

THE
AFRICAN PREACHER.

AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE.

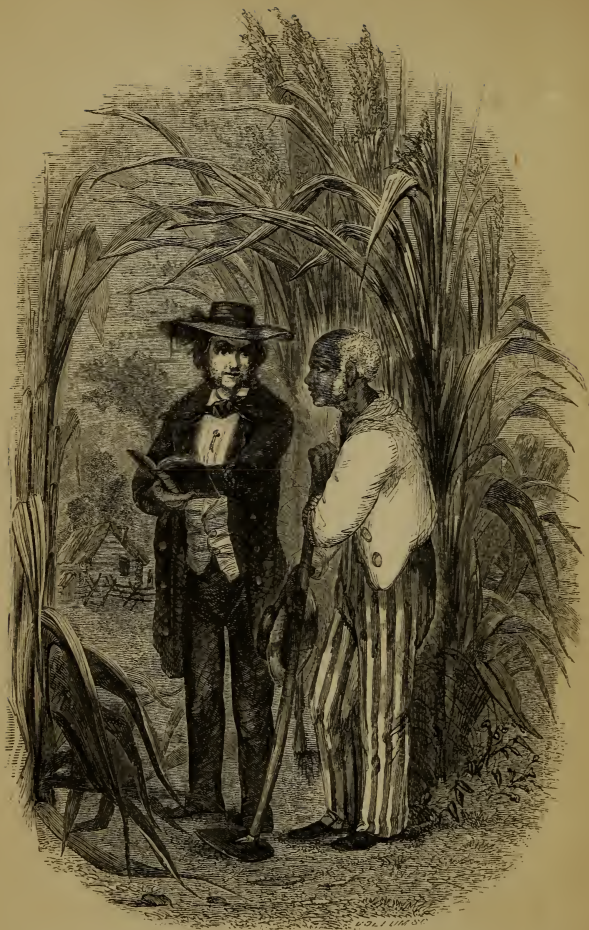
BY THE
REV. WILLIAM S. WHITE,

Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Lexington, Virginia.

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“ I have discovered lately that I am a great sinner.”—Page 78.

To the Rev. BENJAMIN H. RICE, D. D.,

Pastor of Hampden Sidney Church, Va.:

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER—By your counsel, my humble labours as a Domestic Missionary were commenced in the county of Nottoway; and to your sympathy and co-operation is to be ascribed a large portion of the little good which may have resulted from those labours. It is, therefore, most reasonable that a narrative resulting, as this does, from that mission, should be inscribed to you.

Accept it, then, as an humble expression of the respect, the gratitude, and the love of

Your Friend and Brother,

WILLIAM S. WHITE.

THE MANSE, *Lexington, Va., March 10, 1849.*

THE AFRICAN PREACHER.

THE prominence given in the Scriptures to the characters and lives of such persons as Ruth, Esther, and Nehemiah, proves, that “God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him”—that he hath moreover “chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty.” Since the days of inspiration ended, the dealings of God’s providence and the dispensations of his grace, have beautifully harmonized with the revelations of his word. Hence, in all ages of the world, down to the present hour, many of the loveliest

specimens of true piety, have been found in the humblest walks of life. Here, God's wisdom, love, and mercy shine with a lustre all their own; and here religion displays its richest fruits.

The narrative now to be given is designed to illustrate these remarks. The subject of it was a native of Africa. When about seven years of age, he was kidnapped, brought to this country, and enslaved. He was supposed to belong to one of the last *cargoes* of this sort, ever landed on the shores of Virginia. He was purchased at Osborne's, on James' river, by a Mr. Stewart, and was subsequently taken to the county of Nottoway, Virginia, where the whole of his long and interesting life was spent.

He grew to manhood, ignorant of letters, and a stranger to God; engaged in the occupations common to those in a state of bondage. The region of coun-

try in which he lived, was, at this period, deplorably destitute of the means of grace. The gospel was seldom preached, the Sabbath scarcely known as a "day of sacred rest," and few were found willing to incur the odium of a public profession of religion.

Before we proceed further with our narrative it is important to state, that "Uncle Jack," for so he was universally called, possessed great acuteness of mind, and understood and spoke the English language far better than any native of Africa we have ever known. His pronunciation was not only distinct and accurate, but his style was chaste and forcible. His great superiority in this respect must be ascribed to the following causes:—First, to his having left his native land at so early an age. Next, to the freedom with which he was permitted and encouraged to mingle in the best society the country afforded;

and above all, to the familiar acquaintance he soon formed with the language of the Bible. The reader must not be surprised, therefore, that nothing occurs, in what we quote from his own lips, of the jargon peculiar to the African race. Nobody ever heard the good old preacher say *massa* for *master*, or *me* for *I*.

It was during the period of intellectual and moral darkness already referred to, and when he had probably reached the fortieth year of his age, that he became anxious on the subject of religion. The account he gave of his early religious impressions was very simple. He said nothing of dreams and visions, as is so common with persons of his colour. His attention was first arrested, and his fears excited, by hearing from a white man that the world would probably be destroyed in a few days. On hearing this, he

asked his informant what he must do to prepare for an event so awful. He was told to pray. "This," he said, "I knew nothing about. I could not pray." At length he was enabled to recall some portions of the Lord's prayer, which he continued to repeat for a considerable time. But these efforts brought him no relief.

That which thus commenced in mere alarm, soon led to a deep and thorough conviction of his guilt, helplessness, and misery, in the sight of God. He now exerted himself in various ways, and with untiring zeal, to obtain a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. There were literally none in his vicinity, either in the ministry, or among the private members of the church, qualified to teach and to guide an inquiring mind like his. The Presbyterian church, then recently established in Prince Edward, was within

thirty miles of his residence. The ministers of the gospel from that county, made occasional excursions into Nottoway. From these he soon obtained the help he needed. His own statement on this subject is as follows: "I had a very wicked heart, and every thing I did to make it better, seemed to make it worse. At length a preacher passed along; they called him Mr. President Smith.* He turned my heart inside out. The preacher talked so directly *to* me, and *about* me, that I thought the whole sermon was meant for me. I wondered much, who could have told him what a sinner I was. But after a while there came along a young man they called Mr. Hill;† and about the same time another, with a sweet voice, they called Mr. Alexan-

* The Rev. John Blair Smith, D. D., then President of Hampden Sidney College.

† The Rev. Wm. Hill, D. D., of Winchester, Va.

der.* These were powerful preachers too, and told me all about my troubles; and brought me to see that there was nothing for a poor, helpless sinner to do, but to go to the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust in him alone for salvation. Since that time, I have had many ups and downs; but hitherto the Lord has helped me, and I hope he will help me to the end."

He now became deeply interested in hearing the Scriptures read. As his knowledge of the Bible increased, he found, to use his own language, "that it knew all that was in his heart." He wondered how "a book should know so much."

He was still unable to read, but now determined to learn. To this end he applied to his master's children for assistance; promising to reward them for

*The Rev. Archibald Alexander, D. D., afterwards Professor of Theology, Princeton, New Jersey.

their pains with nuts and other fruits, as tuition fees. By the aid of his youthful instructors, his object was soon attained, and he read the word of God with ease. The sacred volume now became the constant companion of his leisure hours. So rapid was his progress in divine knowledge, and such his prudence, good sense, and zeal, that many of the most intelligent and pious people of his neighbourhood expressed the desire to have him duly authorized to preach the gospel. The Baptist church, of which he had become a member, took this matter into serious consideration; and after subjecting him to the trials usually imposed by that denomination, licensed him to labour as a herald of the cross.

Upon the duties of his new and responsible office, he entered with a truly apostolic spirit. He commenced his ministry in a neighbourhood where there

were literally none to break statedly to the people the bread of life. His labours were abundant and faithful. He was often called to preach at a distance of more than thirty miles from his home. He was still a slave, and never seemed to think of any better state, until his attention was called to it by others. He belonged to the undivided estate of his original purchaser, who was now dead. Some of the legatees of this estate were willing to emancipate him, but others were not. This, however, constituted no serious obstacle. He had rendered himself so useful, and had gained the confidence and good will of the community to so great an extent, that a sum of money was soon raised by subscription, quite sufficient to satisfy the demands of those who were unwilling to liberate him. Some idea may be formed of the estimation in which he was held, when it is known that many

contributed liberally to the fund thus created, who were not professors of religion. Having thus secured his freedom, he settled on a small tract of land, of which he became the proprietor, chiefly through the munificence of others, and lived in a way which satisfied his humble wishes. Here he literally earned his bread with the sweat of his brow, while he faithfully dispensed to others the bread of life, with scarcely any compensation, except the consciousness of doing good.

The late Rev. John H. Rice, D. D., had a brief interview with our preacher, in which he was deeply interested. This occurred during the summer of 1826, when the old man had nearly reached the 80th year of his age, and one year before our acquaintance with him commenced.

Referring to this interview afterwards, Dr. Rice said, "The acquaint-

ance of this African preacher with the Scriptures is wonderful. Many of his interpretations of obscure passages are singularly just and striking. In many respects, indeed, he is one of the most remarkable men I have ever known."

At this period, Dr. Rice was editor of the Virginia Literary and Evangelical Magazine; and entertaining the views expressed above, it is not surprising that the pages of this valuable periodical should contain a brief but interesting memoir of "Uncle Jack." It may be found in the first number of Vol. 10. In this memoir, Dr. Rice expresses himself thus: "There lives in a neighbouring county, an old African, named Jack, whose history is more worthy of record than that of many, a man whose name has held a conspicuous place in the annals of the world. There is a book which, I have no doubt, contains the name of *Old Jack*, but not those,

I fear, of many great men and nobles of this world. It is 'the Lamb's book of life.'

"Jack possesses the entire confidence of the whole neighbourhood in which he lives. No man doubts his integrity or the sincerity of his piety. All classes treat him with marked respect. Everybody gives unequivocal testimony to the excellence of his character.

"He possesses a strong mind, and, for a man in his situation, has acquired considerable religious knowledge. His influence among people of his own colour is very extensive and beneficial.

"Old Jack is as entirely free from all bigotry and party spirit, as any Christian I have ever seen. He acknowledges every man to be a brother, whom he believes to be a Christian. A very striking proof of his humble, teachable, catholic spirit, is given in his conduct towards two Presbyterian missionaries,

who were successively sent to the part of the country where he resides. On their arrival, he seemed very cautiously to investigate their character. The result was a conviction that they were pious and devoted men; and a hearty recognition of them as ambassadors of Christ. He found, too, that they knew a great deal more than he did, and resolved to employ his influence in bringing the black people in his neighbourhood under their instruction. He also frequently consulted them in regard to matters of difficulty with himself, and used their attainments for the increase of his own knowledge, and for enabling him the better to instruct the numerous blacks who looked up to him as their only teacher.

“It has before been said, that the conduct of this old Christian had secured the respect and confidence of the white people. As evidence of this, some

time ago a lawless white man attempted to deprive him of his land, under a plea that his title was not good. As soon as the design was known, a number of the first men in the neighbourhood volunteered to assist him in maintaining his right, and a lawyer of some distinction, not then a believer, rendered gratuitous service on the occasion, because everybody said, Uncle Jack was a good man.

