

THE  
**PANOPLIST,**  
AND  
**MISSIONARY MAGAZINE UNITED.**

No. 2.

JULY, 1808.

VOL. I.

*BIOGRAPHY.*

MEMOIR OF THE LATE REV. JOHN NEWTON,  
Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, &c. Lombard Street, London.

**BIOGRAPHERS** frequently observe, That the calm and even tenor of a clergyman's life seldom affords those remarkable incidents which render a Memoir generally interesting. Mr. Newton's, however, is a striking exception (that part of it especially which preceded his conversion and entrance into the ministry;) and we rejoice to think that, in giving an account of it, we are not confined to those scanty and defective materials, which are with difficulty gleaned from uncertain quarters. We are favored with full and clear memorials, written by himself, and which have been long before the public. We refer to "An Authentic Narrative, &c. in a Series of Letters to the Rev. Dr. Haweis," published in the year 1764; his "Letters to a Wife," printed in 1793; his "Apologia, letters," &c.—From these and other undoubted sources, we derive the following most interesting and affecting particulars.

Mr. John Newton was born in London, on the 24th of July, 1725. His father, who appears to have

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been a sensible and moral man; was captain of a merchant-ship. His mother was a pious experienced christian, a dissenter, in communion with Dr. Jennings. Mr. Newton was her only child; and, as she was of a weak constitution and a retired temper, she devoted herself almost entirely to his education. She taught him to read, and stored his memory, which was then very retentive, with many chapters of the Bible, hymns, and catechisms; and though these pious efforts did not reach his heart, nor prevent him afterwards from running to a sad excess of riot, yet they occasioned a considerable restraint for a season. It was long before he could entirely shake off his religious impressions; and, when he was at length awakened to a sense of his condition, the recollection of these "first principles," proved of unspeakable advantage to him. Mr. Newton, therefore, justly considered his own case as affording much encouragement to godly parents, to be diligent and persevering in the religious instruction of their children.

way and Heath, in the county of Hampshire; and Northbridge, in the county of Worcester, great attention to the concerns of the soul has been excited: which has also extended, in a degree, into several neighboring towns. Several hundred persons have publicly embraced the Saviour since the last year, and hopefully become his true followers. Several instances of pleasing religious engagedness appear in other parts of the Commonwealth. Information, which is fully relied on, has been received from a number of towns within the limits of associations not represented in this body, of a very great and powerful work of the Holy Spirit. Berkley, Dartmouth, New-Bedford, Rochester, Wareham and Sandwich, in the counties of Bristol, Plymouth and Barnstable, have been distinguishedly favored: hundreds have been added to the communion of their churches.

Information of these wonderful displays of divine grace, while it awakens delightful emotions in our hearts, we are persuaded will afford pleasure to all the friends of Jesus, and of his rising kingdom; and will excite gratitude to God for his sovereign manifestations of love to men.

It also affords much satisfaction to this Association to recognise an increasing union of sentiment and affection among the lovers of evangelical truth. As tokens of this we view, with gratitude to heaven, the establishment of an important *Theological Institution* in the county of Essex, and the proposed publication of the *Panoplist and Massachusetts Missionary Magazine United*.

*Voted*, that the next meeting of the General Association be at Rev. Dr. Spring's, Newburyport, on the last Wednesday of June, 1809, 9 o'clock A. M.

*Voted*, that the Worcester South Association be requested to appoint a preacher for the next meeting.

Worcester, June 30, 1808.

JOSEPH LEE, Mod'r.  
ALVAN HYDE, Scribe.

Transcribed, Westhampton, July 7, 1808, by

ENOCH HALE, Sec'y.

The Committee of Missions, appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in their Report of May, 1808, state, among other things, that "All the communications from the Rev. Gideon Blackburn, (their missionary to the Cherokee Indians) demonstrate, that his zeal for the civilization and conversion of the Indians, continues to be ardent; and lead the Committee to believe that the institutions under his care are in a prosperous state."

