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The Lives of the British Hymn Writers

BEING

Personal Memoirs derived largely from unpublished materials

BY

THOMAS WRIGHT

(Author of "The Life of William Cowper," "The Life of
William Huntington," &c.)

VOLUME II.

AUGUSTUS M. TOPLADY

AND CONTEMPORARY HYMN-WRITERS

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

4th November, 1740—July, 1755

BOYHOOD

Page

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Early Childhood | 1 |
| 2 | At Westminster School | 6 |

CHAPTER II

July, 1755—June, 1762

TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN

- | | | |
|---|--|----|
| 3 | James Morris | 17 |
| 4 | "The Blessed Year, 1758." His First Volume | 20 |
| 5 | Toplady and his Mother return to England | 28 |
| 6 | Romaine and Gill | 30 |

CHAPTER III

13th June, 1762—June, 1765

BLAGDON AND FARLEY HUNGERFORD

- | | | |
|---|---|----|
| 7 | Blagdon, June, 1762—June, 1764 | 38 |
| 8 | Duke Street, May, 1764; Farley Hungerford, June, 1764— June, 1765. | 46 |

CHAPTER IV

May, 1766—April, 1768

HARPFORD AND FEN OTTERY

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 9 | Harpford and Fen Ottery | 49 |
| 10 | The Diary of 1767—8. Letter to his Mother | 56 |
| 11 | Harpford Vicarage burnt down. 8th March, 1768 | 60 |

CHAPTER V

17th April, 1768—December, 1769

EARLY DAYS AT BROAD HEMBURY

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 12 | Broad Hembury and Sheldon. Letter to Morris, 2nd Sept., 1768 | 64 |
| 13 | <i>The Church of England Vindicated</i> , 13th Feb., 1769 | 69 |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|------|
| CHAPTER VI | | |
| September, 1769—March, 1770 | | |
| THE EXPLOSION | | Page |
| 14 | Hitchin, Ryland and other friends | 74 |
| 15 | The Translation of Zanchy published, Nov., 1769. The Struggle with Wesley, March, 1770 | 84 |
| CHAPTER VII | | |
| March, 1770—December, 1771 | | |
| THE BROAD HEMBURY HYMNS | | |
| 16 | Death of his Mother. April, 1770 | 92 |
| 17 | Broad Hembury Hymns | 98 |
| 18 | Rock of Ages | 104 |
| CHAPTER VIII | | |
| 17th July, 1771—December, 1771 | | |
| THE ATTACKS OF OLIVERS AND OTHERS | | |
| 19 | The Feathers Tavern Association, 17th July, 1771. A Shaft from Olivers | 109 |
| 20 | Death of Dr. Gill, 14th October, 1771 | 113 |
| 21 | The Pamphlet War | 115 |
| CHAPTER IX | | |
| THOMAS OLIVERS AND DR. JOHNSON | | |
| 22 | Toplady at the Foundery, 8th April, 1773 | 119 |
| 23 | The Dinner at Dilly's, 7th May, 1773. | 127 |
| CHAPTER X | | |
| THE SALON IN BERNERS STREET | | |
| 24 | Mrs. Macaulay, May, 1773 | 131 |
| 25 | Was Toplady ever in love? | 138 |
| 26 | Serle and Romaine at Broad Hembury, September, 1773 | 141 |
| CHAPTER XI | | |
| January, 1774—May, 1774 | | |
| LAST DAYS AT BROAD HEMBURY | | |
| 27 | Death of the Rev. Edward Hitchen, 11th January, 1774 | 148 |
| 28 | Lord Chesterfield's Letters, Spring, 1774 | 149 |
| 29 | Mrs. Macaulay again, Spring, 1774 | 152 |
| 30 | The Green Curtain, May, 1774 | 156 |
| 31 | <i>The Historic Proof</i> | 158 |
| CHAPTER XII | | |
| May, 1774—September, 1775 | | |
| SOME HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS | | |
| 32 | John Wesley as pictured by Toplady. | 161 |
| 33 | The Calvin Snuff-box | 164 |

CONTENTS.

ix

CHAPTER XIII

September, 1775—August, 1776

TOPLADY IN LONDON. EDITOR OF THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE Page

| | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 34 | Orange Street Chapel. Toplady as Preacher | 174 |
| 35 | Toplady as an Essayist | 185 |
| 36 | <i>Psalms and Hymns</i> , 26th July, 1776. | 188 |
| 37 | Toplady relinquishes the Editorship of the <i>Gospel Magazine</i> , August, 1776 | 191 |

CHAPTER XIV

August, 1776—17th March, 1777

FRIENDSHIP WITH LADY HUNTINGDON

| | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 38 | At Trevecca, 24th August, 1776 | 194 |
| 39 | Another Sellon. | 196 |
| 40 | The Painted Lady | 198 |
| 41 | "Remember Dr. Dodd!" 17th March, 1777 | 204 |

CHAPTER XV

THE YEAR 1778

| | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 42 | Last Visit to Broad Hembury, 17th March, 1778 | 208 |
| 43 | At Newport Pagnell | 212 |
| 44 | Last Appearance at Orange Street, 4th June, 1778 | 213 |
| 45 | His Death Song | 218 |
| 46 | Last Hours. Death. 11th August, 1778 | 222 |

CHAPTER XVI

THE LAST DAYS OF TOPLADY'S FRIENDS AND OPPONENTS

| | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 47 | Deaths of Gifford and Ryland | 230 |
| 48 | Last Days of Madan, Serle, Romaine and Olivers | 235 |
| 49 | Of the Rupture between Dr. Wilson and Mrs. Macaulay | 238 |
| 50 | Conclusion | 241 |

HYMN WRITERS CONTEMPORARY WITH TOPLADY.

| | | <i>Page</i> |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Adams, John | 245 |
| 2 | Aldridge, William | 247 |
| 3 | Alotli | 247 |
| 4 | Beddome, Benjamin | 248 |
| 5 | Berridge, John | 252 |
| 6 | Brewer, Jehoida | 260 |
| 7 | Clarke, W. Augustus | 261 |

| | <i>Page</i> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| 8 De Courcy, Richard | 262 |
| 9 Fanch, James | 262 |
| 10 Fawcett, John | 263 |
| 11 Fellows, John | 265 |
| 12 Harrison, Susanna | 266 |
| 13 Huntingdon, Countess of | 267 |
| 14 J. S. | 268 |
| 15 Knight, Joel Abraham | 269 |
| 16 Langford, John | 270 |
| 17 Langley, John Henry | 270 |
| 18 Madan, Martin | 270 |
| 19 Matlock, John | 272 |
| 20 Needham, John | 272 |
| 21 Ryland, John Collett | 273 |
| 22 Scott, Elizabeth | 274 |
| 23 Scott, Thomas | 274 |
| 24 Shirley, Walter | 275 |
| 25 S. P. | 276 |
| 26 S. P. R. | 276 |
| 27 Steele, Anne | 276 |
| 28 Stennett, Samuel | 279 |
| 29 Stocker, John | 282 |
| 30 Tucker, William | 283 |
| 31 Turner, Daniel | 285 |
| 32 Wallin, Benjamin | 286 |
| 33 Wingrove, John | 287 |
| 34 W-gt-n, J. | 287 |

APPENDICES.

| | |
|---|-----|
| 1 Bibliography of Augustus M. Toplady | 289 |
| 2 Works by Various Persons published by Toplady | 292 |
| 3 Articles by Toplady which appeared in <i>The Gospel Magazine</i> subsequent to his death | 292 |
| 4 List of Toplady's Letters | 293 |
| 5 <i>Chamber Studies</i> | 296 |
| 6 Dates of Toplady's Sermons | 299 |
| 7 Additional Notes respecting Joseph Hart | 303 |

LIST OF PLATES

| | <i>Facing page</i> |
|--|--------------------|
| Frontispiece | 32 |
| Toplady's Birthplace | 32 |
| The Rock of Ages | 39 |
| Blagdon Church | 39 |
| Rev. Francis Luce | 42 |
| Portion of Letter by Toplady | 49 |
| Farley Hungerford Church—exterior | 49 |
| " " interior | 50 |
| Harpford Church | 50 |
| Fen Ottery Church. | 63 |
| Rev. Dr. Gill | 63 |
| Rev. Martin Madan | 64 |
| Broad Hembury Village | 80 |
| Rev. John Collett Ryland | 80 |
| Thomas Olivers | 97 |
| Broad Hembury Church | 112 |
| Rev. Edward Hitchin, B.D. | 112 |
| Rev. Andrew Gifford | 129 |
| Rev. Dr. Baker | 144 |
| Mrs. Macaulay | 176 |
| Orange Street (Map) | 176 |
| Orange Street Chapel Interior | 193 |
| Orange Street Chapel Exterior | 193 |
| Orange Street Chapel Interior in 1910 | 198 |
| Facsimile of Toplady's Handwriting: Sermon on Isa. xi. 11, | 203 |
| Statue of Mrs. Macaulay | 225 |
| Metal Plate affixed to Casket found in Toplady's grave | 225 |
| The Tablet at Whitefield's. | 240 |
| The Memorial at Farnham Church | 240 |
| The Memorial at Broad Hembury | 257 |
| Hymn-writers Contemporary with Toplady | 272 |
| " " " " | |

PREFACE

TOPLADY'S fame rests chiefly on his celebrated hymn, "Rock of Ages," but he was also the author of other very beautiful hymns, and of many sermons and essays—to say nothing of his controversial works, which abound in golden and life-giving passages. He was one of the very greatest sons of the Church of England. But if his own Church holds him in honour, so also, owing to the soundness of his teaching, and to the warm-hearted friendship that subsisted between him and such men as Ryland and Gill, do a vast number of the Non-conformists. His most bitter opponents were the Wesleyans, but the descendants of these opponents have long since come to speak of him without asperity, and they yield to none of the Churches in their admiration of the best of his hymns. The 18th century is to English hymnology what the Augustan age is to Latin literature, and what the Elizabethan age is to the drama. By the side of such names as Watts, Hart, Toplady, Charles Wesley, Doddridge, Cowper, and Newton, the names of all hymn-writers, previous or subsequent, look pale indeed. The 19th century did not produce a single man worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with any one of the immortal seven. It produced hymns, but no hymnwriter. None whose individuality has shaken the peoples, who has become a cult, whose name is as spikenard poured forth.