“But while the white people respect, the blacks love, fear, and obey him. His influence among them is unbounded. His authority over the members of his own church is greater than that of the master, or the overseer. And if one of them commits an offence of any magnitude, he never ceases dealing with him, until the offender is brought to repentance, or excluded from the society. The gentlemen of the vicinity freely acknowledge, that this influence is highly

beneficial. Accordingly, he has permission to hold meetings on the neighbouring plantations whenever he thinks proper. He often visits the sick of his own colour, and preaches at all the funerals of the blacks who die any where within his reach."

The high source from whence this extract is taken, and the extent to which it must sustain and enforce the subsequent portion of our narrative, is a sufficient excuse for its introduction.

One of the most gifted and honoured sons of old Virginia,* who resided for more than forty years within one mile of the subject of this narrative, and was thoroughly acquainted with his public and private life, and even acknowledged himself under obligations to this humble preacher of righteousness as a spiritual instructor, furnished

* Dr. James Jones, of Mountain Hall.—See Appendix.

the following just and beautiful delineation of his character.

“I regard this old African as a burning and shining light, raised up by Christian principles alone to a degree of moral purity seldom equalled, and never exceeded in any country. Think of him as an African boy, kidnapped at seven years of age, torn away from his heathen parents, thrust into a slave-ship among hundreds of the most degraded beings, transported across the Atlantic, landed on our coast, brought by a very obscure planter in what was then the back-woods of Virginia, here kept in bondage at the usual occupation of slaves, under circumstances but little calculated to improve the mind, or mend the heart; without letters, without instruction, until a glimpse of divine truth, caught by hearing the Bible read, arrested his attention. Seizing on the truth thus obtain-

ed, and appreciating its excellence, almost without assistance, he soon learns to read the sacred volume. His researches are now pursued with growing zeal, and signal success, until he is enabled to penetrate into some of its most sublime mysteries, to feel the force of its obligations, to enjoy its consolations, and to become an able and successful expounder of its doctrines to others.

“As a preacher of the gospel, he gained the good will and secured the confidence of all who were capable of appreciating true excellence of character, gained admittance into the best families, and was there permitted to enjoy a freedom of intercourse that I never witnessed in any other similar case.

“All these views of this old man’s character, have excited in my mind somewhat of an enthusiastic admiration

seldom felt by me for any member of the human family, of any rank or station. Such effects under all the circumstances of the case, must be traced up to a cause altogether superhuman, and set the seal to the superlative excellence, the divine authenticity of the Christian system."

A lady, whose rank, intelligence and piety, place her among the first of her sex, and who still lives to bear testimony to the literal truth of this narrative, has kindly furnished the following statement written more than ten years ago.

"My acquaintance with the old man commenced about thirty years since, when there was scarcely a vestige of piety, especially among the higher classes in this community. The Baptist church to which he belonged was in this region nearly extinct. The few members who remained, he regularly visited and in-

structed. His first visit at our house was intended for a Baptist lady who was spending some time with us. In his conversation with this lady, I was surprised at the readiness and propriety with which he quoted the Scriptures; and especially at the sound sense which characterized his practical reflections on the passages quoted. This induced me to seek a more intimate acquaintance with him; and as he found I was interested in his conversation, he often called on me.

“He has been eminently useful to many persons of my acquaintance. When under spiritual concern, they would apply to no other teacher. During the period of dreadful darkness, to which I have already alluded, he went from house to house, doing good. About this time, he became signally instrumental in the conversion of his former master’s youngest son. This youth gave

abundant evidence of vital piety, both in his life and his death.

“I think the most prominent traits in his character, are meekness, humility, and rigid integrity. He possesses naturally a strong mind, a very retentive memory, with the happiest talent for illustrating important truth, by the objects of sense, and the ordinary employments of life. I trust, dear sir, you will be able to furnish the public with an instructive account of this humble and obscure, but interesting and useful old man.”

This communication was designed to aid in the preparation of a series of biographical sketches of “The African Preacher,” which appeared in the columns of the Watchman of the South in 1839; and was so used. The writer still lives, and would doubtless acknowledge that in her transition from darkness to light, and from the power of

Satan unto God, she was mainly indebted, through divine grace, to the visits and conversations of the good old African, referred to in her letter.

Uncle Jack's views of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, were thoroughly evangelical. He was particularly fond, to use his own words, of "that preaching which makes God everything, and man nothing." The total depravity of man—the absolute sovereignty of God in electing him to salvation through the imputed righteousness of Christ—the necessity of regeneration by the Spirit, through the belief of the truth—the growth in grace and final salvation of all who truly repent and believe the gospel; these were his favourite themes, both in his sermons and conversation. And these, with all their kindred topics, he could illustrate by allusions to nature and art, with a clearness which left no obscu-

rity about his real sentiments. He was particularly fond of the Epistle to the Romans, and often spoke of it, as containing "the very marrow of the gospel." He often bestowed much time on a single passage. On one occasion, he called our attention to the third verse of the eighth chapter of Romans, saying, "Master C. and I have been studying a great deal over that verse for the last three weeks, and we do not fully understand it yet. Do tell me all about it."

Anxious to know what his own construction was, we insisted that he should give us his opinion, promising to give him ours when he had concluded. With this proposition he was very reluctant to comply, but finally consenting, he proceeded as follows. We give the exposition in his own order, and almost *verbatim* as he gave it to us. "Well," said he, "I will do

the best I can. The verse begins thus: 'For what the law could not do.' And what is it the law can't do? Why, it can't justify us in the sight of God. Why not? Because 'it was weak through the flesh.' There is no weakness in the law. *That* is as strong as its Author. But the weakness is in man's flesh. Observe, this is a weakness '*through the flesh*.' That is, the weakness is in man's corrupt nature. Now, what is to be done for man in his helplessness and guilt? The text tells us plainly, 'God sending his own Son'—for what? Why, to do for ruined man what the law could not do on account of his sinfully weak nature. And when God sent his Son, *how* did he come? 'In the likeness of sinful flesh.' I suppose that means, he came as a man, though not a sinful man; for he knew no sin. And *why* did he come? The text answers, 'and for sin, condemned

sin in the flesh.' That is, on account of sin in man, he suffered the condemnation due to *that* sin in his own person. So," says the old African—his dark visage brightening with the emotions within—"what God's law cannot do, his own Son can do. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!"

We could only join in his closing exclamation, assuring him that, according to our best judgment he had adopted the true interpretation of the passage, and we left him, blessing God, as we shook his hand, for bestowing such grace and knowledge upon one so humble and so unpretending.

His knowledge of human nature was profound, because it was derived wholly from the Bible, confirmed by his own observation. Hence his extensive usefulness, not only among those of his own colour, but also in a large circle of whites, embracing many of the most

intelligent, wealthy, and refined people of the county.

In the familiar intercourse to which he was admitted by the latter class, he was never known to offend by any thing like forwardness. Says one who knew him well: "His humility has always been of the most rational kind—entirely removed from all cant and grimace. Before he became superannuated, the great field of his operations as a preacher was the funeral sermons called for by the owners of deceased slaves. He was universally employed in this way, with the hearty consent of persons of all descriptions in this community. I have known him to be sent for to a distance of more than thirty miles to attend to a service of this kind. In every instance he would receive the most polite and friendly attentions of the white portion of the family; and even by the irreligious, was frequently

remunerated in money for his services."

Through life, he manifested a surprising thirst for knowledge. He embraced with avidity every opportunity of getting instruction, both in public and in private. Nothing pleased him more than the opportunity of conversing with ministers of the gospel. Mountain Hall, the delightful residence of the late Dr. Jones, was a home for Christ's ministering servants as they journeyed through that part of the country. The African Preacher lived at the distance of a mile from this place. He seemed to know, almost by intuition, when a minister called to spend the night with the good doctor and his lady. And however dark or even stormy the night might be, when the bell rang for evening family worship, the good old African would be seen with tremulous steps slowly entering,

and with deep solemnity, seating himself in a retired part of the room to attend upon the service. A stranger would not be likely to observe him, unless indeed the person conducting the worship should happen to sing Windham, or Mear, or Old Hundred, to some appropriate psalm or hymn. Then his attention would very probably be arrested by a voice, not remarkable for its melody, nor yet remarkable for its strength—but a voice so solemn, so tremulous with the emotions which seemed to accompany it from the depths of a heart all alive to God's praise, that he could no longer remain unobserved.

When the service closed, he resumed his seat—so modest as never presuming to seek an introduction to the reverend visitor. The polished, but pious inmates of that mansion, were his special patrons and friends, and had given him

a prescriptive right to that corner and to that chair. But he was never permitted to remain unnoticed. The visitor was invariably taken to the place where the old man sat, and told, "this is our friend and neighbour, Uncle Jack, who has come to-night expressly to join in our worship, and to make your acquaintance, with a view to his improvement in divine knowledge." Then followed an interview, in which the teacher rarely failed to learn as much as the scholar.

He greatly delighted in hearing the gospel preached by those who were well educated, as well as pious; and never seemed to enjoy a sermon which consisted mainly in empty declamation. We have often heard him say, "I don't like to hear more *sound* than *sense* in the pulpit."

He uniformly opposed, both in public and private, every thing like noise and

disorder in the house of God. His coloured auditors were very prone to err in this way. But whenever they did, he suspended the exercises until they became silent. On one of these occasions, he rebuked his hearers substantially as follows: "You noisy Christians remind me of the little branches (streams) after a heavy rain. They are soon full, then noisy, and as soon empty. I would much rather see you like the broad, deep river, which is quiet, because it is broad and deep."

On another occasion, when a very large assembly had convened, and when he had reason to suppose there might be a good deal of mere animal excitement, before he sung or prayed, addressing himself to one of his audience by name, he said, "Suppose your master had directed you to go to Petersburg to-morrow; and suppose, on your telling him you knew nothing of the road,

and therefore could not go, he should repeat the command, and say, "You shall go, whether you know the way or not, and shall be severely punished, if you fail to go." Now you are in great trouble, and going to look for some one who can tell you the way, you happen to find a good many people together, all of whom say they know the way perfectly. You tell them the trouble you are in, and beg them to tell you the way to Petersburg. Now, there happens to be one in that crowd, older than the rest, and who is thought to know the way rather better than they. So, all wait for him to talk. Now, suppose that, just as this old man begins to tell you about the road—where this fork, and where that is—when you must turn this way, and when that, all his companions commence clapping their hands, groaning and shouting so, that *you can't hear dis-*

tinctly a word the old man says. Could he possibly teach you the road to Petersburg, unless they would keep still? Now, here are a great many sinners, who must find the road to heaven or perish for ever. I am about to tell them as well as I can, how they may find that road, and escape that destruction, and don't *you Christians bother me, and hinder their learning by your noise.* Let every mouth be stopped, and let all keep quiet until I am done."

