peaceful shore where the storms of trouble never blow. She is forever out of the reach of sorrow, sin, temptation, and snares. Now she is before the throne! She sees him, whom not having seen, she loved; she drinks of the rivers of pleasure which are at his right hand, and shall thirst no more.

She breathed her spirit into her Redeemer's hands a little before seven in the evening on October 6th, 1785, aged 14 years and 8 months.

I shall be glad if this little narrative may prove an encouragement to my friends who have children. May we not conceive the Lord saying to us, as Pharaoh's daughter said to the mother of Moses, "Take this child, and bring it up for me, and I will pay thee thy wages?" How solemn the trust! how important and difficult the discharge of it! but how rich the reward if our endeavours are crowned with success! And we have every thing to hope from his power and goodness, if, in dependence upon his blessing, we can fully and diligently aim at fulfilling his will. Happy they who will say at the last day, "Behold, here am I, and the children which thou hast given me."

The CHILDREN of my friends will likewise see my narrative. May it convince them that it is practicable, and good, to seek the Lord betimes! O my dear young friends, had you seen with what dignity of spirit she filled up the last scene of her life, you must have been affected by it! Let not the liveli-

ness of your spirits, and the gaiety of the prospect around you, prevent you from considering, that to you likewise days will certainly come (unless you are suddenly snatched out of life) when you will say and feel that the world, and all in it, can afford you no pleasure. But there is a Saviour, and a mighty One, always near, always gracious to those who seek him. May you, like her, be enabled to choose him, as the Guide of your youth, and the Lord of your hearts. Then, like her, you will find support and comfort under affliction, wisdom to direct your conduct, a good hope in death, and by death a happy translation to everlasting life.

I have only to add my prayers, that a blessing from on high may descend upon the persons and families of all my friends, and upon all into whose hands this paper may providentially come.

JOHN NEWTON.

*Charles's Square, Hoxton,
October 13, 1785.*

HYMN.

Praise.

- 1 WHILE here on earth I'm call'd to stay,
I'll praise my God from day to day;
Jesus hath wash'd away my sin,
And made my soul complete in him.
- 2 When I am brought before his throne,
I'll sing the wonders he hath done;
And join with all the ransom'd race,
To praise the riches of his grace.
- 3 Thro' all eternity I'll view
My Jesus, and admire him too;
Praise shall attune my warbling tongue,
- 4 And grace, free grace be all my song.

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