Toplady not only wrote a hymn that has gone beyond the work of any other man; he also wrote at least three other hymns that are among the best in our language, and many more that hold high places in the second rank. It is a favourite sport with our peddlers in verse—our makers of jingle and doggerel—to cast at the eighteenth century giants that some of their rhymes are defective. There are defective rhymes in nearly all the great hymns, whether by Toplady or any other. It is only the poetaster whose lines are absolutely smooth. While the words, hissing hot or trembling with emotion, pour from the ecstasied or over-wrought soul, the question of an exact

rhyme becomes a ludicrously minor one. The writer seeks to express his devotional fever, and he succeeds. When Christian is in deadly strife with Apollyon, when darts fly thick and the ground is slippery with scales, blood and spume, his chief thought is not whether the coat on his back is of the latest cut from Paris. Indeed he is so busy with his adversary that he does not know whether he has a coat or a back either. In a quieter moment he can polish his stanza, that is if his stanza admits of polish; but he will in no case sacrifice his original meaning, or weaken even so little as a single line, just for the purpose of tickling the foolish ear of the peddler or the dilettante. Compare these eighteenth century giants with the majority of the nineteenth and twentieth century hymn-writers—men as a rule with no inspiration, no prophetic fervour, no individuality, who sit down and write in cold blood a pretty jingle, or some sickly sentiment which does good neither to themselves nor to anybody else. They call it a hymn. Its rhymes are perfect. Attractive tunes are made for it. It is sung in a thousand churches by complacent people who would sing any inept effusion that might be selected. But life is not all make believe. There come times of pain and suffering. There comes old age. And when men seek real comfort, they quit these sickly sweetmeats, these rattles, these coloured balloons at the end of a string—they quit all these follies, and go back to "Rock of Ages," "God moves in a mysterious way," "Our God, our help in ages past," "There is a land of pure delight," "Glorious things of thee are spoken," "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord," and the rest of the glorious inspirations of the eighteenth century—they repudiate all music except the blast of God's trumpet. And here I would say one word about hymn-books—or rather about a particular book—*Hymns Ancient and Modern*—the one most in use, I suppose, in the Church of England. It contains a number of fine hymns, but among them a mass of futility that makes one blush for human nature. I know of no finer sight than that of a huge congregation kneeling to repeat the classic words of our splendid Church Service—say, for example, the General Thanksgiving; I know of few sadder sights than to see that same congregation rise to sing:

“ Was it he beneath the fig-tree
 Seen of Thee, and guileless found ;
 He who saw the good he long'd for,
 Rise from Nazareth's barren ground ? ”¹

Think of the precipitous and fearful descent from the noble and beautiful wording of the Liturgy to this purile and wretched piece of doggerel ! When the new² edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* appeared, I found to my relief that Ellerton's lines had disappeared. I was glad to see that “ For all Thy saints,” &c. (St. James the Apostle's day), had also gone ; but in place of it there appears something even worse—a feeble piece of jingle by J. H. Newman, beginning, “ Two brothers freely cast their lot.” Imagine even a moderately intelligent, to say nothing of a refined congregation, singing such contemptible stuff ! On the whole, the new edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* is no better than the old, though it has certainly benefited by the inclusion of Joseph Hart's “ Come, Holy Spirit, come.” Both editions are murdered by the absurd “ hymns ” appointed for saints' days, which in reality are not hymns at all, but narratives in verse, such as one might teach to rather dull little children sitting on a low form. Now if we are to have special hymns for special days and seasons—and there is much to be said for the custom—let us have really fine hymns. If there are not any written specially for a particular day, it would be well to use one of the “ General Hymns,”³ and wait till a true poet comes forward to fill the gaps. These “ hymns ” for saints' days are a by-word and a derision among intelligent men and women. Beautiful hymns have been written by Charles Wesley, Keble and others for the greater festivals. Hardly any have as yet been written for the saints' days. The truth is, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*—if it is to continue in use—wants thorough revision ; and there should be more hymns—not fewer than a thousand—for it is possible to get heartily tired even of good hymns. The Church of England has, under this head, much to learn from the Nonconformists, whose books are much larger and far better edited than the various Church hymnals. If a number of men of religion and taste were to meet together, they should have no difficulty in deciding upon the best forty or fifty hymns in the language,

¹ A. & M., No. 419, v. 3.

² The old edition is still in use in most churches.

³ E.g., Newton's “ Begone Unbelief ” for St. Thomas's Day

and these forty or fifty ought to be included in every selection. If these could be found in the Church hymnals there would not be so much cause for complaint. But they do not. What are we to say of a selection that forces upon us the flaccidities respecting the "Fig-tree" and the "Two brothers," but cannot find room for Toplady's "Your harps, ye trembling saints," and "A debtor to mercy alone," or "K.'s" glorious outburst, "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord!"? Why, we can only say this, that either the compilers of the last two editions of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* never heard of three hymns which for power, sound doctrine and poetry, rank among the first ten or fifteen in the language, or that they prefer to them the "Fig-tree," the "Two brothers," and other J. Ellerton and J. H. Newman precosities. The best of our hymns are worthy to be sung even amid our fine Liturgy. The Bible is the noblest prose work in the language; the beauty of the greater part of the Prayer Book appeals to all Christians, whether in the Church or out of it. We use the highest in prose, let us use only the highest in poetry. If a clergyman does not see his way to change his hymn-book, he could at least print a selection, consisting of say twenty or thirty of the best excluded hymns, and use them in his parish as a kind of supplement. The cost would be trifling. In these days of education, every intelligent person knows poetry from doggerel. Moreover, I maintain that it is an insult to the Deity to offer Him dross when we possess a whole Golconda of neglected gold. I write these words in no rancorous spirit, but with the devout wish that they may assist to bring about the removal from our services of a shameful blemish. I could devote pages to the subject of the mutilation of hymns by incompetent compilers, but I will do no more just now than express my deep regret that so many of our best hymns—including some of Toplady's—have been altered and spoilt.

In the following pages will be found a very large number of new facts respecting Toplady; so many indeed, that to most readers he will stand out as an entirely new character; and I have corrected many of the errors into which my predecessors have fallen. For example, it has been said over and over again that Toplady "was inducted to the living of Blagdon;" and the Rev. S. Baring-Gould repeats the error, in an unhappy

article which appeared in the *Treasury* even so late as October, 1908. Toplady was only curate of Blagdon. I have given a number of interesting, and hitherto unpublished, particulars concerning the friendship between Toplady and Ryland, Gill, Hitchin and Mrs. Macaulay.

The new information has been derived chiefly from the following unpublished manuscripts in Toplady's handwriting:—

1. A MS. of which the title-page runs: "Collectanea haece Miscella, tam Anglica, quam Latina ex variis Autoribus desumpta, Literis dare inceptit ad Blagdon in comitatu de Somerset in proprium usum Augustus Toplady, 1762." Two leaves folio and fragments.

2. A MS. entitled, "Concerning Free Will." Twenty-six pages quarto.

3. Life of the Apostle Paul. One leaf folio.

4. Life of Archbishop Laud. Seven leaves folio.

5. De Servo Arbitrio. From the Latin of Martin Luther. Two leaves folio.

6. Translation of Witsius's "Animadversions." One leaf folio.

7. Toplady's Common-place Book. One leaf.

8. History of England. Five leaves folio and four octavo.

9. Three incompleted hymns and an imperfect and an unfinished burlesque poem.

10. Ten Letters:

To William Lunell, Dublin, March, 1764.

„ William Lunell, Dublin, 25th Jan., 1767.

„ Mr. Grey (respecting the fire at Harpford Vicarage),
15th June, 1768.

„ Mr. George Flower, 1st Oct., 1773.

„ Rev. Erasmus Middleton, 5th Feb., 1775.

„ William Hussey, 7th April, 1775.

„ John Evans, 25th July, 1775.

„ Rev. J. W. Fletcher (N.D.)

„ William Tucker, 20th August, 1776.

„ A Gentleman (N.D.)

11. Memoirs of Albona, a very worthy old gentleman, supposed to be in the last stage of a consumption. Unfinished and unpublished. It is a very feeble production. Albona is, of course, England, who is at variance with her neighbour Galla.

Part is in the possession of the Rev. W. B. Bunting, Porlock, and part is in my own possession.

12. Part of the MS. of Toplady's "Historic Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England." (Works, Vol. 1, pp. 406, 407.)

13. Three speeches delivered by Toplady, probably at the Queen's Arms, Newgate Street.

14. Notes of ninety-four sermons—fifty dated and forty-four undated. For lists see Appendix.

15. A large number of miscellaneous fragments.

16. Two common-place books (bound in one vol.), written in 1759, while Toplady was at Trinity College, Dublin. One is a collection of citations from Calvin and other writers, the other Toplady's notes on astronomy, logic, &c.

17. Book of Original Prayers for every Morning and Evening of the Week. These are different from the prayers in "A Course of Family Prayer for each Day in the Week," published in Toplady's Works, Vol. 5, pp. 474—506, and as a separate work (11th edition, 1829). At the end are "Prayers on behalf of Sick Persons," and the prayer quoted on p. 41 of the present work. The volume was evidently written at Blagdon about 1763.

The greater part of Numbers 1 to 15 belong to me. For the loan of Nos. 16 and 17, I have to thank Mr. C. H. Willis Johnson, 19 Abingdon Street, Westminster, great-grandson of Toplady's friend, Rev. C. Johnson, Vicar of South Stoke, near Bath. The following manuscripts and books have also been of great service to me:—

1. "Chamber Studies for every Sunday in the Year, Morning and evening," being 104 Meditations by Toplady. The handwriting appears to be that of Mr. Walter Row, Toplady's friend and literary executor. This manuscript is preserved in the Cowper Museum at Olney.

2. Volume of Toplady's Sermons and other Works, with many MS. notes respecting Toplady in the handwriting of the Rev. John Ryland. Kindly lent to me by Mr. William Wileman, of Kilburn.

I wish to express my hearty thanks to the following ladies and gentlemen who have helped me in different ways:

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 Lightwood, Mr. James T.
 Lock, Mr. Joseph.
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 Manley, Mr. H., Exeter, for Toplady manuscripts.
 Manager, The, Sun Insurance Company.
 Masters, Rev. W. E., Pastor of Orange Street Chapel.
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 Parkinson, Mr. W. C., Hornsey, N.
 Pierpoint, Mr. Robert, Gloucester Place, W.
 Provost, The, Trinity College, Dublin.
 Porter, Mr. J. A., Librarian, Church Missionary Society, Salisbury Square, London.
 Robinson, Rev. Frank E., Baptist College, Bristol.

- Styles, Rev. W. Jeyes, for loan of books.
 Thomson, Rev. H. B., Fulham, London, S.W.
 Trelawny-Ross, Rev. Dr. J. T.
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 Wilkinson, Mr. R., Trowbridge.
 Wright, Mr. Jabez, Ipswich.
 Wright, Mr. W. A. E., Leyton.

I have been indebted in various ways to the following works:

1774—1834. *The Gospel Magazine*, which during this period contains a great amount of information respecting Toplady.

1778. "Rev. Mr. Toplady's Dying Avowal of his Religious Sentiments." Six editions published that year.