His sentiments and his practice on this subject seem the more remarkable, when it is remembered, that at this time nothing was more common, not only among the blacks, but also among the whites, than noise and confusion during public worship. Indeed, they were thought the best Christians who shouted the oftenest and prayed the loudest. This sentiment he literally abhorred, and did his utmost to exter-

minate. He was particularly fond of a tract published by the American Tract Society, entitled, "The importance of distinguishing between true and false conversions." He often applied for this tract, that he might take it to some white neighbour, who had recently professed conversion; expressing the fear, that the individual for whose benefit he wanted it, was in danger of resting in a groundless hope. With those of his own colour, he talked thus on this subject: "You who can read the Bible, should read it much; and you who cannot, should embrace every opportunity of hearing it read. If you do not, how will you ever know that your religion is such as God will approve? God alone knows, and he alone can tell us, what will satisfy him, and this he has done in his word. Why, persons fond of smoking, can't tell whether their pipe is lighted, if they smoke in the dark;

much less can you tell whether your heart is right in the sight of God, unless the light of his word is poured upon your experience.”

The reader will be interested also in knowing something of his sentiments in regard to revivals of religion. More mistaken views on this subject could hardly prevail any where, or at any time, than prevailed in the region of country in which the African Preacher lived, and during the time of his ministry. His sentiments may be fairly and fully learned from the following incident.

On a certain occasion, he attended a protracted meeting, conducted by some of the best white preachers in that part of the country; at which “the new measures” were used, and at which there was a great deal of excitement and no little noise. On his return, he called to see me, and, during his visit,

gave me the following account of the meeting: "There were a great many people, and a great deal of talking, and singing, and praying. They call it a revival; and if by a revival, they mean a great increase of confusion and noise, they are right. But so it is, I had no enjoyment at the meeting. I heard very little of what I call *real preaching*. I was constantly thinking, and it may be, this was a temptation of the devil—any how, I was constantly thinking of what I have sometimes noticed in *new grounds*. If a man *clears up* a piece of land in the summer, and has not time to cut down and take away all the trees, but *belts* a good many, and leaves them standing about in the field, the leaves die, but don't fall. Now, when winter comes, and the wind blows hard, I always noticed that one of these *belted* trees made more noise in the wind, than a half dozen green, living trees.

These noisy Christians look to me so much like *belled* trees with the leaves on, in a windy day, that I could not enjoy the meeting at all. And yet the fault might have been in me."

Few things delighted him more than to be made acquainted with the views of standard evangelical authors on doctrinal subjects. He was at all times particularly interested in clear and sound expositions of such passages of Scripture as are hard to be understood. A friend says, "After I had read to him, at some length, the opinions of one of our ablest divines on a disputed point in theology, he said, 'Well, I have long wanted to have that matter explained, but all I could gather about it, was like picking up a few scanty crumbs and dry pieces of crust, which could not satisfy my hunger; but now, you have given me a great loaf, that I may eat and be full at once.'"

At another time, on having a very difficult text explained to him, he said, "Whenever I came to that text, I was like a little child two or three years old, trying to go from one room of his father's house into another. After trying again and again to reach and raise the latch, but all in vain, his father comes along, and does, without the least difficulty, what the child could not possibly do. Just so with me. You have opened the door, and now I can go in."

He was a close observer of passing events—an accurate discerner of the signs of the times. He looked at every thing in its bearing on the cause of Christ. He said to us on one occasion, "Real Christians are the salt of the earth; and I do believe that this world would have been destroyed long ago, but for them. Does not the word of

God say, that for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened?"

There were two individuals in the circle of his acquaintance, remarkable, not only for their own destitution of religious principle, but also for doing all they could to suppress it in the large families of which they were the heads. During their lives, no member of either household made any advance towards forming a connection with the church. Soon after their deaths, which happened nearly about the same time, the widow and several of the children of each, became pious, active members of the church. When his attention was called to this fact, he said, "I have often seen a large, spreading oak, standing alone in a field, with nothing growing under it—but only cut that tree down and take it away, and a little culture will make the land very productive."

We have already learned that he was

admitted to terms of great familiarity with persons of every grade in society; and yet his deportment never savoured of arrogance or presumption. There was but one class of persons with whom he ever used a freedom which the most fastidious could censure. These were such as scoffed at sacred and divine subjects. Persons of this sort would sometimes jeer him about his religion; and endeavour to make Christ and his precious cause subjects of buffoonery and ridicule. The old African was far more jealous of his Master's glory than of his own ease or reputation. On such occasions, his usual diffidence and reserve would give place to a firm but dignified defence of the truth; and most happily could he "answer a fool according to his folly." Nor did one of this fraternity ever encounter him without being seriously worsted.

A man addicted to horse-racing and

card-playing, stopped him in the road one day, and addressed him as follows: "Old man, you Christians say a great deal about the way to heaven being very narrow. Now, if this be so, a great many who profess to be travelling it, will not find it half wide enough." "That's very true," said the good African, "of all who merely have a name to live, *and of all like you.*" "Why refer to *me*?" asked the man; "if the road is wide enough for any, it is for me." "By no means," was the pertinent reply; "when you set out, you will wish to take along a race-horse or two, and a card-table. Now there's no room along this way for such things, and what would you do, even in heaven, without them?"

Another individual of large fortune, who was accustomed to treat the subject of religion rather sportively, and who at the same time prided himself

on his morality, said to him, "I think, old man, I am as good as need be. I can't help thinking so, because God blesses me as much as he does you Christians, and I don't know what more I want than he gives me; and yet I never disturb myself about preaching or praying." To this the old preacher replied with great seriousness, "Just so with the hogs. I have often seen them rooting among the leaves in the woods, and finding just as many acorns as they needed, and yet I never saw one of them look up to the tree from which the acorns fell."

He was fond of considering piety, both internal and external, as progressive in its developments. He opposed with the utmost firmness and faithfulness, the idea of one's *getting religion*, as the phrase is, and then folding his hands in utter idleness. He was fully aware that this error prevailed to a

deplorable extent, among those of his own colour, and he spared no pains to resist and eradicate it. He was accustomed to say, "I have no notion of that religion which is better at first than it ever is afterwards. When Christians hear a sermon on the text, 'Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?' they are apt to conclude that it don't suit them, because they *have turned* long ago. Now, the truth is, to be the real children of God, we must continue to turn as long we live. For my own part, I often feel as if I *had as much turning to do* now, as I had when I first set out."

His views on this subject were unusually enlarged and scriptural. They reached into eternity. Nothing less than the expectation of an eternal progression in knowledge, holiness, and usefulness satisfied his desires. Of this, we are furnished with a striking

illustration in the following incident. A pious young man, of considerable intelligence, conversing with him on growth in grace, said, "We should strive to grow until we die." "Yes," replied our preacher, "and hope to grow after we die. I trust in God I shall grow for ever."

Standing one day in sight of a field of tobacco, he said to me, "Some fifty years ago, I expected the time would come, when I should be of some account in the Lord's vineyard. But now, I am very old, and have given up this hope." Then pointing to the tobacco, which grew near us, he said, "That is very *promising* tobacco, but it must be *cut and cured*, before it will be of any service to its owner. And so it is with me. All that now comforts me on this subject, is the hope that God will make some good use of me in another and better world. The re-

deemed of the Lord are said to serve him in heaven. What a service that must be! How unlike any thing seen or known on earth!"

Here let the reader pause and consider, that this old African could barely read, and never learned to write. He was taught in the school of Christ, and only there. We never knew him read, nor do we think he cared to read, any book except the Bible, or something of a kindred character. He was literally taught of God, and thus became wise unto salvation. With the jet black colour, and all the features of the African race fully developed, such were the beauties of his mind and heart, as to render him an object worthy of the highest respect—the most profound veneration. Often have we rejoiced to sit at his feet and learn, and with no little delight do we anticipate the day when we shall walk, side by side,

along the banks of the river of life, and partake together of the fruits of that tree, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

Another very striking characteristic of the African Preacher was solicitude for the prevalence of pure and undefiled religion. He sought, in every legitimate way, the advancement of Christ's cause. Most truly could he say, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." Perhaps few, if any, have ever lived, who entered more fully into the spirit of the 80th Psalm—or who, with reference to the interests of Zion, could with greater sincerity or deeper earnestness, adopt the beautiful language of one of our hymns:

"If e'er my heart forget
Her welfare or her woe;
Let every joy this heart forsake,
And every grief o'erflow.

“For her my tears shall fall
For her, my prayers ascend;
To her my toils and cares be given,
’Till toils and cares shall end.”

All who visited him might expect to be questioned on this subject, as closely as good manners would warrant. No one, who made the attempt, ever failed to interest him deeply on the subject of missions. We have often seen the tear roll down his dark and furrowed cheek, as he listened to some thrilling statement respecting the spread of the gospel among the heathen. He fully believed, that “the field is the world”—that the great commission of the ascending Saviour binds the Church to preach the gospel to every creature, and make disciples of all nations. Here his faith and zeal were such as to put to shame many who, with advantages far superior to his, are still strangers to the missionary spirit,

which is but another name for the spirit of the Gospel—the spirit of Christ.

When he prayed, as we know he did with unusual faith and fervour, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,” his far-reaching mind and heart extended to every nation and kindred and tribe, upon the whole earth. He had known what it was to live amidst the darkness of heathenism, and what it is to enjoy the genial light of the Sun of righteousness.

On one occasion, after listening with fixed attention and deep feeling to a statement of a discouraging character respecting the state of religion in a neighbouring county, he said, “There seems to be a great coldness and deadness on the subject of religion everywhere. The fire has almost gone out, and nothing is left, but a *few smoking chunks lying about in places.*” How striking is the thought of one’s having

just religion enough "*to smoke*," but not enough to burn. No light, no heat—only a little smoke. Who that has the fire of divine love in his heart, can be content to lead such a life? Indeed it is extremely doubtful, whether a principle of such potency can exist, and yet exert no more influence. Let the inactive, useless member of the church, ponder the homely but expressive language of the good old African, and hang his head for shame, that he should hold no higher place, and act no better part in the vineyard of his Master, than that of a "*smoking chunk*" lying by the wayside.

Speaking of the causes of a low state of piety, he said, "Christians don't love each other enough. They don't *keep close enough together*. They are too much like fire-coals, scattered over a large hearth. Coals in that condition, you know, soon die out. Only gather

them up, and bring them close together, and they soon become bright and warm again. So it is with Christians. They must be often and close together—in the church—at the prayer meeting, and thus help one another along.”

His attention was frequently called to the purposes and plans of the American Colonization Society. He always said it would succeed if the natives were duly restrained. Young as he was when taken from that country, he seems to have formed a just estimate of the African character. Comparing their superstitious practices and degraded condition, with the privileges enjoyed under the Christian system, he was often heard to thank God that he had been brought to America. “For,” he would say, “coming to the white man’s country as a slave, was the means of making me free in Christ Jesus.” He remembered very distinctly having often been forced

to participate in the idolatrous rites and ceremonies practised by his parents; and he seldom exhibited deeper emotion than when referring to these things. From this subject he seldom passed, without adding, "If I were only young enough, I should rejoice to go back and preach the gospel to my poor countrymen. But," he would say, "it would be a great trial to live where there are no white people."