They further state, that Mr. Blackburn "collected in his tour the last year, through the Middle and Eastern States, \$ 5347, 90 cents, whereof he has rendered a correct account; and that the balance, which remained in Dec. last, will fall far short of supporting the institutions for the current year."

*Extract of a letter from the Rev. Edward D Griffin, of Newark, New Jersey, to the Rev. Dr. Green, of Philadelphia.*

Newark, N. Y. March 31, 1808.

DEAR SIR,

I AM very willing to give you a general and succinct relation of the wonders of divine grace, which we have witnessed.

About the first of December, 1806, we were encouraged with some symptoms of a revival of religion in this village; but they quickly disappeared. In March, 1807, they were renewed, by means of several instances of sudden death; but again passed off, leaving no effects, at that time apparent, except on three or four persons who have since made a profession of religion. The death of Doct. Macwhorter, in July, made a great impression on the congregation, which was sensibly deepened, in the month of August, through the instrumentality of the Rev. Gideon Blackburn, who preached several times here with great zeal and energy. Though nothing extraordinary at that time appeared, yet we have since been able to trace first impressions to each of the four seasons above mentioned. The heaven was secretly and increasingly working for nine months, before it became evident. We have since discovered, also, that during the summer God was preparing some for the

scene, which was about to open, by impressive and often repeated dreams. Days of dissipation were separated by nights, in which fancy would bear the sinner to the bar of God, and fill him with the terrors of the final judgment;—terrors which, though dissipated by the morning, would return with returning sleep. These nightly alarms gradually fixed the waking thoughts. Thus, at a time when every thing appeared to be still around us, secret anxieties were preying upon a number of persons, which, so far from being the effect of sympathy, were known only to God and themselves. In the latter weeks of August, I knew of nothing special in the congregation, except two or three persons, who began to be awakened; and four christians whose desires for a revival of religion were too earnest to be concealed from their minister. In this precise posture things remained for about a fortnight. To a few it was an hour of awful suspense. But in some of the last days in August it became apparent, that the desire for a revival was rapidly spreading among the communicants.

As our sacramental Sabbath was approaching, this church, in connexion with two neighbouring churches, agreed to set apart the preceding Friday, (Sept. 4,) for fasting and prayer; partly as a preparatory service, but chiefly to make supplication for effusions of the Holy Spirit. The day, which was spent in prayer, singing, and short addresses to the people, was marked with unusual stillness, accompanied with very pleasing appearances of humility, earnest desire, and a sense of entire dependence. On the following Sabbath, a number of persons assembled, at nine o'clock in the morning, to spend an hour in praying for their minister, and for the blessing of God on the exercises of the day; and this has since become the stated practice of almost all the praying people of the congregation;—a practice which has been accompanied with effects very refreshing to themselves, and materially beneficial to the cause of evangelical piety. Those who attended at this first season, unexpectedly found themselves animated with desires, unfelt before, that God would, that very day, bring out

his perfections to the view of the communicants. *And this He did*, to a degree that many had seldom or never seen before. On the evening of the following Monday, at a lecture preached in a private house, the first feelings which denoted the extraordinary presence of God, and the actual commencement of a revival of religion, were awakened;—perhaps in every person that was present. It was no longer doubtful whether a work of divine grace was begun. During that and the following week, increasing symptoms of a most powerful influence were discovered. The appearance was as if a collection of waters, long suspended over the town, had fallen at once, and deluged the whole place. For several weeks, the people would stay at the close of every evening service, to hear some new exhortation; and it seemed impossible to persuade them to depart, until those on whose lips they hung had retired. At those seasons you might see a multitude weeping and trembling around their minister, and many others standing as astonished spectators of the scene, and beginning to tremble themselves. One Sabbath, after the second service, when I had catechised and dismissed the little children, they gathered around me, weeping, and inquiring what they should do. I presume not less than a hundred were in tears at once. The scene was as affecting, as it was unexpected. Having prayed with them again, and spent some time in exhortation, I attempted to send them away; but with all my entreaties I could not prevail on them to depart, until night came on, and then I was obliged to go out with them, and literally force them from me. But this excitement of animal feelings, incident to the commencement of revivals of religion, soon subsided, and the work has ever since proceeded in profound silence.