1778. "Memoir of some Principal Circumstances in the Life and Death of the Rev. A. M. Toplady." 3rd edition, 1779.

1794. "Memoirs of the late Rev. Mr. Toplady . . ." with a brief Examination of his Works. 8vo. Price 3/-, sewed. Pages 139. Row, Great Marlborough Street, 1794. 3rd ed., 1826.

1794. "A Course of Prayer for each Day of the Week." . . . Printed from the Manuscripts of the late Rev. Augustus Toplady. 8vo. Pages 35. Price 6d. Row, &c.

N.D. "The Gleanings of the Vintage," being several Essays and Meditations selected from the Manuscripts of Periodical Papers, and written by the late Rev. Augustus Toplady, . . . with a recommendatory Preface by Henry Peckwell, D.D. One shilling. 8vo.

1820. *Memoirs of Rev. Theophilus Lindsey*, by Rev. T. Belsham.

1821. "Devotional Retirement Recommended and Enforced, with Meditations and Remarks, to which is prefixed an Essay on the Character of Job, by Augustus Toplady." This is the 6th edition.

1825. "The Works of Augustus M. Toplady, A.B.," in six vols.

1832. "Essay on the Character and Writings of Mr. Toplady," by G. Watkins, LL.D.

1833. "Memoirs of Rev. Joseph Priestley. (Centenary Edition).
1835. "Rylandiana," by W. Newman, D.D.
1841. Sydney's "Life of Sir Richard Hill," and Review of it in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, May, 1841.
1855. "Autobiography of Rev. William Jay."
1856. "Hymns . . . by the late Rev. A. M. Toplady," (London: W. H. Collingridge). This is a reprint of pp. 305 to 423 of Vol. 6 of the 1825 ed. of Toplady's Works.
1857. *Gospel Standard*, October, p. 315. Review of Collingridge's Edition of Toplady's Hymns.
1860. "Toplady's Hymns," edited by Daniel Sedgwick; and Notice in *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. 1, p. 128.
1864. "Memorials of Rev. William Bull," by Josiah Bull.
1867. "Memorials of the Clayton Family," by T. W. B. Aveling.
1872. "Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. A. M. Toplady," by Rev. W. Winters.
1897. "The Three Rylands," by Rev. James Culross, with Preface by W. Ryland Dent Adkins, M.P.
1899. *Gospel Magazine*, May. Toplady Number.
1907. *Gospel Magazine*, May. Article on "Toplady's Country," by Rev. George Alexander.
1908. "The Churches of Harpford and Fen Ottery," by Rev. Arthur P. Lancefield.
1910. February and March. Articles on Orange Street Church. *Christian World*.
1910. The *Beacon*, August. Article on Catharine Macaulay; a Bath Queen, by J. F. Meehan.
1910. "Dictionary of National Biography." Article on Toplady, by Rev. Canon Leigh Bennett.
1910. "Broad Hembury Church." Article issued privately. By Rev. C. Lister James.
1910. *Devon and Exeter Daily Gazette*, 12th August, 1910. Article by Rev. A. P. Lancefield.

NOTE.—In these pages when reference is made to Toplady's Works, the edition of 1825, in 6 volumes, is intended.

LIFE OF AUGUSTUS TOPLADY.

CHAPTER I

4TH NOVEMBER, 1740—JULY, 1755

BOYHOOD

Toplady flashed upon and past the world like a meteor. A brilliant streak of light, and he was gone. But he will ever live in the affections of all who love pure religion, and scorn every touchstone save the Holy Scriptures. To have produced the greatest hymn in the English language—for “Rock of Ages” has, by general consent, been assigned the place of honour—would alone have earned him the gratitude of the churches. So remarkable, indeed, has been its vogue that the public are apt to overlook the fact that he was the author of many other hymns, some of which—for example, “Deathless Principle,” and “What though my frail eyelids refuse”—surpass in euphony and ethereal beauty, though not in depth and intensity of feeling, his acknowledged masterpiece. In these hymns, written in rapturous moments that come only to the privileged few, and to them but rarely, the ardent soul dissevers itself from earth, mounts on eager and confident pinions, and flutters

1. *Early
Childhood.*

ecstasied before its God. But it is not as a hymnwriter only that Toplady excels. The best of his essays are studded with vitalizing thoughts expressed in noble and virile English. His sermons, which contain many magnificent passages, are storehouses of sound and lucid divinity.

The author of "Rock of Ages" was no pensive, dreamy recluse, unimaginable apart from post-horn¹ paper and the goose-quill that laboured his neat and unmistakeable hand-writing. To his opponents, Walter Sellon and Thomas Olivers, who fled shrieking,² pursued and blasted by the flames of his breath, he appeared "a wild beast of impatience and lion-like fury." His crest was the appropriate and defiant one of a demi-griffin with its fangs in a leathern gauntlet; and that gauntlet he was ever ready to cast down before any with-stander of what he conceived to be the plain teaching of Holy Scripture. He was no gentle pulpiter. Whatever angelic qualities he possessed—and he had many—they were not those of softness, lenity and meekness; and yet of his most bitter opponents he could say from the heart, "Let it not be supposed that I bear them the least degree of personal hatred. God forbid. I have not so learned Christ. The very men who have my opposition have my prayers also." Half swordsman, half seraph, he was above all things a

¹ So called from its water-mark.

² See Works I, p. 182.

man of quivering vitality—a man of action, a man with a mission—one of those fiery, yet clear-brained, perspicacious, impulsive souls, who see plainly the goal whither they are hastening, and are not to be thwarted by powers earthly or powers abysmal.

But his life was not all tumult. It abounded in affecting as well as in striking contrasts. One moment we are in the thick of the fight—with Calvinist and Arminian hurling rocks and belching fire at one another so frenziedly that we can scarcely see the combatants for dust and smoke, or hear their voices (strident as they are) for the distracting din; the next we are listening with transport to the sweet and holy cadences of "Jesus, immutably the same," "Awake, sweet gratitude," or some other delightful offspring of Toplady's confident, seductive and kindling muse. The soft notes have hardly melted away before the clangour of conflict again arises—the irritating charge, the angry retort, the eating taunt, the eloquent rebuke—all are heard as pamphlet answers pamphlet. And while our ears are still tingling with the hot gibe, the sinister allusion, we see the preacher-poet penning for us in the midnight quiet of his study the gracious and heartening "Essay on Fears," or the moving sermon, "Jesus seen of Angels." And then—and then comes surging down to us the strain beside which all other purely human rhythmic and devotional petitions are suddenly hushed—

the surpassing strain of "Rock of Ages." The climatic changes of Toplady's own Devonshire: rain, clear sky, mist; mist, clear sky and rain, all in a quarter of an hour, are not more swift or more surprising.

Toplady's parents were Richard Toplady, a major in the British Army, and Catherine, daughter of the Rev. Dr. Bate, of Canterbury. Their eldest son, Francis, lived only a few days. In May, 1740, Major Toplady, who was serving under his friend Admiral Vernon at the siege of Cartagena, in South America, died of yellow fever before that city; and on the 4th of November Mrs. Toplady gave birth, in a house in West Street, Farnham,¹ to a second son, who was baptised on 29th November, 1740, at Farnham Church, receiving the name of Augustus Montague.² A sadder entry into the world can scarcely be conceived. He was cradled in sighs and tears. Thenceforward all the thoughts and aspirations of the young widow—and she was a woman of piety, elegance and taste—were focused upon her child. His education and instruction became the delight

¹ This account of Toplady's birth differs in some particulars from the accounts in other works. It is founded on notes, written in a volume of Toplady's sermons, by the Rev. John Ryland. The volume is now in the possession of Mr. William Wileman, of Kilburn. Mr. W. Stroud, who has lectured on *Farnham Worthies*, says: "I do not know what brought Toplady's mother to Farnham, but the reason she occupied the little house in West Street was because the inns were full. Farnham was in those days one of the busiest towns in England. My own theory is that Major Toplady brought his wife to Farnham in order that she would be near his friends the Vernons, of Vernon House."

² After his godfathers Augustus Middleton and Adolphus Montague. A verse of "Rock of Ages" is sung at the end of every evening service at Farnham Church.

of her vacant hours. He was everything to her, and she—invariably his “honoured,” “sweet,” or “precious” mother—was to the end of her life all in all to him.

Toplady was a pale-faced, delicate, aerial, high-spirited, and painfully precocious child. When he should have been whipping tops or bowling hoops he was preaching sermons and composing essays.¹ His thoughts, however, were not all serious, for he welcomed the visits of the chapman, through whose wares he became acquainted with “The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green,” “The Dragon of Wantley,” and other classics of the nursery. Beyond these excitements, and an occasional visit to Deptford, of which parish his uncle, the Rev. Julius Bate,² a prominent Hutchinsonian, was rector, he had little variety. He disliked both his uncle and his aunt. “Mrs. Bate,” he tells us in a schoolboy’s diary, presently to be quoted at greater length, “cut me fat meat, though she knew I did not love it; no more don’t her children, yet she makes them eat it. Oh, the difference there is between their mamma and mine.” A visit to May Fair proved disappointing, for the giant, of whom so much had been expected, proved to be only one man on the shoulders of another; while the rope-dancer, whose fame exceeded even that of the

¹ He may have attended the Grammar School at Farnham for a while. Mr. W. Stroud writes: “‘Rock of Ages’—the Farnham hymn,’ as the boys call it—is used constantly at the commencement of school.”

² Julius Bate (1711—1771), author of *Critica Hebræa*, married Miss Elizabeth Stanhope. He attended Hutchinson in his last illness, 1737.

giant, lost his equilibrium and fell among the spectators.

After a while Mrs. Toplady removed from Farnham, and took a house in the New Way,¹ Westminster, with a view to her son's attending Westminster School.

He seems to have been entered there at the age of nine or ten. This venerable foundation, which rose on the ruins of a mediæval monastery, stands to the south of the Abbey, and to the east of the secluded Dean's Yard. It is larger now than it was in Toplady's day by the addition of Ashburnham House, a romantic structure erected by Inigo Jones. The school buildings are a curious medley of heavily mullioned Tudor windows, crumbling walls and quaint doorways leading into puzzling passages and court-yards, haunted by the ghosts of Henry VIII., Nicholas Udal, Richard Busby, the "flogging master," and other ancient and dictatorial personages. The great, rawish schoolroom, which was formerly the monks' dormitory, possesses a fine 13th century roof, and is terminated by an apse, which has immemorially been known as "The Shell." Under the Shell's "high concave walls" sat, imposingly arrayed in wig, robe and bands, the head-master, Dr. John Nicoll, whose name Toplady always spelt "Nicholls." Before him stood a small table. In its drawer lay a birch. The second master was Dr. Pierson Lloyd, father

¹ This street formed part of what is now Victoria Street.

of Lloyd the poet ; and the fifth form worked and idled, or, rather, idled and worked, under the gifted, immethodical, chirrupy and slovenly wag, Vincent Bourne. Nicoll, though he sat in Busby's chair, was a man to inspire love and respect rather than fear. He was close on seventy. Amiability beamed from his personable and refined countenance ; and under his benign, yet firm, rule no boy had any serious grievance. Flogging was rare, bullying unknown. Lloyd and Bourne were as amiable as Nicoll, but as they wanted his firmness, the discipline of their forms was deplorably lax. If Toplady entered in or before 1749, he must have been for a few months contemporaneous with William Cowper, who left that year, at the age of eighteen, with the ostensible purpose of studying the law. They may have met. In after years Cowper wrote charmingly of Nicoll and Bourne. He recalled the pains which Nicoll took to prepare the boys for confirmation, and he translated into crisp and delightful English verse a number of Bourne's Latin poems, including those masterpieces of sly humour, "The Jackdaw" and "The Snail."