In every situation, whether of freedom or of bondage, he had found in the white man a friend and a brother. And we scruple not to say, that the black man has no better friend on all this earth, than he finds in the educated, pious son of the good old commonwealth, in which the African Preacher lived, preached and died—respected while he lived, and lamented when he died.

Perhaps no Christian grace shone more brightly in his character, than hu-

mility. The attentions bestowed upon him by persons of the highest standing, were remarkable. He was invited into their houses—sat with their families—took part in their social worship, sometimes leading in prayer at the family altar. Many of the most intelligent people attended upon his ministry, and listened to his sermons with great delight. Indeed, previous to the year 1825, he was considered by the best judges the best preacher in that county. His opinions were respected, his advice followed, and yet he never betrayed the least symptom of arrogance or self-conceit. When in the presence of white people, he seldom introduced conversation, and when he did, it was invariably done by modestly asking some very pertinent question on some very important subject. He was perpetually employed either in seeking or communicating information, and when no opportunity pre-

sented itself of doing either, he was habitually silent.

His dwelling was a rude log cabin; his apparel of the plainest and even coarsest materials, and yet no one ever heard him utter one "murmuring word." Like the shepherd of Salisbury Plain, his gratitude for what he had, precluded all anxiety for what he had not.

The tones of his voice, the expression of his countenance, together with every word, and every action, proclaimed that, in true lowliness of mind, he esteemed others better than himself.

An illustration of his meekness and humility is furnished by the fact, that when asked his opinion respecting the law, then recently enacted by the State Legislature, prohibiting coloured men from preaching, he very promptly expressed his approbation of the law; adding, "It is altogether wrong for such as

have not been taught themselves, to undertake to teach others. As to *my* preaching, I have long thought it was no better than the ringing of an old cow-bell, and ought to be stopped." He accordingly bowed to the authority of this law; and although often told that the penalty for its violation would not be inflicted on him, he never preached afterwards; but became a constant and devout worshipper in a neighbouring Presbyterian congregation, which had been recently organized, and over which the first pastor of that denomination ever settled in the county of Nottoway, had been recently installed.

Another incident, illustrating his humble and contented disposition, must not be omitted. Previous to the cessation of his public ministry, a pious and wealthy lady, feeling grieved to see him so rudely clad, presented him with a well made suit of black cloth. This



suit, he wore but once, and then returned it to his kind friend, begging that she would not be displeased at his doing so, and justified his conduct thus: "These clothes are a great deal better than are generally worn by people of my colour. And besides, if I wear them, I find I shall be obliged *to think about them even at meeting.*"

We have already spoken of the polite attentions he received at the hands of white people. In truth, Uncle Jack was always a welcome guest. In warm weather, he always insisted on sitting in the portico, or on the steps leading into the house, as a place better suited to his rank and character, than the parlour. Whenever he took this humble position, the whole family would soon gather around him, and hang upon his words, as long as he could be induced to remain. We have known the whole of a large and fashionable dining party,

leave the gay attractions of the parlour, and repair to the porch, or to the shade of some venerable tree, under which he had taken his position, each saying as they went, "Uncle Jack has come, let's go and hear him." On such occasions, he displayed great prudence and wisdom in the topics introduced. He seemed fully to realize the importance of not repelling or disgusting the young and irreligious, by pressing religious truth upon their consideration, any further than they were disposed to give him their serious attention. The skill with which he could "rightly divide the word of truth, and give to each his portion in due season," might well rebuke some far better educated and more distinguished ministers than he.

He never seemed to suppose for a moment, that the attentions shown him, were the result of any personal merit of his own. He considered them all as

flowing directly from a regard to his Master, and his Master's cause. Nor was he led by such attentions to consider himself above those of his own colour. Most meekly and humbly did he "condescend to men of low estate." Most tenderly did he love, fervently did he pray, and faithfully did he labour for, his "brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh." He sought their society, and mingled with them in their cabins, with the utmost familiarity. The respect shown him by the whites, united with the vast superiority of his intellectual and moral attainments over theirs, rendered him the object of suspicion and jealousy with the more ignorant, and vicious of this class. He was, moreover, a rigid disciplinarian. He was the relentless enemy of all pretended sanctity. Every departure from what he deemed an orthodox creed, or a consistently pious life, was sure to

meet with his most decided opposition. Hence, all feared, and some really hated him. He was no stranger to persecution for righteousness' sake.

A gentleman of our acquaintance detected one of his servants, who belonged to Uncle Jack's pastoral charge, in some petty theft. The master merely admonished the offender, and dismissed him, saying, "I shall content myself with laying this matter before your preacher." He retired, but soon returned, and with the deepest concern depicted in his countenance, said, "Master, I have come back to say to you, that if you think I deserve punishment for what I have done, I would much rather you would punish me at once, as you think I deserve, than to tell Uncle Jack about it." The gentleman very wisely concluded not to comply with this strange request, and the servant was commended to the *moral* dis-

cipline of the good old pastor, which resulted very favourably.

It is somewhat remarkable, that just about the time that Alexander Campbell, of Bethany, commenced the propagation of his peculiar sentiments, which so seriously disturbed and divided the Baptist churches in the west, a coloured preacher whose name was Campbell, entered upon the work of "reformation" among the Baptists of his own colour in south-eastern Virginia. This man, however, struck out a course of his own—in some respects the reverse of the system adopted by his more learned namesake, but possessing equal, if not superior claims to originality. It will be quite sufficient for our present purpose, to mention two articles in the new creed of this sable reformer. One of these may be expressed thus: Inasmuch as very few of the blacks are able to read, they should no longer rely

upon, or be directed in their faith or practice by, the written word of God, but depend entirely upon the teachings of the Holy Spirit. The other was, that the old Jewish law, forbidding the use of swine's flesh, was still in force, and hence it was a great sin to eat pork or bacon.

Our Mr. Campbell could read, but, he said, God had shown to him in a dream the great impropriety of his doing so, as so many of his people were deprived of this privilege. He accordingly called a number of his congregation together, told them his dream, and gave them the interpretation thereof—said it was very wrong for the preacher to be above the people, and then, with great affected solemnity, threw his Bible into the fire and burned it to ashes. The success of this fanatic was considerable; so much so, as to awaken no little alarm among the owners of slaves in that sec-

tion of the country. As soon as tidings of these things reached our old African, true to his principles, and faithful to the cause of truth and righteousness, he determined to make an effort to check the evil. Accordingly, he set out on a visit to the “reformer,” and on reaching the neighbourhood in which he lived, called on several gentlemen whose servants had become *his* “disciples”—stated the object of his visit, and desired that a meeting might be held for the purpose of checking, if possible, these new and strange doctrines. His approach was hailed by these gentlemen, as if he had been a second Luther, come to withstand another Tetzal. The meeting was held.

Mr. Campbell commenced, with all the self-importance so common to self-constituted, and self-styled reformers—pouring forth torrents of “great swelling words of vanity.” The people sympa-

thized with their leader, and joined warmly in the clamour. The African Preacher maintained the utmost silence for a considerable time, but at length arose with great solemnity and said, "My Bible teaches me, in all my ways to acknowledge God, and never to lean to my own understanding. Hence, I can go no further in this business until we have prayed for God's guidance and blessing." This proposition was evidently unexpected, and to many very unacceptable. But the dignified and solemn manner in which it was made, awed them into momentary silence, and kneeling, he prayed with strong faith and deep feeling, that God would be pleased to direct and bless them in their efforts to learn and do his will. The impression made by this prayer was eminently salutary. Finding that the people had become silent and more respectful, our good preacher proposed to

this “setter forth of strange” doctrines, to state and prove his creed. He commenced with an attempt to sustain his positions by quotations from the Bible. To this Uncle Jack objected, on the ground that he had burned his Bible, and accordingly had no right to the use of any thing it contained. This was extremely embarrassing. But the prohibition was very properly enforced with the utmost firmness. An appeal to the audience as to the propriety of this course, met with so much favour, that Campbell, finding the current beginning to turn against him, became very angry, and resorted to personal abuse of the good old African. Upon this, the latter arose and with a good deal of biting sarcasm—a weapon he knew quite well when and how to use—said to the people: “My friends, you all see that what this man says about doing without the Bible, and depending on

the Spirit, cannot be true; for he was not able to talk at all, when I told him he had no right to quote a book he had burned. And you can all see, by his getting so angry, that if any spirit came to his help, it was not the Holy Spirit. And as to that notion of his about the sin of eating *hog-meat*, if the half of what I hear about him and a great many of his members be true, the white people ought to do all they can to encourage that belief, as it will make the raising of hogs down this way, much easier and more certain than it is now." With this he took his leave, and with this, *coloured Campbellism* died entirely.

The life of the African Preacher was one of no little toil and suffering. Perhaps the most imprudent step he ever took, was marrying a woman who was in no respect "a help meet for him." Without mental culture, without religion, encumbered with a large family

of children, the fruits of a former marriage, and surrounded by an extensive circle of other relatives, she only served to burden him with domestic cares, sufficient to have crushed the spirit of any ordinary man. These people were idle and profligate; he, industrious and economical. They hung around and imposed upon him in the most shameful manner. Often would they filch from him the products of his own daily labour, and then add insult to injury, by the grossest personal unkindness, and even cruelty. But all this only served to give additional brightness and purity to his piety. Some metals become the more brilliant on being rubbed, and some flowers are all the more fragrant when trodden upon. So it is with pure and undefiled religion, and so it was with this good old African Preacher.

His thoughts, his affections, his aims, were all lifted so far above the din of

domestic strife, that it seldom or never disturbed his equanimity even for a moment. The dreariness of his home on earth only served to make him sigh more deeply for "that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." He rarely alluded to these things, and whenever he did, he never failed to say all he could in extenuation of the guilt of those who had injured him. To the writer, he never alluded to these trials but once, and then he said, "I am such a *hard-headed*, disobedient child, that I need a whipping every day." At another time, referring to his poverty, and also to the fact that he had no descendants, he said, "I left nothing in Africa, and I brought nothing to this country. When I die, I shall leave nothing behind me, and shall carry nothing with me, but the merits of my Saviour's obedience and death."