Early in September, there were formed many private associations for prayer,—some male, and some female,—the happy influence of which has been manifestly and largely felt. I never before witnessed the communication of a spirit of prayer so earnest and so general, nor observed such evident and remarkable answers to prayer. The agonies of parents

Have been such as to drive sleep from their eyes, and for weeks together, have been seemingly as great, as their nature could well sustain. And these parents, in every case that has come within my knowledge, have each several children, who are already numbered among the hopeful converts.

Many professors have been severely tried, and not a few have, for a time, given themselves over for lost. The Lord has indeed come to search our Jerusalem with candles, and to discover the men that were settled on their lees. Awed by the majesty of a present God, many could say, with Moses, "I exceedingly fear and quake" I could not help saying, If this glimpse of light dissipates so many hopes, what effects will attend the final judgment!

This work in point of power and stillness, exceeds all that I have ever seen. While it bears down every thing with irresistible force, and seems almost to dispense with human instrumentality, it moves with so much silence that, unless we attentively observe its effects, we are tempted, at times to doubt whether any thing uncommon is taking place. The converts are strongly marked with humility and self-distrust. Instead of being elated with confident hopes, they are inclined to tremble. Many of them possess deep and discriminating views; and all, or almost all, are born into the distinguishing doctrines of grace.

I suppose there are from two hundred and thirty to two hundred and

fifty, who hope that they have become the subjects of divine grace; and many remain still under solemn impressions, whose number, I hope, is almost daily increasing. The subjects of this work are of all ages, from nine years old, to more than three score years and ten; and of all characters, including drunkards, apostates, infidels, and those who were lately malignant opposers; and of all conditions, including poor negroes, and some of them hoary with age. I cannot refrain from mentioning, among the hopeful converts, three young gentlemen of the first talents and education, and of excellent families, who have abandoned the study of the law, in which they have been employed for two years, to devote themselves to the gospel ministry.

We have had but one sacrament since the work commenced, at which time we received ninety-seven new members, out of one hundred and two persons, who had been propounded a fortnight before.

While we gaze with wonder and delight at these glorious triumphs of the Prince of Peace, and weep for joy to hear our babes and sucklings sing hosannas to the Son of David, we cannot but join in a general response, and cry, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest."

I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours,

EDWARD D. GRIFFIN.

*List of donations to the Massachusetts Missionary Society.*

1808, May—Rev. Cornelius Waters, from a number of his parish in Ashby, . . . . .	8 22
Thomas Wales, of Bridgewater . . . . .	8
Mr. Daniel Lang, Salem, by Rev. Dr. Hopkins 16 Bibles, 48 Testaments, 30 Watts' psalms. . . . .	
23d, Rev. Daniel Hopkins, from his Society . . . . .	110, 30
from Ladies in ditto. . . . .	85, 16
Rev. Dr. Emmons, from his parish, Franklin . . . . .	46, 81
Rev. Jacob Norton, from his Society, Weymouth . . . . .	11, 63
Rev. Brown Emerson, from Nathaniel Hancock, Salem . . . . .	6
Rev. Reuben Emerson, from a young Lady, Reading . . . . .	2
Rev. Samuel Worcester, from his Society . . . . .	155, 20
Rev. Jonathan Strong, from a friend to missions . . . . .	10
Rev. Otis Thomson, from his Society . . . . .	10, 86
ditto from a friend . . . . .	2
Rev. Elijah Parish, from his Society, Byfield . . . . .	33, 45