In October, 1751, when close on eleven, Toplady commenced the diary to which we have already referred, a "book of duty,"¹ as he calls it. Its pages reveal a boy of a sanguine temperament, with the gift of being able to see the

¹ Part appeared in "The Christian Observer," 1830, and also in "The Gospel Magazine," May, 1899 (Toplady number).

humorous side of things. He is shrewd, pertinacious, conscientious, loveable, but perhaps a little spoilt by a doting and indulgent mother, and perhaps a little self-righteous. There is already discernable in him the stuff of which intrepid and dogged fighters are made.

Under date February 28th, 1752, he writes: "My dear mamma gave me a pulpit cloth of white all-a-piece, laced with a broad gold lace. I always love God, and endeavour to cast away all impurity and all sin whatever."

Other entries are as follow :

"April 7th. Mamma told me that I was as good to her as ten children; see the tenderness of a kind, dear mother! Went to my uncle Charles's; he gave me threepence. My aunt Betsy invented a terrible mistake of me. I have a little garden at Mr. Bunting's: she said she sowed some horse-radish in it; that I had pulled it up. I told her of the mistake and of the consequences which would attend getting a bad character on me: on which she multiplied her number from one piece of radish to two; stands to it, and that I told a lie; but thanks be to God, I scorn one.

"I shall add in my journal the prayers I say before I go to school. *Going there:* 'O Lord God, dear Redeemer, heavenly Father, dear Protector, grant I may not have any anger from Dr. Nicholls, Dr. Lloyd, or any of the ushers, that may proceed from any one cause whatever, and in particular

(here I name my fears). Amen. Grant also I may not have any quarrels with my school-fellows. Grant that peace may circulate in our hearts, as if we were brothers. Amen.' I always join in the prayers which are said in the school, and say this following, 'Receive my praise, O Lord, for protecting me from all anger. Grant that nothing may come to interrupt the unity which ought to subsist between dear mamma and me. Grant that all my power, and strength, and might, vigorously unite to promote Thy glory. Amen.' *Coming back*: 'Thanks be to Thee for my progress in learning, and for all Thy goodness, kindnesses and comforts. Amen.'

"April 11th. My dear mamma, having heard my prayers, cried tears for joy, and said that she hoped I should never leave the right road, and bid me beware cautiously of sin, that God's heavenly grace might be with me.

"May 15th. I set down these rules: First, I must beware of spiritual pride: secondly, of uncleanness: thirdly, of lying: fourthly, of neglecting that great precept of loving God with all my heart, mind and strength. The love of God consists in a thorough obedience to His mandates, which gives such pleasing ideas that the soul is transported in a manner beyond itself.

"I am now arrived of the age of eleven years. I praise God I can remember no dreadful crime: and not to me but to the Lord be the glory.

Amen. It is now past eight o'clock, and now I think fit to withdraw, but yet my heart is so full of divine and holy raptures, that a sheet of paper could not contain my writings.

“May 16th. I hear that my grand-mamma said that my mother would bring me up a scourge to herself. This is the love of my grandmother, who before my face pretended kindness, but behind my back could stab me, by taking away my reputation with my mother. I went to my uncle Jack's: he never asked me to sit down (*very rude*). He, having set a very rude look, asked me, Why did you not come on Sunday? I told him that I should have waited on him according to his desire; but that ‘*I had not clothes fit to come out of a Sunday*’; and besides that, we are in such *want* of money, that every day seemed two, and that I had not good *stockings*.¹

“July 15th. Went to aunt Betsy's, who set forward a most dreadful quarrel, calling me names, &c. Mamma made it up.”

On July 25th he went on a visit to Farnham, and while bathing there nearly lost his life. He says, “I was walking with some boys, and as you go out of the churchyard door by the minister's house,² there is a walk with a little ditch on one side; and instead of going on, you turn on the left hand over the fields, and there is a large place like

¹ In the original the letters of the italicised words are reversed, thus Sunday is written *yadnus*. Toplady calls this his private language.

² The Vicarage, not the Rectory.

a moat¹, that runs round the minister's gardens, and supplies the town with water. In that very place I stripped and washed myself; my foot either giving way, or the cramp seizing me, which it was I cannot tell, being in great disorder, I sank, and according to my account was some time under water, carried away by the stream for the space of three yards. I was insensible all the while I was in it. I stopped at some rushes, and made shift to get on them, and so in vast perturbation I got again on land. Bob Trimmer told me if I had been drowned he would have got me out. Said I, 'I thank you, but it would have done me more good if you had got me out while I was alive.' "

On November 2nd, 1752, he writes: "Mrs. Loveday paid me a very genteel compliment, which I am very undeserving of; viz., she said I am a second Timothy, who from a child had known the Scriptures. I do not set this down from my vanity, knowing everybody's fair speeches are but compliments.

"December 23rd. Went to my uncle Jack's to dine. I ran the gauntlet sorely; for I carried two or three of my sermons to show to my cousin Kitty: my uncle took hold of them, and read part of one, and asked whose I got them out of? I told him, nobody. He shook his head, and said, he knew what children can do before now. I

¹ A branch of the river Wey. It is now very shallow.

still urged that I really did not take them out of any one, but they were my own. He bid me hold my tongue, and not make it worse by denying it. He went on, 'If you were my boy I would flay you alive' (a fine friendly expression from an own uncle!) 'for doing such things, and fetch the truth out of you.' A little after this Mrs. Bate came into the room, and Miss, and they were in a close whisper, and now and then looked at me."

As time went on "Aunt Betsy" and "Uncle Jack" became more and more hostile. The diary proceeds, "January 27th, 1753, my aunt Betsy sent for me, and after the most ungentle treatment flew at me and beat me sadly."

"March 4th. A whole holiday; preached a sermon before my aunt on Isaiah i. 16, 17.

"April 12th. Walked over the bridge [Westminster] with my aunt; met my dear Boy (a dog that I love vastly). He is a grateful, good-natured dog. I love him more than any other dog. He is a good half-a-yard high; chiefly black, only two legs, which is spotted with white. His head is black and shining, the lower part of his back black and white; he has a beautiful white mark round his neck like a collar. I also know another dog—that is Mr. Hancock's, in Turtle Street¹—his name is Pompey; he will fly at anybody that meddles with me, an instance which one Christian ought to show to another; and therein most dumb creatures

¹ Tothill or Tuttle Street.

are to be copied after, because every bird, dog, cat, and every animal knows its benefactor and loves him.

"September 2nd. Went to Aunt Betsy's. She is so vastly quarrelsome; in short, she is so fractious, and captious, and insolent, that she is unfit for human society.

"November 29th. Lord Norreys¹ [a boy of Toplady's age] promised me to go with him to see the lottery drawn to-morrow.

"November 30th. Was dressed on purpose to go with the dishonorable Norreys till twelve o'clock, who promised to be at our house by nine. Fate defend me from such noblemen." Toplady had no reason to be dissatisfied, however, with the conduct of another personage of noble birth, the courtly and good-natured Lord Chesterfield,² who on occasion would bestow a guinea, with the suggestion that it would be well not to spend the whole on nuts and oranges.

"December 16th," runs the diary, "went to Uncle Jack's, in Bloomsbury Square. I asked the footman if my uncle was at home. The man said that my uncle had left word with him to bid me never come there no more, and that he would read

¹ Willoughby, Lord Norreys, eldest surviving son of the third Earl of Abingdon. Doubtless he was one of Toplady's schoolfellows at Westminster. See § 5. Later, Toplady calls him "my dear friend."

² Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield (1694—1773), author of "Letters to his Son." After March, 1749, he resided at Chesterfield House, Blackheath. There seems to have been a slight family connection between the Topladys and Lord Chesterfield. Toplady's aunt, Mrs. Julius Bate, was, it will be remembered, a Miss Stanhope. See § 1.

neither letter nor message that comes to him from us. I thank God I am conscious that I have not done anything to him, nor do I know to what cause to attribute his un-uncly behaviour. We do not want his assistance, for we have another estate of my father's coming to us in March."

During the latter part of this year the boy conceived the idea that he could write dramatic pieces worthy of being presented on the boards. Thus one entry runs, "Sat up late about my farce, which I intend to show Mr. Garrick, master of Drury Lane Playhouse. It is called *Cyrorone*;" and under date 21st December, 1753, he writes, "Carried an entertainment of my making, called *The Shepherd's Dispute, or Rural Queen*, all in verse, to Mr. Garrick; he desired me to come at the end of the season, and he would look it over."

In those days the thoughts of poets and playwrights luxuriated in shepherds and shepherdesses. Scarcely a song was sung to the harpsichord, or printed with the music in magazine or chap-book, but had references to a coquettish Chloris and a languishing Strephon, or to a coy Delia and an ardent Colin. Court ladies, who had never minded a sheep even for five minutes in the whole course of their lives, and never intended to mind one, liked to appear on canvas, in gardens of topiary work, with smirking faces and ribboned crooks, and in the most unpastoral of hooped petticoats. Toplady's choice of a subject was therefore only a

natural one, and doubtless the good-natured Garrick derived amusement from the boy's naivety and magnificent assurance. That the "entertainment" ever drifted again to Garrick is improbable; but in any case he was not destined to influence the boy either for good or for bad. Toplady's alma mater was to be not Drury Lane, but Carter Lane.¹ As will be seen, however, Garrick was, in after years, to fall under Toplady's marvellous spell.²

On Sunday, 27th January, 1754, continues the diary, "went to St. Martin's Church.³ Heard a poor mean sermon, and a very long one, by Dr. Pearce,⁴ Bishop of Bangor. The only good thing in it was when he said, 'To conclude.'"