The simplicity of faith, and the self-ap-

plication with which our good preacher was accustomed to attend upon the ministrations of the sanctuary, were truly remarkable. "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand," was not only the language of his lips, but of his heart and of his life. When more than ninety years of age, we have known him to walk two, and sometimes four miles to reach the house of God. And this he would sometimes do in very inclement weather. Nor was he a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word. We have often been surprised at the accuracy with which he could give the outlines of a sermon many days, and even weeks, after he had heard it. Under faithful and pungent exhibitions of the truth, he was often very deeply affected. After hearing a very lucid and impressive sermon on the resurrection of the dead, we found him, when the service had ended, in the rear of the church,

leaning against the side of the house, bathed in tears. On asking him why he wept, he replied, "I am afraid, sir, that after all, I shall never realize what that young preacher talked about to-day. The glories of the resurrection unto life are too high for me." He was reminded of what the preacher had said about the changes which annually occur in nature, as to some extent illustrative of the resurrection. He was told to recollect the astonishing difference in the appearance of the trees in winter and spring; and was then asked, if the God who caused this difference, who, in the spring thus adorned the forest, could not, with perfect ease, beautify and adorn his body in an infinitely higher degree. To this he said, "I do not doubt the power or the love of God; but that which troubles me is this. If the tree has not a good root, God will never make it bloom. And so it is with

me. If I have not the root of the matter in me, I shall never know any thing of the resurrection unto life."

On another occasion, we found him in no little distress of mind; and on asking the cause, were answered substantially as follows: "About a week ago, I heard a sermon on the text, 'Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?' The preacher, who came from the school up here in Prince Edward, took more pains than common to tell us what was meant by *turning*. He made the gate appear so strait, and the way so narrow, that he soon made me fear I had never turned at all. He certainly convinced me that I had still a great deal of turning to do, and that this turning must be the great business of the Christian's whole life." This was a very favourite thought with him. In strict conformity with his views on this

subject, he preferred the term *converting* to converted.

In the course of a sermon on regeneration, he once introduced the following illustration to enforce the duty of growing in grace: "If a farmer," said he, "in clearing and preparing a piece of ground for cultivation, should do no more than to cut down the trees, and remove the bodies and branches of those trees, whilst all the stumps were left undisturbed, he would very soon find that around every one of those stumps a considerable number of sprouts, of the very nature of the old tree, had *put up*, and he would have even more clearing to do than he had at first. Now, to get his land in a proper condition, he must not only cut down the trees, but he must *grub up* the stumps. Yes, he must continue to grub as long as any part of the root is left. Just so

with sin in a man's heart and life. He must not only forsake open sin, he must look to the heart, where the roots of this open sin are, and these roots must be grubbed up. And this grubbing he must keep at, as long as life lasts, or he will never bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to the praise of God's free grace."

Our good preacher was much opposed to the hasty admission of members into the Church. He was accustomed to say, "It is much easier and safer, to keep unworthy persons out of the Church, than *to get them out*, after they have been once received." And again he would say, "The Church will not suffer half as much, by keeping a dozen worthy members out, a little too long, as she will by admitting one individual too soon. If you adopt this method of admitting members, you must see to it, that *your back door is as wide as the*

front. You must prepare for *dropping them*, as readily as you *took them up*."

It should be remembered, that these views were entertained and expressed, by a native of Africa, at different periods, between the years 1828 and 1836. Every one, at all acquainted with the history of the Presbyterian Church during those eight years, will be struck with the difference between the sentiments of this sable son of a Pagan continent, and some who stood high, as learned doctors of divinity, and even professors in Theological Seminaries, in these enlightened ends of the earth. And we presume there are few or none now in our communion, who would hesitate to say, that the Church would have fared much better, had she asked counsel of the African Preacher, instead of following the advice of some of her "most enlightened and pious divines." Had this been done, our motto would

have been, *a pure church, or no church.* It is true, the course recommended by the African, would not have emblazoned our church registers with so long and imposing an array of names; but the purity, and by consequence the moral power of the Church, would have been far greater. The efficiency of an army depends upon the patriotism, the courage, and the activity of each soldier, more than it does upon the gorgeous uniform, the graceful movements, or even the imposing numbers of those who fill its ranks. So every one destitute of the essential qualities of "the good soldier of Jesus Christ," hinders the progress, and detracts from the efficiency of "the sacramental host of God's elect." Such views as these led the good African Preacher to make the Saviour's rule his, and they should lead us to make it ours. It is the only reliable rule: "By their fruits ye shall

know them." The application of this rule in any given case, requires more than a day, a week, or a month.

The next thing deserving of consideration in the character of this excellent old man, was his method of dealing with persons awakened to a sense of their sinfulness in the sight of God. He was very often consulted by persons in this state of mind, of every grade in society; as also by those who, having hope in Christ, were asking what step they should take next, to honour Christ and do good. Here, as in other matters, his course was characterized by good sense and discretion.

On one occasion, a lady of great respectability told him that she considered herself a Christian, but at the same time avowed the purpose of not making a profession of religion by connecting herself with the Church. At this he expressed great surprise—

reminded her of what our Saviour said of those who “confessed,” and of those who “denied” him, and then added, “Mistress, if you should suddenly come in possession of a large sum of money, would you lock it up in your house, and try to keep it a great secret? It would neither do you nor any body else much good, to take that course with it.”

At another time, one gave him a long account of a remarkable dream she had had, and desired his opinion on the subject. To this he replied, “The Scriptures do tell us something about dreams, but no where that I remember, of any one converted by a dream or converted when he was asleep. I can understand people a great deal better when they tell me of what they say and do when they are awake, and when they talk about a work of grace in their hearts.”

There lived in his immediate vicinity, a very respectable man who had become interested on the subject of religion, and who, with some earnestness, had begun to "search the Scriptures." He had been thus employed but a short time when he became greatly perplexed with some of those passages which even an inspired apostle has said, are "hard to be understood." In this state of mind he repaired to our preacher for instruction, and found him at noon, on a sultry day in summer, occupied in his field, hoeing corn. As the man approached, the preacher saluted him with his accustomed politeness; and then with patriarchal simplicity, leaning upon the handle of his hoe, listened to his story. "Uncle Jack," said he, "I have discovered lately that I am a great sinner, and I have commenced reading the Bible that I may learn

what I must do to be saved. But I have met with a passage here," holding up his Bible, "which I cannot understand, and which greatly perplexes me. It is this, 'God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth;' what does this mean?" A short pause intervened, and the old African answered as follows: "Master, if I have been rightly informed, it has only been a short time since you commenced reading the Bible, and I think the passage you have just read is in the Epistle to the Romans. Long before you get to that, at the very beginning of the gospel it is said, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' *Now, have you done with that?* The truth is, *you read entirely too fast.* You must begin again, and learn the lesson as God has been pleased to give it to you. When you have *done* what you are told to do in Matthew, come to

see me, and we will talk about that passage in Romans." Having thus answered, he resumed his work, and left the visitor to his own reflections.

Who does not admire the simplicity and good sense displayed in thus dealing with a person of this description? Could the most learned polemic more effectually have met and disposed of such a difficulty? The gentleman particularly interested in this incident gave the foregoing account of it to the writer, and, if he still lives, will joyfully say now, as he did when he first spoke of it, "It convinced me fully of the mistake into which I had fallen. I took the old man's advice, soon saw its propriety and wisdom, and hope to bless God for ever for sending me to him." The consequence was, that he soon became an intelligent, consistent Christian, connected himself with the Church, and contributed in no small degree to

the promotion of a cause he had once hated and opposed.

Our preacher was not only skilful in imparting instruction, but patient and submissive in the endurance of evil. We have already seen with what meekness he bore the domestic trials which befell him. He sometimes suffered abroad as well as at home. But his Christian submission was every where and at all times conspicuous. When reviled, he reviled not again. He rejoiced in being counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. We know of but one instance in which he was threatened with personal violence. A party of such as the Apostle Paul denominates "lewd fellows of the baser sort," on one occasion interrupted him while preaching, and took him into custody. After reviling him a good deal, they avowed the horrid purpose of punishing him with stripes, and asked him,

tauntingly, what he had to say in his own defence. "I wish to know," said the good old man, "why you intend to punish me. If it is for preaching the gospel, I have not a word to say." "Why," asked one of the party, "you are not willing to be whipped, are you?" "Perfectly willing," was the emphatic answer, "perfectly willing; and I will tell you why I am. I can read the Bible *a little*; and in reading it, hardly any thing surprises and grieves me more than to find that such a man as the Apostle Paul, 'five times received forty stripes save one,' for preaching this same gospel. Now, when I remember this, and then remember that an old sinner, such as I am, should have been preaching, or trying to preach this gospel for more than forty years, and never yet had *one lick* for it, I am perfectly willing to be whipped."

This reply wholly disarmed his ad-

versaries. They were literally silenced. With a moral courage which was fully equal to his humility, he resolved to improve the advantage he had thus gained. The whole of his audience, frightened by the brutal assault of these wicked men, "forsook him and fled." He stood alone, in the midst of his enemies, with no eye to pity, and no hand to help. But He who said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," fulfilled his gracious promise. Thus sustained, thus cheered, he addressed his persecutors in language so pungent, and yet so tender, that one by one, they walked quietly away, leaving him in the undisturbed possession of the ground. The leader of this party, who gave us this story, and who subsequently became a pious man, was often heard to say, "the impression made on my mind and heart by that incident, was never effaced."

Knowing that the African Preacher

was now very old, and evidently near the end of his earthly pilgrimage, and our personal intercourse with him having for several years ceased, we addressed a letter, early in the winter of 1838, to *our* best earthly friend and *his*, Dr. James Jones, asking for information of his state, now that the shadows were lengthening, and his end supposed to be near. To this letter, the good Doctor promptly sent us the following reply:

“MOUNTAIN HALL, *Nottoway*, Dec. 31, 1838.

“*My Dear Sir*—There are very few persons, either among the living or the dead, with whom I have had so long personal intercourse, as with *Uncle Jack*. I found him among my nearest neighbours, when I first settled at my present residence. His deportment, under all circumstances, has never varied; always modest, unassuming and humble. His serene and placid countenance is seldom without a smile, if engaged in

conversation, or great gravity, if disengaged. Ever prone to enter into conversation, where he thinks it not disagreeable, he scarcely ever fails to make religion the topic before it ends. He visits my family with the utmost freedom, on all sorts of business and occasions which are legitimate, and I think I cannot be mistaken in the assertion just made. His visits are now, perhaps, more frequent than ever; and seem to be made almost exclusively for the purpose of getting information on some text or parable or narrative in the Bible. When this is his object, he announces it immediately on his arrival, asks to have it read from the Bible, and frequently inquires what our commentators say on the subject.

“It is proper here to state, that while his memory is greatly impaired on all matters of secular concern, it is retentive and ready on every thing relating

to the Scriptures, in connection with his own experience of the influence of divine truth. On propounding his questions for information, he invariably quotes, most accurately, the chapter and verse; not unfrequently, the words themselves. Very frequently he will refer to the occasion on which he first heard it read or spoken of; perhaps thirty or forty years ago, in some sermon or private conversation.

“Both his physical and mental powers are evidently on the wane. He exhibits no little debility by his unsteady gait, his head inclining forwards, so that his chin almost rests upon his breast; and he complains much of rheumatism. Still, he manifests great reluctance to confinement, so long as he can use the organs of motion. He gives his personal attention to every branch of business in his little establishment, and is, at this time,

in a most comfortable situation, as respects his supplies of the necessities of life. I perceive no alteration at all in the temper and disposition of his mind. The same equanimity which has so long distinguished him, still prevails; and so remarkable has his character been, in this respect, that I have never yet seen an individual who has known him to be put out of temper, or to show any thing like petulance, or irritation, or resentment, on any occasion whatever, throughout his whole life.

