

A
Brief Memoir
OF
MR. RICHARD HEYWOOD,
THE FATHER OF THE REV. OLIVER AND NATHANIEL HEYWOOD.

MR. RICHARD HEYWOOD was a descendant of Mr. John Heywood, of Heywood Mill, near Bolton, a younger branch of the Heywood family, of Heywood Hall, between Rochdale and Bury. He is supposed to have been born at Bolton, about the year 1596; but the Parish Register at Bolton was lost in the civil war. Under the preaching of a pious minister at Cockey chapel, religious impressions were made on Mr. Heywood's mind when nineteen years of age, from which time he cast in his lot among God's people, and engaged in social exercises of religion with them. "In my childhood," says his son Oliver, "I can remember many days so employed, and, when the apparitor was searching after them, a person was appointed in the entry to deaden the voices of such as were praying in the parlour."

He married Alice Critchlaw of Longworth, in Bolton parish, in A. D. 1615, he being 19 years of age, and she 21. Mr. Alex. Horrocks preached the nuptial sermon. God intending to build them high, laid their foundation low, by taking from them their first-born son John, when he was about a year old, and afterwards bringing them into difficulties, in consequence of Mr. H. becoming responsible for another man's debt: but God had mercy on them, disposed his father to be kind to them, and raised them up many other friends, beyond expectation. "At last," to adopt the words of his son's narrative, "about the year when I was born, the Lord was pleased to extricate them out of troubles, and, my father being careful, began to manufacture on his own account, which was then lucrative." Embarking in commercial speculations, God graciously blessed him in matters of the world, so that he began to rise to opulence, and things succeeded prosperously far beyond expectation. God increased his property while his family was increasing, so that he bought much land, gave portions to his daughters, sunk coal-pits, built houses, and maintained two sons in London and two at the University. God gave him property for the education of his children, and especially for training up his sons, Oliver and Nathaniel, for the service of the sanctuary,

and when that object was accomplished, he stript him of property again.

What follows is an abridgement of the manuscript narrative, retaining the language and sentiments of the narrator.

His embarrassments and troubles in the world returned again upon him in his old age. He changed his sphere of business, and instead of dealing as a merchant in fustians, he engaged in the sale of woollen goods, in which he had not been conversant. He often told me he knew how he bought and how he sold, and he was confident there were large profits, and yet he also saw his property went faster than it came; he saw it, but could not tell how to help it. As for himself, he was always exceedingly economical and provident enough for his calling; yet he was unawares plunged into debt, which I confess is the strangest thing imaginable, and hath been the wonder of many.

This good old man had various afflictions and difficulties to encounter, besides what originated in his commercial speculations; one of which was very peculiar, and scarcely admits a parallel. The case was this: 1647, or thereabouts, the Presbyterian government was established in Lancashire, every congregation had its eldership, several congregations had their classis, and these maintained intercourse by a provincial assembly for the whole county, which was usually held at Preston, to which appeals were made, and by which differences were decided. At Bolton, where my father had joined in communion, there were two ministers, Mr. John Harpur, and Mr. Richard Goodwin, with whom were associated twelve elders chosen out of the parish. These sat with the ministers, carried their votes into effect, inquired into the conversation of their neighbours, assembled usually with the ministers when they examined communicants, and though the ministers only examined, yet the elders approved or disapproved. These together made an order, that every communicant as often as he was to partake of the Lord's supper should come to some of the ruling elders on the Friday before, and request and receive a *ticket*, which he was to deliver in to the elders immediately before his partaking of that ordinance. This ticket was of lead with a stamp upon it, and the design was, that they might know that none intruded themselves without previous admission. The elders went through the congregation and took the tickets from the people, and they had to fetch them again by the next opportunity, which was every month. But this became the occasion of great dissension in the congregation, for several conscientious Christians stumbled at it and refused to come for

tickets, yet ventured to sit down, so that when the elders came they had no tickets to give in; whether these passed unnoticed I am not certain. My father was one of these ticketless persons, and because they judged him to be the ringleader of this faction of schismatics, they singled him out and summoned him to appear before the eldership. They required his reasons for non-compliance, which he gave in against that practice, such as the following: 1. Because there is neither precept nor example in scripture for any such practice, therefore it is not of divine institution but of human invention, and if allowed would militate against nonconformist principles, and re-establish popish and prelatical ceremonies. 2. No other church in Lancashire, London, or England, had invented or used this rite, though they are as careful of order as this church; and innovations are dangerous. 3. Because it was cumbersome to the communicants, for the poor must leave their callings to attend the elders, and perhaps not find them at home. 4. It was an uncertain means to attain the end, as experience testified. 5. The practice might degenerate to worse consequences and greater inconveniences than could be foreseen. 6. It already did, and might hereafter, prove a snare to some persons, as if their getting a ticket was a sufficient qualification. 7. Other and more profitable means might be used to discriminate communicants, and time might be better spent by ministers, elders, and people, in endeavouring to prepare themselves and others for a due participation of that sacred ordinance.