Having produced sermons, essays and "entertainments," the boy ventured upon a new *rôle*, that of hymn-writer. "Wrote," he says, on February 2nd, "the following hymn;" and then he sets down a metrical address to the Almighty—a production of slender merit, but not without attraction, seeing that it came from the hand that was destined to write "Rock of Ages." It consists of five verses, the last of which runs:

"Always my soul with sacred grace supply;
From sin and every crime my mind defend;
No evil will I fear while Thou art nigh,
My Advocate [and] unabraising⁵ Friend."

¹ Dr. Gill's chapel; see § 8. ² See § 33.

³ St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square.

⁴ Zachariah Pearce. He was elected Bishop of Bangor, 14th January, 1748. In 1756 he was translated to Rochester.

⁵ Unupbraiding.

There are other entries in this diary, but enough has been given to reveal the character of the youthful Toplady—with its curious mixture of simplicity and wisdom, of the crudeness of childhood and the experience of manhood. It was a clean-shaven age, or he could have been described as a babe with “a beard a yard before him.”

CHAPTER II

JULY, 1755—JUNE, 1762

TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN

Toplady left school in 1755, and the same year he accompanied his mother to Ireland; the object of her journey being to settle some affairs respecting an estate which she possessed in the county of Wexford.

3. James
Morris.

On July 11th he was entered at Trinity College, Dublin. It was the year of the earthquake of Lisbon, and shocks were also felt in various parts of the British Isles. "The earth was disturbed by lightnings, thunders and threats of heaven." Toplady had been brought up in an atmosphere of religion, but soon after his settlement in Dublin he became unusually serious. Life through, to use his own expression, the thunder taught him, and the lightning held for him the lamp of knowledge.¹ These convulsions of nature, which led so many others to serious thoughts, may have been in part responsible for his new emotions. On November 25th, 1755, he wrote a short poem entitled, "To a Friend, asking what God was;" and sent it to the *London Magazine*, where it

¹ Works 5. p. 466.

appeared in the following March.¹ One day in August, 1756, when he was visiting his mother's estate in Wexford, he had the curiosity to attend a revivalist meeting that was being held at a place called Cooladine.² The preacher, James Morris,³ a man of great natural abilities, but of little education, took as his text, Eph. ii. 13, "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." The preacher seemed inspired. Toplady—young and impressionable—was transported—carried beyond himself. His heart flamed, his tears flowed. "Under that sermon," he says, "I was, I trust, brought nigh by the blood of Christ, in August, 1756. Strange that I, who had so long sat under means of grace in England, should be brought nigh unto God in an obscure part of Ireland, amid a handful of God's people met together in a barn, and under the ministry of one who could hardly spell his name!"⁴ Whenever in after years Toplady referred to Morris it was invariably as "that dear messenger," or "that man of God."

Although the sermon had done its work, Toplady had still many steps to go. "There was

¹ It is also printed on p. 173 of *Contemplations on the Sufferings, Death and Resurrection of Christ, by Augustus Toplady, A.B.* Published from the Author's MSS. Issued by Walter Row in 1822.

² Not Codymain, as most books on Toplady put it.

³ Toplady says that Morris was not at the time connected with the Methodists. He seems, however, to have been connected with them in 1753. See Toplady's Works 1, p. 113. He afterwards, according to Ryland, became a Baptist minister.

⁴ Morris, however, was not quite so illiterate as Toplady supposed.

not," he says, "a more haughty and violent free-willer within the compass of the four seas." From a child, as he tells us,¹ he had been "intended for the ministry" of the Church of England, but after his awakening under Morris he made a special study of the 39 Articles, which he found, to his dismay, to be Calvinistic. His principles being Arminian, he felt that he could not in conscience subscribe to them, and he therefore resolved to sever his connection with the Church of England and to become a minister in one of the dissenting and Arminian churches. Writing in the third person, he says² of himself, "and he had certainly carried his design into execution, had it not pleased God to open the eyes of his understanding [and initiate]³ him into the doctrines of grace while at the University and previous to his ordination." One day after he had been haranguing in company on the universality of grace and the powers of human free-agency, an old gentleman rose, and taking him by a button, observed in mild tone, "My dear sir; there are some marks of spirituality in your conversation; though tinged with an unhappy mixture of pride and self-righteousness. You have been speaking largely in favour of free-will; but from arguments let us come to experience. Do let me ask you one question, How was it with you when the Lord

¹ Unpublished MS.

² Unpublished MS.

³ Two words illegible. They look like "and initiate."

laid hold on you in effectual calling? Had you any hand in obtaining that grace? Nay, would you not have resisted and baffled it, if God's Spirit had left you in the hand of your own counsel?" "I felt," comments Toplady, "the conclusiveness of these simple, but forcible, interrogations more strongly than I was then willing to acknowledge."¹

Toplady seems to have spent his vacations in England. In any case, he was in Chester, probably on his way to London, in July, 1757.

While his views were still Arminian, several letters passed between him and the Rev. John Wesley. Wesley was then a famous and white-haired man of sixty-one; Toplady, an unknown youth of seventeen. Writing to Wesley on 13th September, 1758, he says, "I thank you for your satisfactory letter, particularly for your kind caution against trifling company. I do not visit three persons in the college, except one or two of the fellows . . . I do not believe there is one that fears God in it." The remainder of the letter shows him to have been at the time in complete sympathy with the doctrines held by Wesley. But doubts soon began to assail him; and a lambent prepossession that further revelation impended led him to read voraciously as many books as possible, both on the Calvinistic and the Arminian sides. Even-

4. *The Blessed Year, 1758. His First Volume.*

¹ Sermon 6. Works 3, p. 170.

tually, just as he had reached the age of eighteen, he met with a work, Manton's *Discourses on the Seventeenth of John*, which straightway caused him to range himself with the Calvinists, and freed him effectively from what he ever after regarded as a dangerous delusion. He felt that he had at last entered into the possession of the grand arcanum. When he looked back on his previous life it appeared a distempered dream. He had lived, and yet he had not lived. "When I am in heaven," he said, "I shall remember the year 1758 with gratitude and joy;" and again and again he alludes glowingly to this event of events. His principles having become Calvinistic, and therefore unisonal with those of the 39 Articles, he at once abandoned his idea of quitting the Church.

Another book that at this period proved of much spiritual use to him was Quarles's *Emblems*.¹ Thenceforward, in season and out of season, he was the doughtiest of fighters on the Free Grace side. The doctrine of personal election, in particular, he never wearied of upholding. One day an opponent of the doctrine said to him, "Would you, if you were God, create any being to misery?"

"When I am God," replied Toplady, "I will tell you."²

¹ See his Recommendatory Letter to the Edition of the *Emblems* issued in 1777.

² Letter to Gifford, 6th April, 1775.

During the next two years he attended the Baptist meeting¹ in Swift's Alley,² Francis Street, Dublin, and formed a friendship with its pastor, the Rev. James Rutherford,³ and with Mr. William Lunell⁴ (a Dublin Banker), a Mr. Many-penny, a Mr. Fenwick, a Mr. Huddleston,⁵ and other hearers and helpers of Mr. Rutherford. Occasionally he was a worshipper in a chapel in Back Lane, which is midway between the Cathedral and Swift's Alley. He gave as his reason for attending Mr. Rutherford's meeting that there was not at the time in Dublin a single church connected with the Establishment in which the gospel was preached. He says, "I was obliged either to starve my soul by never sitting under the ministry of the Word, or to go for it to a dissenting meeting-house. I made not a moment's hesitation in choosing the latter; and would again pursue the same line if Providence was again to place me in similar circumstances. But, though I heard the gospel constantly at meeting (because I could hear it nowhere else) I constantly and strictly communicated in the church only. I know that this was pleasing to God by the many

¹ Rev. John Ryland's Notes. The Chapel in Swift's Alley was erected in 1738 on the site of the first Baptist Chapel, erected in 1653. The Chapel, which is still standing (a Mission is now carried on there under Miss MacPherson), belongs to the Rev. J. T. Hunter, The Manse, King's Sutton, Banbury.

² Swift's Alley is a little to the south-west of Christ Church Cathedral.

³ Spelt "Rutherford" in Toplady's Works.

⁴ See *Life of Countess of Huntingdon*, Vol. 2, p. 150.

⁵ Then or afterwards a minister. See § 9.

happy soul-seasons I enjoyed, both at the Lord's table and in the separate assembly. And yet the clergyman at whose hands I received the memorials of Christ's dying love knew no more of the gospel than so many stocks or stones."¹

The mental excitement that accompanied the change in Toplady's religious opinions had the effect of leading him to express his thoughts in verse; and in 1759 he published at Dublin a volume of hymns and paraphrases from Scripture, *Poems on Sacred Subjects*.

Although the work of a raw and diffident youth, Toplady's volume is not without touches of genius, while it displays, as might be supposed from what has been related of his religious experiences, a genuine piety and a nervous straining after holiness. Thus in one of the hymns, after rejoicing in the mercy of God, he exclaims :

“ Shine, then, Thou all subduing light,
The powers of darkness put to flight,
Nor from me ever part.
From earth to heaven be Thou my guide,
And oh, above each gift beside,
Give me an upright heart.”

While writing these hymns he was undergoing a very needful refining process. The folly of placing dependence on fortune, friends, or even on health, had slowly come home to him. He is perplexed, cast down with cares, temporal and spiritual. Suddenly his face illumines. All these

¹ Letter, 27th November, 1777, to Mr. F. Works I, p. 285.

things, he sees, teach us to place our dependence on God, and on Him alone. "That is beautiful!" we seem to hear him say, and the thought provokes him in more than one of the hymns to pray that he may come out of sorrow's furnace as gold refined. He also found helpful a saying of his "reverend and dear friend" Rutherford, "If God is with you, you will want neither company nor comfort."¹

His overwhelming sense of the necessity of a Saviour is reflected in "Pilot of the soul, awake," and "Emptied of earth I fain would be." Repeatedly we find him asserting that unaided he could do no good thing. He regarded himself simply as commissioned from above. "Jesus, God of Love, attend," is marked by unusual fervour; while, "From Thy supreme tribunal, Lord," and, "O Thou that hearst the prayer of faith," have special claims on our notice by reason of the lines, "Weary to Thy cross I flee," and "I have no refuge of my own," which anticipate the great hymn that was long after to be written. The hymn, "O Thou who didst Thy glory leave," he afterwards revised, and it appeared in its new form in *The Gospel Magazine* for May, 1771.²

Having written verse from the Free Grace standpoint, Toplady became ambitious to express his

¹ Toplady's Works 4, pp. 373, 374. Toplady quotes many other of the Rev. James Rutherford's sayings.

² For additional criticism of *Hymns on Sacred Subjects*, see Review in *The Gospel Standard*, October, 1857, by Rev. J. C. Philpot.

convictions in prose. Among his enthusiasms was Zanchius's nervous treatise on Absolute Predestination, with its uncompromising insistence on the doctrines laid down in the 17th Article of the Church of England; and as there was at the time a zealous opposition to the doctrines of predestination and justification by faith, he determined to render the work into English. He applied himself to the task with his usual impetuosity, and in due course finished it; but the time did not seem ripe for printing it, and for nine years it slumbered in his desk.