“Weak and feeble as he is at this time, he seems to have been most highly excited, both in mind and body, by the revival of religion which has been for some time past in progress in the churches around him. He is unable to attend distant meetings, but frequently walks to those near at hand. He takes special care, however, to get to very many of the families in which

conversions have been reported, let them be far or near. I am often surprised to hear from him an account of what passed between him and certain families, in recent conversations. Upon inquiry, I find he has walked all the way expressly to see them. He would say, 'I could not resist. I was obliged to try and get to them, that I might tell them all I knew, to help them on their way.'

"I can only add the assurance of the undiminished esteem and affection of

Yours truly,

JAMES JONES."

It must not be forgotten, that the subject of this narrative was supposed to be nearly eighty years of age when the writer first made his acquaintance. Both in mind and body he was already on the wane. Little or nothing is remembered of what he was in the vigour of mature age. There were none at

that period, whose feelings and habits prompted them to preserve for future use the incidents of a life so unpretending and so humble. They who have rendered us so much assistance, were not then professors of religion; and few, if any, of those who were, could be considered capable of appreciating the old man's real worth. We have therefore only called the attention of the reader to the rays of a luminary near the horizon. For any adequate conceptions of his noon-day brilliancy, we are left wholly to conjecture. We have, moreover, sketched the lineaments of a mind almost entirely destitute of cultivation. With thorough training, may we not reasonably suppose that our African Preacher would have attained to the intellectual stature of an Augustine or a Cyprian—those distinguished sons of his father-land?

But we must resume our narrative.

Shortly after the foregoing letter was written, he became extremely ill. He thought the time of his departure had arrived, and so thought all his friends. Dr. Jones, who attended him as his physician, during this illness, has kindly furnished us with the following account of the old man's views and feelings at this trying time.

“During his illness, I often listened with intense interest to the views and feelings he expressed, as he lay upon what he supposed to be his death-bed. And views more rational and scriptural I never heard from any one. The most perfect calmness, as to his future destiny, pervaded his bosom. Gratitude to God for all his merciful dealings towards him, was the prominent exercise of his mind. The neighbours vied with each other in acts of kindness in that crisis. In view of this, he said to me, ‘What have I done to deserve all

this? I came, a stranger to all, thousands of miles across the great water, and as long as I have lived, I have never wanted a friend. And now, when I am about to die, I am loaded with kindness far beyond any thing that I deserve.” The Doctor closes his statement thus: “Whenever this venerable African departs hence, it may be truly said, that a purer spirit than his never escaped its clay tenement on earth, to its house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

From this attack, however, he recovered, and lived about four years longer. During this period, his hearing, sight, and speech were all impaired. Still he enjoyed surprising health for one of his advanced age. Nor did his interest in the cause of Christ suffer the least abatement. His path was emphatically that of the just, “which shineth more and more to the perfect day.” The truth

is, when every thing else failed to arrest his attention and excite his feelings, the bare mention of that name which "is above every name," imparted, in no small degree, the lustre of youth to his almost sightless eyes, and the animation and vigour of mature age to his emaciated frame.

In July, 1842, we saw him for the last time. On reaching Mountain Hall, we soon learned from the family that Uncle Jack was then with them. He had recently come on one of his accustomed visits, and was taken suddenly so ill that he could not return to his own cottage. This was very favourable to his comfort. For here he was supplied with every thing necessary to check his disease or to cheer his spirit. On proposing to go to his room, we were told that he had been for some days in a stupor; that he could scarcely be induced to say any thing, or to notice any body; and

that it would be painful to see him. But we determined to go, not doubting that he could be roused. He had no fever, and suffered no pain. The candle had sunk in the socket, and only needed *raising*, to make it shine as brilliantly as ever. And there was a way by which this might be done. Accordingly, we went to his room, accompanied by the good friend, whose guests both Uncle Jack and we were, as we had often been before. We found him, on entering his apartment, surrounded with as many conveniences and comforts as any one could reasonably have desired. He lay, calm and tranquil, with his eyes fixed on the ceiling. Approaching his bedside, we took his black and bony hand in ours, but he spoke not, nor moved his eyes. We then saluted him in the usual style of ordinary civility, inquiring, in a very distinct voice, after his health. Perceiving that he scarcely

noticed what we said to him, Dr. Jones advanced and said, "Old man, don't you know who this is?" He replied, "My hearing is better than my eye-sight. I don't know the face, but I am sure I have heard the voice before. I think I have heard that voice in the pulpit." We then determined to try the experiment of rousing him, by merely quoting passage after passage of Scripture in his hearing; and soon succeeded, far beyond our most sanguine expectations. When the passage, commencing, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," was mentioned, he responded with great animation, "*That he did—that he did*; and there rests all my hope."

He now expressed great pleasure in recognizing an old acquaintance, and said, "Sometimes I hear of you in one place, and sometimes in another; but

go where you may, the Lord takes care of you."

On being asked how he felt in prospect of death, he replied: "Everything I call my own will soon be dissolved and pass away. Without Christ, I am but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." After a short pause, he proceeded to speak, substantially as follows: "Some years ago I heard you preach a sermon on the text, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock!' That text, I think, is in Revelations. I have thought of that day and that sermon a great many times since. You seemed to be much in earnest, but I was sorry to see how little interest the people took in it. They seemed to go away unconcerned. Then I thought, what will all our knocking come to, unless the Lord adds his blessing?" After another pause, during which he seemed to be asleep, he opened his eyes and said, "We have

had a revival here lately. Some call it a revival, and some say *it is all trash*. Any how, the Lord can take *even trash*, and make *a real fire*, if he chooses."

Having joined with him in prayer and praise, we left him for the night, greatly revived both in body and spirit. We had seen and heard *that* over which the soul of man might well rejoice, and we could but utter, in silent ejaculation, thanksgiving to Him who not only came into our world "to seek and to save" the rich publican, Zaccheus, but also to provide that the poor should have the gospel preached to them.

On the ensuing morning we found him improved in health, but depressed in spirit. "I have lived a long time," he said, "but all to no purpose. I do not see the least fruit of any thing I ever did; and I suppose it would be no better if I should live as long again. For a long time I have tried to get a

new heart and a right spirit, but fear I never succeeded. Such thoughts and feelings as trouble me, would never disturb a real Christian." Here he was reminded of the Christian warfare, and particularly of what the Apostle says about "wrestling." He replied, "That is all true. I have many a time gone into the woods and wrestled in prayer, until my enemies would all flee, and I would think they were gone for ever; but they soon came back and worried me worse than ever."

His attention was next called to our Saviour's interview with the woman of Samaria; and particularly to this expression: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." In this he was deeply interested, and made many pertinent remarks about the water of

life, and concluded as follows: "This water *springeth up*: it don't *run down* like common water. It is very pleasant and refreshing water. Sometimes we suffer *the trash* of this world to get into it, and then it is not so good. But it is our own fault. The fountain is in heaven, but there are streams of this water now running about almost everywhere. I am nearly done with the stream, and hope soon to be at the fountain."

Speaking of prayer, he said, "Wherever there is a praying heart, there is the throne of grace."

He was next told that a missionary had recently returned from Africa, his native land, and brought the pleasing intelligence that many of his countrymen had received the gospel. At this announcement he clasped his withered hands, and, with much emotion, said, "Every word that cometh out of the

mouth of the Lord is true. He said that his word should be a witness among all nations—that it should have free course, run, and be glorified—and so the gospel has gone across the great sea, all the way to Africa. When the Lord works, none can hinder. Then, I suppose, I shall meet some of my countrymen in heaven. Bless the Lord! As we shall all sing one song, I suppose we shall all speak one language.”

When we rose to leave him, he said, smiling, “You have given me *a snack* upon which I can feed for some time; such talk is meat and drink to me. You must not go away to-day. I wish you to say and do all you can before you leave, to keep me from wandering away any more. It is no wonder that God’s child, when he leaves his father’s side, should get crippled; and when he does, he has nobody to blame but himself.” Shortly after we had left his

apartment, one of his attendants came to me, saying, "Uncle Jack has sent me to tell you that his doubts and fears and difficulties are all gone; that he is now very peaceful and happy, and has nothing more to do but to die and be at rest."

To the surprise of every one, he lingered for several months, but never fully regained his health. We left him, never expecting to see his face in the flesh again. Nor did we. All that we subsequently learned of his state was, that he so far recovered as to be carried to his own humble home, where he lingered a little longer, and then rested from his labours, and now his works follow him.

In the Watchman of the South, of May 4th, 1843, the following announcement occurs:

THE AFRICAN PREACHER—HE IS GONE.

The following obituary, written by

one who had some knowledge of the deceased through the last fifty years of his life, will be read with lively interest by many of God's people.

“The African Preacher, alias Uncle Jack, departed to his rest on the 6th of April, full of years, and full of the hopes of the gospel. A perfect calm marked his last moments. ‘I am ready and waiting to go,’ were his last words.

“Since the publication of a series of biographical sketches of this extraordinary man, in the columns of the Watchman of the South, between four and five years ago, there has occurred nothing in his subsequent life, different from the uniform tenor of it, as depicted in those sketches. Both body and mind gradually sunk, and gave way to the pressure of nearly one hundred years, which he had numbered on earth.

J. J.”

About the time the foregoing obituary appeared, we received the following communication from another, but a kindred pen.

“NOTTOWAY, *April 12, 1843.*

“Uncle Jack is no more. He sunk gently down to the grave on the 6th instant, under the pressure of nearly one hundred years. His last days, like his whole life, were calm and peaceful. But little could be gathered of the exercises of his mind, except from the attitude of prayer, which was indicated by the frequent raising of his hands and eyes upwards. A few hours before he died, he revived a little, and said, ‘I am ready and waiting for the Saviour;’ then gently breathed his last.

C. J.”

It is pleasing to review such a life, terminating in such a death. It might be profitable to detain the reader with

the reflections which very obviously arise from this unpretending narrative of so humble and obscure a man. But the writer is conscious that the moral of these simple annals, will at once occur to every serious reader. Let him only remember, that this old man's pilgrimage commenced on the dark shores of Africa: that when a heathen boy, he was captured and brought to this land; for a time enslaved, but soon emancipated: that he was indebted for his freedom, under God, to the liberality of benevolent and Christian masters, whose sole object was to confer on him the merited reward of an upright life, and to enlarge his sphere of usefulness to others. Visited by "the day-star from on high," he was numbered among those whom the Son makes free. And having led a very long life of humble, consistent, and devoted piety; a life which won for him the kind

attentions and affectionate confidence of the best people of the country in which Providence had placed him, he died, cheered by the bright prospect of a blessed immortality. And through all that country, his memory is cherished, and his influence felt to this day. True, to use his own striking language, "having done with the stream, he is now beside the fountain," but still he lives, and will live, as the wise, the good, the useful always do, to the end of time.