These, and such like reasons he exhibited in writing to the presbytery at Bolton; but they did not satisfy them, and what they said did not satisfy him. They sent several times for him; he went, many disputes they had on this subject solely, for they had nothing else to lay to his charge. At last they admonished him, and when they saw him still resolved not to revoke his error, they suspended him from the Lord's supper for contempt, as they construed it, because he could not in conscience comply. They said he laughed them to scorn; but he, having naturally a smiling countenance, might possibly smile in his conversation with them. His dear tender-spirited wife would have had him yield to them for peace' sake, but he durst not in point of conscience. Others, though they approved what he did and encouraged him, did not much appear, but held off out of policy or cowardice, so that he was left alone to struggle with his opponents, which he did manfully.

He being in this great strait, shut out from the communion of God's people, knew not what to do. He first applied himself to God, appealing to him for the righteousness of his cause,

confessing his sin, begging pardon, getting his heart nearer to God, and seeking counsel in this difficult case. He consulted his christian friends, and, at last, resolved to make his appeal to the class-presbytery of ministers and elders meeting at Bury. There the matter was debated a considerable time, and though the classis was dissatisfied with the eldership of Bolton, yet they, being loth to censure them, only desired they would pass it by and admit him to the Lord's supper again. But they trifled about it and did nothing, so he made his appeal from the class-presbytery at Bury to the provincial assembly at Preston. When the business had been stated and debated there, they made an order that the congregational eldership at Bolton should revoke the sentence of suspension publicly, and admit him again into fellowship, exhorting both sides to mutual accommodation; and, as I remember, about this time the occasion of this contention was laid aside. When this order came to the ministers and elders at Bolton, they somewhat demurred at his restoration without submission. However, they were bound to obey the order of the provincial assembly, and at length framed a paper which was read in the church, in which they freed R. H. from his suspension, but gave some hints therein as though he had submitted, which he did not; so it was not all satisfactory, and I think he never joined with them in the Lord's supper afterwards, but was received at Cockey chapel, a mile nearer him than Bolton, and at all other places about, and maintained private communion in days of fasting and prayer, in Bolton parish and elsewhere.

This is a faithful account of that unhappy difference. Behold how great a flame a little spark may kindle! I wrote many papers for him in 1648, as replies to the eldership at Bolton, and some appeals which I have now forgotten. This controversy continued some years, occasioned many animosities amongst good people, and opened the mouths of those who hated religion. It divided the whole society into parties, and greatly affected the heart of his good wife, who was all for peace and submission: but he insisted upon his integrity, and often alleged Job xxvii. 2—6. It was indeed a great affliction to his spirit, which he bore with unconquerable fortitude, and managed with great wisdom and moderation. Few would have been found so capable of defending christian liberty at the same rate. Whether it was well done in them to impose, or in him to oppose, I leave; he and they are gone to appear before the impartial Judge. It is very rare but in such a controversy both sides may be wrong in the mode of conducting things; I hope God hath pardoned, accepted, and saved the souls of the good.

It were endless to relate all the troubles R. H. went through, and the remarkable deliverances he had during his 14 years of distress, from 1662 to 1676. But God put an end to his difficulties several years before he died, so that he lived quietly and comfortably with his second wife, Margaret Brereton. He was a man of excellent natural genius, large capacity, tenacious memory, with a speculating head, always contriving something. It has been observed that as God prospered him exceedingly in the middle of his days, in every thing; so towards the latter part of his life God frustrated his designs, and disappointed him in all that he undertook: doubtless it was to take his heart off from the world, and to prepare him for heaven.

He was of a strong, vigorous, and healthful constitution, naturally very cheerful, and of an affable, sociable, and amiable temper. About two years before he died, when he was 79 years of age, he took a journey to London as witness for one Rich. Watts in a trial for about £500. Most of his relations knew nothing of his journey till he sent a letter signifying that he was well, and kindly entertained by his cousin Mr. Nath. Hilton, whom he had employed as a factor, and who was grown very rich.