Of his college studies he tells us nothing except that one of the text-books was Watts's Logic¹; but two of his common-place books, written in the year 1759, have been preserved. One is what he called his "Collectanea,"—a collection of citations from Calvin, Witsius, Zanchy and other Reformation divines, with the title: "*Thesium Theologicarum compendia, ex Autoribus variis Reformationis extraneis pro Pietate et Eruditione maximè Illustribus.*" Each citation is followed by the date on which it was written (the dates range from 10th September, 1759, to 1st January, 1760), and the initials A. M. T. The other manuscript is entitled: "ASTRONOMIÆ, PHILOSOPHIÆ-NATURALIS, ETHICES, LOGICAE et ONTOLOGIÆ, compendia 1759," and is divided as follows:

¹ Works, Vol. 6, p. 91.

“ASTRONOMIÆ, secundum KEILL¹ et WELLS compendium.”

“PHILOSOPHIÆ NATURALIS COMPENDIUM, variis ex Autoribus, præcipue vero, HELSHAM et GRAVESEND² decerptum.”

“ETHICES, variis ex Autoribus decerptum compendium.”

“LOGICES secundum Burgersdicium”³ et Artem COGITANDI COMPENDIUM: cui accedit ejusdem Artis Compendium, secundum LOCKE.”

“LOGICES, secundum LOCKE, compendium. Subjicitur, ad calcem, ONTOLOGIÆ spicilegium, variis Autoribus decerptum.”⁴

In the spring of 1760 Toplady took his degree, B.A.⁵

On July 28th, 1760, Toplady, according to his Journal,⁶ set forward with a friend to Castledermot, in the south of Kildare. “I arrived,” he says, “in the evening. Read 5th chapter of John in my Greek Testament.” The succeeding entries run as follow:

¹ John Keill.

² M. Gravesende, author of *Astronomical Lectures*.

³ Francis Burgersdicius, the “Dutch Burgersdyck” of Pope’s *Dunciad*, Book 4, line 298.

⁴ These two manuscripts, which are bound together, form a crown octavo volume about an inch thick. It now belongs to Mr. C. H. Willes Johnson, 19 Abingdon Street, Westminster. For reference to another MS. in the possession of Mr. C. W. Johnson, see chapter 3.

⁵ Naturally Toplady’s memory is honoured at Trinity College, Dublin. In 1906, the Rev. Wm. Battey, M.A., presented the College with £210 to form an endowment for a Toplady prize (a Bible or a Greek Testament), which is given for knowledge of Holy Scripture as distinct from general theological knowledge.

⁶ Part was printed in the “Gospel Magazine,” 1800.

“July 29th. Walked to the east end of the town to see the remains of the old Abbey.¹ After breakfast, set forward with the Honourable Mrs. Nickson, for her seat [Ballymurphy], in the county of Carlow, where we arrived about one. Spent the remainder of the day in walking about and reading part of Hervey's Dialogues.

“July 30th. After breakfast, hired two horses and a man, and set out for Billy Barn, in the county of Wexford.

“August 1. Visited, with my dear brother [James] Morris, that precious follower of the Lamb, Mrs. Hutchins. . . . In the evening read Mrs. Rowe's Letters² and wrote in my ‘Collectanea.’ ”

This volume, entitled “Collectanea,” was the second³ of the kind that he mentions. It contained doubtless, like the first, a number of citations chiefly from the most distinguished divines. Apparently it has perished. To a third volume entitled “Collectanea,” commenced in 1762, reference will be made in the next chapter. He further writes :

“Saturday, August 2nd. Breakfasted at Mrs. Morgan's. Dined with Mrs. Hutchins at dear Mr. Morris's. . . . Took leave of Mr. and Mrs. Morris and several other friends, after accompanying me to Billy Barn.

“August 4th. Two of my tenants supplied me

¹ Franciscan monastery, founded 1302.

² Elizabeth Rowe, the friend and correspondent of Dr. Watts.

³ It was certainly not the volume referred to on page 25.

with two horses and a man, and I set out early on my return to Mrs. Nickson's [Ballymurphy]. From this day to the 9th I was mostly employed reading Hervey's Dialogues, Watts's Logic, and the Greek Testament. At my request saw no company. I walked out about this charming seat; enjoyed, blessed be God, much comfort in my own soul.

"August 9th. Took leave of the family at Ballymurphy, and set out for Dublin; entered safe at my mother's house there, much fatigued after a long day's journey of forty-seven Irish miles.

"August 10th. Dined at Mr. Powell's. . . . In the afternoon, at Backlane meeting, dear Mr. Morris preached from Isaiah li. 19, 'By whom shall I comfort thee?' In the evening read Baxter's 'Aphorisms concerning Justification,' a cramp, dark treatise, and in many respects directly contrary to the Word of God. It ought to be burnt by the common hangman."

Toplady and his mother then made preparations for their return to England. Their goods were sent "by long sea" to London, and on August 11th they took leave of their friends. Their departure and the events of their journey are thus described by Toplady:

"August 11th. In the evening went to Backlane. Dear Mr. Morris preached a most excellent sermon from 'Call upon Me in the day of

5. Toplady
and his
Mother re-
turn to
England.
12 Aug., 1760.

trouble.' Afterwards took leave of that precious man of God.

"August 12th. Embarked with my mother between 12 and 1 in the afternoon in the *Racehorse* for Parkgate [Cheshire]. Rough passage.

"August 13th. Landed at Parkgate about 2 in the afternoon. Set forward with my mother in a post chaise for Chester.

"August 15th. Walked with my mother on the city walls. In the morning at Trinity Church met my dear Rutherford, with whom I dined and had sweet converse. Retired early in the evening to my chamber, sat up until one in the morning in prayer and reading my Greek Testament.

"August 16th. Was informed that Mr. Bennet, a minister, whom I heard several times with so much comfort and edification when I was in Chester in July, 1757, went to glory about a twelve month ago. Set forward with my mother in the evening in a post chaise for London." The route lay through Stone, Lichfield, Coleshill, Coventry and Hockley, and they arrived in London on the 20th, between 5 and 6 in the afternoon. He could hardly have given himself time for a meal, for he writes, "Went in the evening to the Tabernacle [Tottenham Court Road], where I heard dear Mr. Whitefield preach a glorious sermon on 'But be filled with the Spirit.' The wonderful power with which he was enabled to speak showed that he was filled with the Spirit

indeed." To borrow from another great writer: "His eyes rejoiced because of strength."¹

Then follows a very curious entry: "August 22nd. At Mrs. Pierce's and Mr. Budd's was much affected to hear that my dear friend, Lord Norreys, just after succeeding his deceased father, the [3rd] Earl of Abingdon, in title and estate, was burnt to death in his bed at Rycot, about two months ago. Lord, what is man! a worm! a leaf! a blast! a shade!"

A little later Toplady must have discovered, to his intense joy, that the news was untrue. How it originated is easy to explain: The old earl died 10th June, 1760. People would then begin to talk over the history of the family, and they would recall the fact that the old earl's eldest son, James, was burnt to death in his bed [12th October, 1745] fifteen years previous. As the tale passed from mouth to mouth, mistakes must have arisen, and somebody must have assumed that Toplady's friend, Lord Norreys, who had become the 4th Earl of Abingdon, was the old earl's eldest son, that it was he who had been burnt in his bed, and that therefore the fatal accident must have occurred subsequent to the death of the father.

Having decided to offer himself as a candidate for Holy Orders, Toplady seized every opportunity of hearing the leading divines both in the Establishment and among the Nonconformists.

6. Romaine
and Gill.
1760-1.

¹ William Blake: *Europe*, p. 6.

Notwithstanding the labours of Whitefield, Wesley, and their colleagues, religion was still at a low ebb in England. "The luxury, riot, debauchery, lust and madness of the age," said a faithful preacher of the day, "could not be painted in colours equal to the life. Our language hath no word equal to the subject." Among the clergy, the Rev. Dr. Puzzletext,¹ who delighted in "women, drink, tobacco and backgammon," and Parson Barnabas, who "loved sermons no more than a grocer doth figs," were unhappily representatives of a large class. The majority of those who were neither coarse nor vinous preached an icy and loveless morality. Lawrence Sterne, who had nothing better to offer the hungry and thirsty soul than a piquant sauce or a perfumed liqueur, was a class by himself. The Nonconformists were in as pitiable a plight. In too many instances the vainglorious Deist and the speculative Socinian held possession of their pulpits. A good man looking round on the dismal scene could but cry—stretching out his hands as he groped his way—"Dark, dark, dark!"² And yet here and there, dotted about the land, were men, both in the Establishment and in the Free Churches, who preached the pure gospel. There was a Berridge at Everton, a Hervey at Weston Favell, a Brine in the City, a Gill at Southwark; and many

¹ Fielding's *Grub Street Opera*.

² See also *Wesley's Veterans*, Vol. 1, p. 238.

others might be named—men “baptised with the Holy Ghost and with fire, setting their faces as a flint”¹—men with whom religion was a transporting passion. Upon such men the chambering, card-playing, drinking or morality-preaching clergy naturally looked down with a fine disdain. If the rank and file of the Church were of the complexion indicated, those above—the bishops and other dignitaries, were for the most part mere men of the world. The Archbishop of Canterbury himself—Dr. Cornwallis—incurred the censure of the King for holding in his palace “large balls and convivial routs.”² It is not surprising that the clergy of this stamp thought no shame to make a practice of preaching other men’s sermons. Toplady called one day at the shop of Osborne, the well-known bookseller, of Gray’s Inn Gate, in order to make some purchases. Just as he was leaving, Osborne drew him aside, and in a subdued voice said, “Sir, you will soon be ordained. I suppose you have not laid in a very great stock of sermons. I can supply you with as many sets as you please. All originals: very excellent ones and they will come for a trifle.”

“I certainly shall never be a customer to you in that way,” said Toplady, “for I am of opinion that the man who cannot or will not make his own sermons is quite unfit to wear the gown.”

¹ Ryland’s *Character of Hervey*, p. 54.

² *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon*, 2, p. 281.



TOPLADY'S BIRTHPLACE,
Farnham, Surrey.



THE ROCK OF AGES,
Burrington, Somerset.

From Photo by Mr. F. W. Taylor, Exeter.

"Nay, young gentleman," said Osborne, "do not be surprised at my offering you ready-made sermons, for I assure you I have sold ready-made sermons to many a bishop in my time."

"Good Mr. Osborne," said Toplady, "if you have any concern for the credit of the Church of England, never tell that news to anybody else from thenceforward for ever."