We conclude with the prayer, that he who writes, and they who read, may only live the life, and share at last, the heavenly inheritance of the African Preacher.

APPENDIX I.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DR. JAMES JONES.

THERE occurs, very frequently, in the foregoing narrative, the name of one with whom the reader may wish to become better acquainted. Such a wish is reasonable, and should be gratified. But a higher purpose may be answered by the brief sketch we now propose to give. In thus associating two individuals, in many respects so different, it must be gratifying to the pious, and may be useful to all, to see how the religion of the Bible reaches *up* to the highest, then *down* to the lowest; and disdaining the distinctions which birth, education, rank and for-

tune create, can make companions and friends of both. Thus it was with the African Preacher and the late Dr. James Jones, of Mountain Hall. During the last twenty years of their lives, it was difficult to know one, without knowing the other. They resided for almost fifty years within one mile of each other. The former was poor, the latter rich; the former almost wholly destitute of the knowledge of letters, the latter educated in the best schools on two continents. The one humble in his circumstances, unpretending, and unknown; the other occupying several of the highest civil stations ever held in this country, besides shining as one of the brightest ornaments of the medical profession. What but the gospel of the Son of God, could have brought together two individuals, so diverse from each other, and called forth so much condescending kindness in the one, so much

reverential regard in the other, and so much fraternal sympathy in both?

Dr. James Jones, was born in the county of Nottoway, Virginia, December 11th, 1772. His parents were among the most reputable and wealthy citizens of the county in which they lived. They wisely determined to spare neither care nor money in the education of their son. He was accordingly sent to the best schools, and as early as 1788, he matriculated at Hampden Sidney College, during the presidency of the celebrated Dr. John Blair Smith. Here his mind became deeply imbued with religious principles, during one of the most remarkable revivals of religion ever known in this, or any other country, since the great revival on the day of Pentecost, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. He left College, however, without making a profession of religion, and mainly to gratify his desire for religious knowledge, he became

a temporary resident in the family of the celebrated Devereux Jarret, an Episcopal clergyman of Dinwiddie. Here his religious impressions were fostered; and although he sometimes thought of the gospel ministry as his profession, he seems not to have been really converted. He remained but a short time in the family of his friend Mr. Jarret, and at the earnest solicitation of his father, repaired to Philadelphia, where he prosecuted the study of medicine with great success, under the celebrated Dr. Benjamin Rush. Thence he was transferred to the University of Edinburgh, where he graduated with signal honour, and returned to his native State, and native county, a physician, whose talents and education soon placed him at the head of his profession.

Shortly after his return from Europe, he married Miss Catherine Harris, of Surrey; a lady, whose mind, manners and education

were such as to enable her, in a very high degree, to promote his happiness and contribute to his success. Her dignified and gentle manners, her polished mind, her amiable disposition, her warm-hearted hospitality, are extensively known and highly appreciated through Virginia and elsewhere, especially by travelling ministers of the gospel, who so often found in her a sister, and in her house a home. She survives her husband; and now, at an advanced age, in all the loneliness of a childless widowhood, she awaits, with Christian meekness, the summons, which must ere long call her to that land, where

“ Everlasting spring abides,
And never withering flowers.”

Dr. Jones was not permitted to continue long in private life. He was frequently called to represent his county in the State

Legislature. He served as Privy Counsellor under the elder John Tyler; represented his district in Congress during the administration of Mr. Madison, and was chosen to act as a member of the Electoral College in the election of four successive Presidents. In all these important stations, he discharged his duty with signal faithfulness and ability.

His extreme modesty, and nothing but this, prevented his becoming distinguished as a debater in our national councils. But he was a politician whose prudence, whose accurate and varied knowledge, sound judgment, purity of purpose, and practical wisdom, rendered him eminently useful.

His residence, as a student of medicine, in Philadelphia, and still more, his subsequent residence in Europe, was by no means favourable to the development of the religious feelings and principles which had been awakened at Hampden Sidney. Indeed, an

opposite and a disastrous influence was exerted. He returned to his native land very decidedly skeptical in his views. Unfortunately, such views had, at this time, become very popular in Virginia, and particularly so in the region of country in which our friend commenced the practice of medicine. Here a number of the wealthiest and most intelligent gentlemen, had united in the formation of an "infidel club," the place of whose meetings is known to this day as "*Paineville*"—thus named in honour of *Tom Paine*. The high intellectual character of these gentlemen was such, as to give them great influence over our young physician; and he was accordingly led to think, and feel, and act as they did. Thus he lived for many years, and thus, to use his own language, he "did much to embitter the latter portion of his life with wormwood and gall."

His domestic relations were eminently

happy, and perhaps no man was ever better fitted, by high social qualities, to impart and to enjoy happiness as a husband and father. In the wise but inscrutable providence of God, the sources of our purest and most elevated enjoyments often become the occasions of our deepest grief. It was thus with these fond parents. God had given them two lovely daughters, the only children He ever gave them. One of these died in infancy. The other had nearly attained maturity, and gave abundant promise of the rarest excellences. A lovely person, a sprightly and well-cultivated mind, a tender and amiable heart, made her almost the idol of her doting parents. She seemed to them as a source of light and comfort, by which their footsteps were to be directed, and their hearts cheered, amidst the darkness of old age. But, in all this, they were sadly disappointed. Death came again, and laid this

lovely form by the side of her who had been buried in infancy, and bore her spirit to Him who is the resurrection and the life.

The death of two such children, with none to supply their place, was an affliction almost too heavy to be borne, and threatened to crush those upon whom it fell.

The following extract is taken from a paper found in his desk after his death, and written at the time of his sad loss. It is here presented, as furnishing proof of the strength of his parental feelings, an illustration of the greatness of his grief, and as a specimen of the efforts made by a vigorous mind and tender heart—as yet, unenlightened and unrenewed by divine grace—to find consolation in sorrow. The extract is as follows:

“She was her parents’ sole delight ;
They had but one—one only child.”

“The loss of this fair bud of being, just

beginning to bloom and spread all its sweets abroad to our enraptured senses, nipped by an untimely frost, has left me to wail in gloomy silence. Ever dear, ever sacred shall be the recollection of her! Yes, an all-wise Providence permitted her to shed on this benighted world, the effulgent beams of her brilliant soul, for a short time only, and then took her back to himself, in order to attract more forcibly the earnest longings, the ardent aspirations of her afflicted parents towards himself. Never can I again plunge into the gay scenes, the flattering, beguiling pleasures of this troubled ocean of time. Whilst I possessed such a treasure as she was, far short of its intrinsic value was my estimate of it. Now that I am bereft of it, my fond, my mortified recollection goes back to scenes, which, could I return to them again, would afford me the most exquisite delight—the antepast of heaven. To cultivate such a

mind; to cherish all its virtuous emotions; to guard it against the attacks of vice; to direct its expansive operations in the fields of fancy and of science! O God! what exquisite enjoyments didst thou put within my reach, and what shameful indifference did I betray! Pardon, O pardon, my gross ingratitude! Give me resignation to thy heavenly will, believing that all things shall work together for good to those who, through faith and patience in well-doing, seek for immortality of bliss in thy favour only."

Here the manuscript ends abruptly. About this time, whether before or after writing the above we are not informed, the deeply-distressed father addressed a letter to a distinguished gentleman, whose acquaintance he had made in Congress, asking for consolation. His friend, who was an utter stranger to the Bible, if not an avowed unbeliever, replied with promptitude and kindness, say-

ing all that the light of nature, and all that reason, unassisted by revelation, could say, to cheer the heart, when well nigh crushed with grief. Having read this letter again and again, he exclaimed, "Is this all? Can nothing more be said or done to cheer me in my sorrow? There must be a God. This I have always believed. It is equally obvious, that this God is benevolent; and if so, he has somewhere made provision for support and comfort at a time like this. But where is this provision to be found? The letter of my friend shows plainly that this world has it not. Had it been discoverable by reason, the writer would have known it. But, instead of giving comfort, his communication adds poignancy to my grief. It must be in the Bible. *I will look.*" Thus he reasoned. Then opening the inspired volume, he turned its leaves somewhat at random, when his eyes fell on this passage, "For our light

affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal, but the things which are not seen, are eternal." 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

This arrested his attention. This touched his heart, and he exclaimed, "I have found it. This meets my case." Thus encouraged, he read on, and in process of time, became a true believer in Christ, and a consistent and useful member of his church.

He now sought to promote the spiritual good of his friends and of the world, with great liberality and zeal. Upon thorough investigation, he became a Presbyterian, and sought and obtained from the Presbytery a missionary, who found in his house a home, and at his hands a support, which enabled him to prosecute his work with some success;

and thus, through the instrumentality of this distinguished physician and statesman—now an humble Christian—were the foundations of a church laid, which has increased in numbers and efficiency, until it has become one of the largest and strongest country churches in the Synod of Virginia.

At an early period of his Christian life, he became a ruling elder in the church which he had so materially aided in organizing; and for many years served with great fidelity in all our church courts, from the Session to the General Assembly.

Dr. Jones had mingled freely, until about the fiftieth year of his age, in the gayest, most fashionable, and the least religious circles of society. His manners and his habits were accordingly such, as strongly incline those who make a profession of religion, from the higher walks of life, to content themselves with the shadow, rather than

the substance. As an illustration of the mighty power of divine truth in remodeling the character, and as a proof of the sincerity and depth of his piety, it should be stated, that on connecting himself with the church, he engaged promptly and zealously in the active duties of the Christian life. He erected an altar, around which his family were regularly called to offer their morning and evening devotions. He took the deepest interest in the religious instruction of his large family of servants; and few have succeeded so well in inducing this class of persons to attend regularly and seriously on divine worship, both social and public. From his earliest connection with the Church, to the end of his earthly pilgrimage, he had a neat apartment kept as a private chapel, where divine service was regularly performed on the Sabbath, for the benefit of his own servants, and such of his neighbours' servants

as might choose to attend. For several years, the writer was accustomed to officiate in this place, and to this people, on the Sabbath afternoon; and never can he forget the dignified, yet subdued and chastened manner, with which this excellent man regularly seated himself in the midst of this humble audience, to hear with them the words of life eternal. There, too, sat the good old African Preacher, with his dark visage, but brilliant mind and pious heart, who never failed, when the service was over, to remain, that he might propound questions, and make remarks suggested by the sermon just delivered.

Our lamented friend became the early and zealous champion of the temperance reformation. As early as the year 1828, he attended and addressed the first temperance meeting ever held in that part of the country. He was one of only eight persons who could be induced to favour the holding of this meeting;

and shared largely, but cheerfully, in the public odium which this movement elicited. In this war—and war it was of a truth—he enlisted for life, and lived and died its wise and prudent, but firm and fearless friend and promoter. It was his happiness, too, to see this cause, as well as that of his church, both of which had so feeble a beginning, surmount every obstacle, and attain a high degree of prosperity and usefulness.