He had not such strong religious affections as some Christians, but was sober, solid, and well fixed in the principles and practices of religion; very judicious in his answers to questions at stated conferences, and in discourse with ministers and christian friends. Many days of prayer I have known him keep with God's people, yea, I remember a whole night in which he, Dr. Bradshaw, and several excellent men, were engaged in prayer, on account of King Charles demanding the five members of the House of Commons. It was such a night as I was never present at in all my life; the case and work were extraordinary. Bolton parish considered R. H. as a man of some judgment, capacity, and interest, when in the year 1644, on the death of Mr. Gregge vicar of Bolton, the parishioners sent him into the low countries with a message to Mr. Robt. Park, formerly vicar of Bolton and then preacher to the English congregation at Rotterdam, to solicit his return to them. He went and succeeded. When my father landed at Hull, he heard the astonishing tidings of Prince Rupert's taking Bolton, killing man, woman, and child, as represented to him, and when he came by Halshaw-moor, after the battle there, he beheld a most lamentable spectacle of multitudes slain and plundered. When in London, he furnished himself with the best books, the most plain, practical, and experimental treatises in divinity, such as

Calvin, Luther, Perkins, Preston, and Sibbs, in reading which he took much pleasure. When Prince Rupert's forces took Bolton and ravaged all the country, my sisters had the books conveyed away into a coal-pit house, and laid under piles of wood; but they found them, carried them away, and, it is said, burnt them on Cockey-moor.

R. H. had enjoyed a great measure of health most of his days. He had often said he would visit his two sons, and continue a month with each; but kept putting it off. His son Nathaniel came over to him at Christmas, stayed a fortnight in the neighbourhood, and lodged several nights with him; he conversed familiarly with him, preached in his house on the Lord's day, and remained longer with him than he had done above twenty years, and was much affected with his company. About this time, he got several ministers to spend the Lord's day in his house, in preaching and prayer. The Lord's day before he died, Mr. Aspinall preached; he prayed and discoursed with him that day and the Monday morning, and had great satisfaction from him. Several months before his death he was much impressed with a sense of God's great goodness to him, and in his prayers was greatly drawn out in thankfulness to God. He appointed several days of solemn thanksgiving, at which he desired the help of christian friends and neighbours, and was much enlarged on those days. A good man told me, that the last day he was with him on that occasion, he praised God with so much feeling and so many tears, as much affected his heart and others that united with him.

I came to him, Feb. 22, 1677, and found my dear and honoured father ill in bed. I was much agitated with fear, and suspected, as it proved, that he was sick unto death. He had been abroad on the Monday, and thought he had got some cold, I visited him on the Thursday. He had a bad cough, and told me he was extremely weak, and that however God might deal with him, he was never in such a condition before, and was waiting God's pleasure. I asked him, how it was with him as to the state of his soul? He cheerfully answered in these words: "It is now threescore and two years since God shewed me my woful condition by nature, and helped me to lay hold on Christ; and though I have had many failings in the course of my life, yet I hope I can say, I never took my leave of Jesus Christ." These words so sensibly spoken, did greatly melt my heart. He lamented that of late God had much withdrawn himself from him in secret addresses. "In my family," said he, "and with others, God doth in some measure assist me, but I find not

his presence by myself as I desire ; and I have been guilty of many sins, but I will cleave to my Lord Jesus and lie at his feet, let him do with me as seemeth good."

I put him into God's hands by prayer, and he slept much, yet in the morning I perceived his strength was much abated, and that his memory failed him, repeating often the same things. I told him I was obliged to leave him. God did more than ordinarily assist me in prayer, and in expounding part of Job. xxxiii. My sisters, Esther and Alice, and several other friends and relations were present. There was a solemn parting and a flood of tears. Seldom hath my heart been in such a frame, reflecting on his more than ordinary care of me and prayers for me, when I could not or did not pray for myself. With much difficulty I parted from him about two or three o'clock in the afternoon, Feb. 23 ; lodged at Rochdale that night, preached at home on Lord's day, at Warley on Tuesday, at Idle on Wednesday, and, immediately after my return home on Thursday night, a messenger came to acquaint me with his death that morning, March 1, 1677. On Friday I went back with the messenger. They told me how he died, just as he had foretold, for he had often said, he thought he should die without much sickness or pain, as it proved. He slept quietly most of the night before, and about break of day called for something to wet his mouth, which while his wife was fetching, he opened his lips twice as if yawning, and breathed his last, without noise, groan, or the least struggle. On Saturday, his funeral was solemnized at Bolton, according to the decent custom of the country. His son Nathaniel met us there from Ormskirk. Mr. Tilsley, who kept his station at Dean church, preached the funeral sermon in Bolton church, from 2 Tim. i. 12, " I know in whom," &c. These words, a beloved sister of mine observed, our good father had frequently repeated, and recommended them to him as the subject of his discourse. Mr. Tilsley very cheerfully complied. The day after, being Lord's day, I preached at Cockey chapel on Rev. x. 6, " There shall be time no longer." O that it would please God to bring in some soul of our relations to fill up this vacancy, to do our dear Lord some acceptable service !

R. H. passed through a variety of circumstances and dispensations with such equanimity of spirit as I have seldom known, not being lifted up in prosperity beyond what was meet, nor too much cast down in adversity. He bore all his troubles with an invincible courage, for God wonderfully upheld him, and I doubt not sanctified his afflictions for the bettering of his heart ; he had a good report of all men and of the truth itself. He lies