The preacher among the Nonconformists who most fascinated Toplady was the Rev. Dr. Gill, of Carter Lane, Southwark, author of *A Body of Practical Divinity* and other solid works, a divine whose learning and Biblical dignity had passed into a proverb. Dr. Gill's voice rose clear and distinct above the babblement of the day. "For by grace," he taught, "are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." At first some of his people were alarmed. "In the name of prudence, dear sir," they said, running to him, "don't preach that. You will lose the subscriptions of your wealthiest members." "Don't talk to me of losing," replied Gill, sternly, "I am not afraid to be poor. I value nothing in comparison with gospel truths."

Toplady not only listened to Dr. Gill,¹ he became personally acquainted with him; they frequently met and corresponded. Toplady showed Gill his translation of Zanchy; and Gill, who heartily

¹ Toplady's copy of the first volume of the first edition of Dr. Gill's Sermons is in the possession of the Rev. W. Jeyes Styles, of Wandsworth. See "Earthen Vessel," July, 1909.

approved of it, urged his young friend to send it to the press. "I was not then, however," comments Toplady, "sufficiently delivered from the fear of man,"¹ so the manuscript was put back to slumber a little longer in his desk. Toplady, who crowded his common-place book with citations from Gill's sermons and printed works, could never sufficiently express his indebtedness to "this great man of God," as he liked to call his venerable friend.² Toplady's acquaintances were a little mystified. They could understand a young man who was preparing for Holy Orders giving his days and his nights to pharaoh³ and backgammon, but what his motive could be in going again and again to hear the profoundest preacher of the day exceeded their comprehension.

The Rev. John Wesley, in the course of a conversation with Toplady, once observed, "Gill is a positive man, and fights for his opinions through thick and thin."⁴ Recalling the conversation some time later, Toplady commented, "That is true; and he never fought a battle without gaining the victory."⁵

In one of his letters to Gill, Toplady says:⁶ "Though I am certain that you are immortal until your work is done, and that God will perform the

¹ Works 1, p. 189.

² Gill was 65, Toplady 22.

³ Sometimes spelt "faro," a favourite game with the gamblers of that day.

⁴ Toplady's Works 1, p. 17.

⁵ Works 1, p. 45.

thing that is appointed for you, I am yet enabled to bear you, in the arms of prayer, to the throne of grace;" and he concludes by requesting that "at the seasons of access with joy" Gill will, in his prayers, remember the writer of the letter.

A few more entries may be given from Top-lady's diary:

"August 23rd [1760]. Visited Mrs. Bennet, who still stands fast in the faith, and is strong. In the evening at the Tabernacle, and heard Mr. Whitefield preach with power from Acts xxii. 14, 15.

"August 26th. Waited on Dr. Gill, and drank tea with Lady Piers. In the evening, at Tottenham Court Chapel, Mr. Whitefield made a most memorable sermon on Mark xvi. 3. [Date not given.] In the afternoon went in a coach [to Carter Lane Chapel] and heard Dr. Gill preach from Deut. xxxii. 18. In the evening, at the Tabernacle, Mr. Whitefield preached from Gal. iii. 22."¹

The pulpit of the New Way Episcopal Chapel, situated only a short distance from Mrs. Top-lady's house, was occupied for about six months in 1761 by the Rev. William Romaine,² whose extraordinary gifts were rapidly being recognised; that of St. Margaret's, Westminster, by the Rev. Dr. Thomas Wilson,³ son of the Bishop of Sodor and

¹ This is from the "Gospel Magazine," 1800, p. 397. Then follow the words "To be continued." I looked through the volumes for 1801 and other years, as preserved in the British Museum, but could not find any continuation.

² William Romaine (1714—1795).

³ Born at Bishop's Court, 1703; died at Alfred House, No. 2 Alfred Street, Bath, 15th April, 1784.

Man.¹ Wilson was also prebendary of Westminster, and rector of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, London; but, unsatisfied with positions which were themselves beyond his merits, he aimed at a bishopric. Romaine, too, had his ambitions, but of an infinitely higher kind than those nursed by Wilson. Romaine preached the gospel with the fervour and zealotry of an apostle; Wilson, whose foible was archæology, preached a fashionable morality, with the finicalness of a virtuoso. The one offered minted gold, the other mischievous tinsel.

“What news from your parish?” enquired King George one day of Wilson.

“Why, your Majesty,” was the reply, “that fellow Romaine, who has got a chapel in the New Way, draws all my parishioners from the church.”

The poor deluded people, it seems, having once tasted “the good old wine of distinguishing grace,”² could on no account be induced to exchange it for a cheap and insipid vintage.

“Humph!” replied the King, “we will make him a bishop; that will silence him.”

Neither Romaine nor Wilson, however, attained to lawn sleeves; but while the former became a pillar in the evangelical world, the latter, though not without parts, glided into a life of compara-

¹ He was for 57 years Bishop of Sodor and Man. He died in March, 1755. For the account of his life, written by Toplady, see Toplady's Works, 4, pp. 92—100.

² Toplady's expression. Works 1, p. 145.

tive uselessness, and became eventually a byword for self-delusion and senile folly. The popularity of Romaine increased by leaps and bounds. As the result of it, so many persons gathered regularly to hear Jesus Christ preached, that the Dean and Chapter became seriously concerned ; and seeing no other way of putting an end to the distressing state of things, they withdrew their patronage from the chapel, and prevented Romaine from continuing to preach there. Toplady, who was one of Romaine's most enthusiastic hearers, owed more to him than to any other clergyman of the Church of England, and by the time of Romaine's removal from Westminster, they had become staunch friends.

CHAPTER III

13TH JUNE, 1762—JUNE, 1765

BLAGDON AND FARLEY HUNGERFORD

On 5th June, 1762, Toplady was ordained deacon, and licensed to the curacy of **7. Blagdon.** Blagdon, a picturesque Somerset vil-
June 13, 1762 lage seated on the northern slope of
—June, 1764. Mendip. The church,¹ which, with the exception of its turreted and pinnacled tower, was in 1910 rebuilt by the late Lord Winterstoke, is an object of remarkable beauty, especially when regarded from the uplands, south of the village, whence the eye takes in also the artificially broadened Yeo,² which gleams behind it like liquid silver. The rector, the Rev. William Lupton, was, like so many other of the clergy in those days, non-resident. Toplady preached his first sermon at Blagdon on Sunday evening,³ 13th June, 1762. In the course of his remarks he commented on the smallness of the congregation in the morning. "By not attending in the morning," he said, "you are deprived of the comfort and benefit of joining in the finest prayers in the world;" and he concluded, "I shall be always ready to attend you, late or

¹ A brass, placed in the church by the late Lord Winterstoke, commemorates Toplady's connection with the parish.

² Reservoir for the Bristol Waterworks.

³ Possibly the rector preached in the morning.

early, if my *duty* calls me to your houses ; otherwise I have at present neither health nor leisure to visit you often. Should I at any time perceive ought amiss in your conduct, you must permit me, in the spirit of love and tenderness, to tell you of it ; and should you, on the other hand, observe any part of *my* conduct, which may appear inconsistent with the dignity and holiness of my profession, I shall be obliged to any of you—to the poorest as well as to the richest—for giving me a friendly admonition.”

On the Sunday evening, July 4th, he again observed that it gave him concern to see so few of his parishioners in the morning, and he entreated them not to forsake the assembling of themselves together ; and in his sermon on October 31st, he urged on them the importance of presenting themselves at the Lord's Table.

Although Toplady was only a short time at Blagdon, he thoroughly endeared himself to the people, and traditions of him, though rendered shadowy by the distance of years, still survive among the older inhabitants, the result in part of his habit of presenting books to them. One of these books, Dean Stanhope's translation of the *Imitatio Christi* (1759), given by him to Dorcas Cole,¹ has been preserved. While Toplady was curate of Blagdon, he asked the friend of his boy-

¹ The inscription, which is in Toplady's handwriting, runs, "Dorcas Cole, her book, the present of her sincere friend, Augustus Toplady, December 15th, 1763." The book now belongs to Mr. John N. Panes, of Hertford College, Oxford.

hood, Lord Chesterfield, for a scarf, that is to say, a chaplaincy. In reply, his Lordship said, "I am exceedingly sorry that you did not mention it early enough. Had you asked me two days sooner, a scarf should have been at your service; but no longer ago than yesterday I gave away the only vacant one." Toplady wrote again to say that he "should be glad to hope for the honour of the next that fell." "The next is already promised," was the reply, "but you shall certainly have the next after that." Following a comment on "the flat contradiction of these two plausible speeches," Toplady observes, "I never asked him again, but looked upon him as a finished courtier from that day forward. He certainly had a great fund of good nature at bottom, though it was half smothered and corrupted by art and finesse."

During the early years of Toplady's ministry England and her ally, Frederick the Great, whose fame since the battles of Rosbach (5th November, 1757) and Leuthen (5th December, 1757) had dazzled the world, were at war with France, and the feeling against that country was very bitter. Frederick in his cocked hat and with his long pig-tail stared out of every printshop, and from a hundred sign-boards; days of thanksgiving were observed in the churches and chapels "for the signal victories gained by the King of Prussia over his enemies;"¹ and Toplady daily prayed, "Bless

¹ E.g., 2nd January, 1758, at the chapel in Tottenham Court Road (Whitefield's). See "Gentleman's Magazine," 1758, p. 41.

King George¹ and Ye King of Prussia in Soul and Body, in Time and Eternity : more especially now in their fleets and armies. May one of their men chase a 1,000, and may 2 put 10,000 to flight : may Thy praises be in their mouths and a two-edged sword in their hands. Continue and multiply their successes ; turn ye scale of this war in their Favour ; and improve even their Losses to their advantage.”² The war, however, gradually drew to a close, and the Preliminaries of Peace, signed in November, 1762, were clinched in the following year.³ While at Blagdon Toplady began a third Volume of “Collectanea.” On the front page he wrote : “*Collectanea hæcce Miscellanea tam Anglica, quàm Latina, ex variis Autoribus desumpta, Literis dare incepit ad Blagdon in cometatu de Somerset. Augustus Toplady, 1762.*”⁴

At the beginning of 1764 the people of Blagdon were in the thick of a quarrel which divided the parish into two fiercely hostile factions. What it was all about has not transpired, but Toplady in a sermon preached on January 15th made a serious attempt to bring about peace. He took as his text, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” and remarked : “I look upon it as a

¹ George III.

² Unpublished bound manuscript in possession of Mr. C. H. Willes Johnson.

³ For the influence of this war and the signing of the Preliminaries of Peace on the hymns of Joseph Hart, see *Life of Joseph Hart*, of this series, p. 67. See also Carlyle's *Frederick*, Vol. 6, p. 169. (Ashburton ed.)