All the benevolent enterprises of the Church, enjoyed his confidence, and shared in his benefactions. We have rarely known a man, whose judgment more promptly approved, and whose heart more warmly embraced, whatever tended to elevate and bless his race. Thoroughly educated himself, he was the firm friend of the education of others. An alumnus of Hampden Sidney College, and subsequently a trustee, he was the warm friend and liberal supporter of that

venerable and useful institution. He saw, too, the obvious difference in rank and importance, between the College and the University; and hence his zeal for the former did not make him the blind opponent of the latter. His private letters abound with expressions of the highest admiration for the University of Virginia. He, more than once, visited this seat of learning, and informed himself thoroughly respecting its course of instruction and system of discipline by personal inspection; the result of which was, an abiding conviction, that, without an institution planned, endowed, and conducted as that is, the literary and scientific wants of the commonwealth could not be supplied.

From the period of Dr. Jones's conversion no subject more constantly occupied his thoughts, or more deeply enlisted his feelings, than the condition and future prospects

of his servants. We have already seen the measures he adopted for their religious instruction. But when taught, he wished them to enjoy the benefits of that instruction to the fullest attainable extent. In a word, he desired and he purposed to emancipate them.

He fully believed that the only wise and benevolent method of doing this, was to send them to Liberia, under the auspices of the American Colonization Society. Accordingly, after corresponding with Mr. Elliot Cresson, and other distinguished friends of this cause, in reference to this matter, he and Mrs. Jones, whose sentiments and feelings were identical, commenced a course of instruction designed to enlighten their minds, and to form their characters with a view to emigration.

But the condition of these servants was rendered so extremely comfortable, by the

parental treatment received at the hands of their excellent master and mistress, that not one of them could be induced to go, until that master and mistress should be taken from them by death.

In 1837 he made his will, in which he provides amply for the emancipation and emigration to Liberia of as many as could be induced to go, leaving the whole to be executed at the death of his widow. This will contains the following clause: "The whole subject is to be fully and intelligibly presented to their minds, so that they may have the option of going to the Colony, or remaining in bondage. And I particularly desire that any of them who may be willing to go, shall *at any time* be emancipated by due form of law, by my executors, and transferred to such agents of said Colony as may be willing to receive them. I would prefer that point known as Bassa Cove, under the

direction of the New York and Pennsylvania Colonization Societies.”

The will of 1846, which is his last will does not differ materially from the former. Knowing how tenderly his loved wife felt on this subject, he only leaves the whole matter more fully in her hands.

She has accordingly commenced the work, both of colonization and emancipation; having tendered to some of them the privilege of going this spring to Liberia, and having actually emancipated others, in the best and only way permitted by the laws of Virginia, with the privilege of remaining in the commonwealth.

Were it expedient, we might easily and greatly extend this sketch. We should like to speak, as truth would warrant, of his purity and patriotism; his unshaken constancy as a friend; and particularly of his almost excessive tenderness, faithfulness and

affection as a husband. But we can only glance at his last moments.

He had lived the life of the enlightened patriot, the hospitable and polished gentleman, the consistent, useful Christian. Such a life might be expected to terminate in a calm and peaceful death. His last illness was protracted and severe; but borne with Christian fortitude and Christian submission. He was among the first to discover, that his sickness would be unto death. With the utmost composure, he proceeded to give such directions respecting his temporal concerns, as he deemed necessary; not neglecting a full expression of his wishes as to his burial. Having done this, he said to a friend, who had travelled many miles to visit him, "I am glad to see you. I have endeavoured, from the first, to cast myself upon a gracious God, through a Redeemer. This I now do. The violence of my disease interrupts thought,

and hinders devotion. *I can only trust.*" Shortly after this, he seemed to have drawn his last breath. All perceptible signs of life were gone. His fond wife bent over him in agony, exclaiming, "It is all over." To the surprise of all around him, he opened his eyes, and looked tenderly upon her who was dearer to him than his own life, and said, "Be still and wait. I am waiting quietly."

On another occasion he said, "When I do go, I hope to go straight to a better world." He was now unable to carry on a connected conversation, but as he lay, struggling for breath, and expecting every moment to be his last, he was heard, from time to time, indulging in such expressions as these: "*Bluntly* prepared. Yes, ready, and sometimes very anxious, to go."—"There is still a great deal of evil in the world. Satan is still permitted to have much power. But

the Lord reigns, and will do all things well.” To the friend before referred to, who was, at this critical moment, very reluctantly forced to leave him, and whom, with much difficulty, he was made to recognize, he said, “Farewell! God bless you! It is all that I can say.”

These were among the last expressions which fell from that tongue which had so often, and with so much eloquence, edified and delighted the intelligent and pious visitors, who were accustomed to frequent his delightful residence. That tongue is now silent in death, but the spirit which animated it, lives in a purer and brighter world. That body which, with so much dignity and grace, was accustomed to move through the apartments, and over the fields and gardens of Mountain Hall, now lies beside the remains of the loved ones lost in childhood; but his character and his example still live, to teach

surviving friends and relatives how to be useful in life and happy in death.

Thus lived and thus died, the African Preacher and his distinguished friend and patron. The former ended his days on the 6th of April, 1843, supposed to be nearly one hundred years old. The other followed on the 25th of April, 1848, in the 77th year of his age.

We bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for that gospel which can thus influence all classes in society; revealing, as it does, a Saviour, who could thus lay one hand on the kidnapped African, and the other on the polished graduate of a European University; then mould and fashion their habits and tastes so much alike, that it is hard to say, whether the power and grace of that Saviour are most conspicuous, in elevating the former, or humbling the latter. As unlike by nature as the two continents

which gave them birth, by grace they became one in Christ Jesus, and, beyond a doubt, are now together before the throne, singing, as with one voice and one heart "the song of Moses and the Lamb."

APPENDIX II.



It is stated at page 29, that Uncle Jack was very often called upon to officiate at the funerals of the coloured people. Such occasions on the plantations often exhibit scenes of much solemn interest, both on the part of the planters and the slaves. The following extract from a popular journal, gives a graphic sketch of such a scene.—[EDITOR OF PRESB. BOARD OF PUBLICATION.]

THE NIGHT FUNERAL OF A SLAVE.

Travelling recently on business, in the interior of Georgia, I reached, just at sunset, the mansion of the proprietor through whose

estate, for the last half hour of my journey, I had pursued my way. My tired companion pricked his ears, and with a low whinny indicated his pleasure, as I turned up the broad avenue leading to the house. Calling to a black boy in view, I made him inquire of his owner if I could be accommodated with lodgings for the night.

My request brought the proprietor himself to the door, and from thence to the gate, when, after a scrutinizing glance at my person and equipments, he inquired my name, business, and destination. I promptly responded to his questions, and he invited me to alight and enter the house, in the true spirit of Southern hospitality.

He was apparently thirty years of age, and evidently a man of education and refinement. I soon observed an air of gloomy abstraction about him. He said but little, and even that little seemed the result of an

effort to obviate the seeming want of civility to a stranger. At supper, the mistress of the mansion appeared, and did the honours of the table, in her particular department. She was exceedingly lady-like and beautiful. She retired immediately after supper, and a servant handing some splendid *habanas* on a small silver tray, we had seated ourselves comfortably before the enormous fire of oak wood, when a servant appeared at the end door near my host, hat in hand, and uttered, in subdued but distinct tones, the, to me, startling words:

“Master, de coffin hab come.”

“Very well,” was the only reply, and the servant disappeared.

My host remarked my gaze of inquisitive wonder, and replied to it—

“I have been sad, sad,” said he, “to-day. I have had a greater misfortune than I have experienced since my father’s death. I lost

this morning the truest and most reliable friend I had in the world—one whom I have been accustomed to honour and respect since my earliest recollection. He was the playmate of my father's youth, and the mentor of mine; a faithful servant, an honest man, and sincere Christian. I stood by his bedside to-day, and with his hands clasped in mine, I heard the last words he uttered; they were, 'Master, meet me in heaven.'"

His voice faltered a moment, and he continued, after a pause, with increased excitement:

"His loss is a melancholy one to me. If I left my home, I said to him, 'John, see that all things are taken care of,' and I knew that my wife and child, property and all, were as safe as though they were guarded by a hundred soldiers. I never spoke a harsh word to him in all my life, for he never merited it. I have a hundred others, many

of them faithful and true, but his loss is irreparable.”

I came from a section of the Union where slavery does not exist; and I brought with me all the prejudices which so generally prevail in the free States in regard to this “institution.” I had already seen much to soften these, but the observation of years would have failed to give me so clear an insight into the relation between master and servant as this simple incident. It was not the haughty planter, the lordly tyrant, talking of his dead slave as of his dead horse, but the kind-hearted gentleman, lamenting the loss and eulogizing the virtues of his good old *friend*.

After an interval of silence, my host resumed:

“There are,” said he, “many of the old man’s relatives and friends who would wish to attend his funeral. To afford them oppor-

tunity, several plantations have been notified that he will be buried to-night. Some, I presume, have already arrived; and desiring to see that all things are properly prepared for his interment, I trust you will excuse my absence a few moments."

"Most certainly, sir; but," I added, "if there is no impropriety, I would be pleased to accompany you."

"There is none," he replied; and I followed him to one of a long row of cabins, situated at the distance of some three hundred yards from the mansion. The house was crowded with negroes. All arose on our entrance, and many of them exchanged greeting with my host, in tones that convinced me that they felt that he was an object of sympathy from them! The corpse was deposited in the coffin, attired in a shroud of the finest cotton materials, and the coffin itself was painted black

The master stopped at its head, and laying his hand upon the cold brow of his faithful bondsman, gazed long and intently upon features with which he had been so long familiar, and which he now looked upon for the last time on earth. Raising his eyes at length, and glancing at the serious countenances now bent upon his, he said solemnly, and with much feeling—

“He was a faithful servant and true Christian. If you follow his example, and live as he lived, none of you need fear when the time comes for you to lie here.”

A patriarch, with the snow of eighty winters on his head, answered,

“Master, it is true, and we will try to live like him.”

There was a murmur of general assent, and after giving some instructions relative to the burial, we returned to the building.

About nine o'clock a servant appeared

with the notice that they were ready to move, and to know if further instructions were necessary. My host remarked to me that, by stepping into the piazza, I would probably behold, to me, a novel scene. The procession had moved, and its route led within a few yards of the mansion. There were one hundred and fifty negroes, arranged four deep, and following a wagon in which was placed the coffin. Down the entire length of the line, at intervals of a few feet on each side, were carried torches of the resinous pine, here called light-wood. About the centre was stationed the black preacher, a man of gigantic frame and stentorian lungs, who gave out from memory the words of a hymn suitable to the occasion. The Southern negroes are proverbial for the melody and compass of their voices, and I thought that hymn, mellowed by distance, the most solemn, and yet the sweetest music that had

ever fallen upon my ear. The stillness of the night, and strength of their voices, enabled me to distinguish the air at the distance of half a mile.

It was to me a strange and solemn scene, and no incident of my life has impressed me with more powerful emotions than the night funeral of the poor negro. For this reason I have hastily and most imperfectly sketched its leading features.

THE END.