⁴ Part of the manuscript is in my possession. In one of his commonplace books Toplady quotes a saying of “Mr. Herne, formerly Rector of Blagdon.” See Works 4, p. 348.

singular happiness that I have had neither part nor lot in the disputes that have divided you ; and as both parties are equally dear to me, I most heartily wish you would all live as becomes the gospel of Christ, and prove yourselves to be His disciples by forgiving and loving one another."

Of the walks in the neighbourhood of Blagdon, the most striking is that across the southern uplands and on by footpath and road to Burrington Gorge, one of the most impressive of those grand and awe-inspiring ravines for which Mendip is so justly famous. The rocks, in parts yellow with ragwort, in parts naked, or green with fern, slope far and very far upwards from the traveller. Owing to the winding of the deep road he is at times entirely shut in—alone in a vast, solemn pit, amid a profound silence. On quitting the gorge he passes on the left a huge gray cloven rock, its great slanting cleft partly fringed with herbage, and its base lost in grass, hare-bell, and the inevitable ragwort. It is locally known as "The Rock of Ages," and the story runs that one day when approaching it Toplady was overtaken by a terrible storm, and that while sheltering¹ in its cleft his imagination took fire, and expressed itself in the hymn which will be ever associated with his name. As we have seen, ideas similar to those which are embodied in the

¹ It may be noticed that in some hymnals the opening line of Toplady's hymn appears as "Rock of Ages, shelter me." The tradition may have been partly responsible for the alteration.

T. Don't let me mis-understand you. You hold, that
Men are absolutely independent on God, so far as relates
to the Management & Actings of their own Wills?

O. I believe it firmly.

T. You are honest, & consistent: but I cannot call
you Orthodox. You suppose Man to possess a Degree of
Independence & self-Command, which not an Angel in
Heaven can dare lay Claim to. — Absolute, independent
Self-Determination is an Attribute only & property Divine.
If I thought you possess'd of it, I sh'd immediately fall down
& worship you as a God.

O. You have it, & I have it, & every Man has it, ex-
cept he sins away his Day of Grace. — If I should say to this
[Taking up my walking cane, which happen'd to lean near him] (cane)

hymn had haunted Toplady's mind as early as 1759, when he was writing his volume of poems; but it is worthy of note that the first instance in which in any preserved manuscript occurs the expression, "Rock of Ages," is in a sermon preached at Blagdon—a sermon which will presently be quoted. This fact certainly adds weight to the local tradition, for the persons who handed down the tradition could not possibly have been aware even of the existence of the unpublished manuscripts. It is certain, then, that thoughts of Christ as a cleft and sheltering rock had taken hold of Toplady's mind at a time when he was living within easy walking distance of a remarkable natural object—a huge cloven rock—which was in those days, as it is now, one of the sights of the neighbourhood. The fact that the hymn was not published¹ till long afterwards is without weight, for Toplady held back many of his hymns for years after they had been composed. It was in a farewell sermon² preached to the people of Blagdon on Easter Sunday, 22nd April, 1764, that Toplady first publicly used, as far as I know, the expression, Rock of Ages. In his sermon he remarked that if God were "to justify and save only those who are pure and upright Heaven would be empty of inhabitants;" and he continued, "I say not this to encourage sin; but to en-

¹ It first appeared in "The Gospel Magazine" for March, 1776.

² The MS. is in my possession.

courage those who are grieved for their sins ; who fly to the blood of the cross for pardon, and whose prayer is that they may henceforward be renewed in the spirit of their mind and bring forth acceptable fruit unto God. Let not such be afraid to meet Him : Let not such say, 'How shall I stand when He appears ?' for such have a Foundation to stand upon, a Foundation that cannot fail, even Jesus, the Mediator and Surety of the covenant, Christ, the Rock of Ages. He died for such, their sins which lay like an unsurmountable impediment, or stood like a vast partition wall, and blocked up the passage to eternal life ; I say He took the sins of His penitent people out of the way, nailing them to His cross."

Personally, I am firmly of opinion that the hymn, "Rock of Ages," was written at Blagdon. As the discourse from which these words have been quoted was a farewell sermon to the people of that parish, a few more passages from it may be given. "The joyful event of Christ's resurrection," says Toplady, "which we commemorate to-day, ought to be considered by repenting sinners as a public and solemn ratification of pardon, as an acquittance in full, if I may so speak, under the hand and seal of God Himself, certifying that the Saviour's atonement was accepted, and that through Him the sins of His redeemed are done away. 'Twas his glorious view of Christ's sufferings and resurrection that set St. Paul as on the

pinnacle of holy triumph, and made him give the universal challenge, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?' . . . A believer in Christ should not be cast down. He may consider all that Christ did and suffered as done and suffered for *him*; he may likewise look upon the Scriptures as a treasury or storehouse filled with promises all which belong to *him*; for there is not a single promise in the Bible respecting either grace here or glory hereafter but is made even to the feeblest follower of Christ." He concluded, "May you, may I, and all who desire to know His name, be admitted both soul and body into His palace above, where we shall be ever with the Lord and with each other."

Toplady, however, stayed in the parish a week longer than he had anticipated, so he preached a second farewell sermon.¹ This was on April 29th. On May 13th he took duty at St. John's Chapel, Bath, and from Bath he proceeded to London. On arriving there, he heard the wonderful news that his friend Romaine, who had been without any important employment in the Church since he had been ejected from the New Way Chapel, had been presented² to the rich living of St. Andrew Wardrobe and St. Ann's, Blackfriars.

From an unpublished letter written to William

¹ A portion of it is in my possession.

² March, 1764. He had just finished his work, "The Life of Faith." Romaine announces his preferment in a letter of 3rd March, 1764. Works, 1837 ed., p. 675.

8. Duke St.,
 May, 1764.
 Farley Hun-
 gerford,
 June, 1764—
 June, 1765.

Lunell, we learn that Toplady officiated for a short time at an episcopal chapel in Duke Street.¹ "You have heard, I doubt not," says Toplady, "of dear Romaine's success in Lond[on. This] eminent man two or three years ago attempted to get possession of a chapel [situate in the] New Way, Westminster, within a few doors of my mother's house, but the [dean and] chapter ordered it to be shut up, and so it has continued ever since. [Subsequently], at Mr. Romaine's request, I tried for it myself, but could not succeed. [However, Pro]vidence, within a little while, opened my way to that in Duke [Street], which is much more eligible in all respects, and chopped into my ha[nds] unthought of."

Owing to a dispute about the election, which was settled in the Court of Chancery, Romaine was not admitted to his living until 1766, but thenceforward he had no further trouble, and he was able not only to smile at his detractors, but also to carry on his noble work without let or hindrance.

Toplady, who had by this time been admitted to priest's orders, must very soon have resigned his position at Duke Street Chapel, for in June [1764] he was appointed to the curacy² of Farley Hungerford, a parish eight miles south of Bath. His

¹ No doubt Duke Street, St. James' Square. The chapel is now turned into "chambers."

² The rector was the Rev. Henry Arnold, Prebendary of Wells.

works contain several allusions to the Farley people—the most notable being the account of the last hours of a godly parishioner who had dreaded the final wrench, but whose fears were providentially removed in the jaws of death.¹

Toplady left Farley in June, 1765. Writing a little later from London to his Dublin friend, Mr. William Lunell, he says:² “Very soon after I had expostulated with my honoured and most dear Mr. Lunell, from Farley, I was revived with the sight, and more than a little comforted by the perusal of a letter from him. . . . On arriving here I found myself doubly your debtor, my mother having laid by for me your obliging favour of last November.

“The Sunday before I left the West was a day much to be remembered. I was greatly enlarged in taking leave of a people to many of whom God seems to have given the hearing ear. I administered the Lord’s Supper to a number of weeping communicants; nor do I remember if that ordinance was ever accompanied with so signal a blessing to my soul. The gracious melting appeared to be general; and the overpowering flame of holy love was, I believe, caught from heart to heart. When all was over, we bid a personal and particular adieu to each other, though

¹ Works 1, p. 382 (1825 ed.)

² Letter printed in the “Gospel Magazine” (Toplady number), May, 1899. One of Mr. Lunell’s sayings is preserved in Toplady’s Works 4, p. 455.

with many tears, yet with a hope that appeared full of immortality. Amid all their tenderness and affection, there was something in their manner which seemed to say, 'We shall one day meet again.' And so, I trust, we shall, in that place of love where ministers and people part no more. I need not tell you that I am now with my honoured mother, who, I fear, breaks apace." The letter closes with references to some of his acquaintances at Mr. Rutherford's meeting: "I find that the High Church folks¹ at Swift's Alley are going on at the old dog-trot rate. . . . I trust the faithful few at Back Lane go on to prove what is the acceptable and perfect will of God. Amidst all their discouragements, may they hold fast the truths, and enjoy the heavenly experience of the gospel! I am hardly surprised at Brother Allen's jumping into the whimsical reveries of Sandeman,² or that his religion should adopt some of those oddities with which his private life abounds. However, as I believe him upright, I doubt not that when the novelty is over he'll be brought back to the old point. . . . I should not be surprised to hear that Mr. Prosser, together with long Walton and short Neal,³ were overtaken with the same delusion." He begs to be remembered to "Mr. Manypenny and Mr. and Mrs. Fenwick."

¹ He doubtless means Hyper-Calvinists.

² Robert Sandeman (1718—71), leader of the sect at one time known as the Glassites, and subsequently as Sandemanians.

³ Hearers doubtless at Back Lane Chapel.

CHAPTER IV

MAY, 1766—APRIL, 1768

HARPFORD AND FEN OTTERY

Toplady stayed in London for twelve months, preaching occasionally, and often hearing his old friends, Romaine and Gill. In April, 1766, he was presented by a Mr. Samuel Cleveland, of Woolwich, to the benefice of Harpford with Fen Ottery,¹ in Devonshire; apparently it was obtained for him by purchase, but in any case he owed it to some practice that afterwards troubled his conscience.² These villages, of which Harpford had a population of about 200, and Fen Ottery of about 100, are situated eight miles east of Exeter. Fen Ottery Church,³ which has Norman features, was restored in 1882; Harpford Church, which is early English with a battle-

9. Harpford
and
Fen Ottery.
May, 1766—
April, 1768.

¹ Toplady became Vicar of Harpford and Rector of Fen Ottery.

² "Toplady's predecessors had been presented by members of the Duke family of Otterton, and a member of that family presented Toplady's successor, the Rev. Francis Luce. How Samuel Cleveland acquired this one right of presentation has not been explained."—Rev. A. P. Lancefield (Rector of Fen Ottery and Vicar of Harpford), in the *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 12th August, 1910.

³ The Rev. A. P. Lancefield is inviting all lovers of Toplady's hymns to subscribe to a fund, the object of which is to place in Fen Ottery Church a stained glass window in which Toplady's connection with the parish will be commemorated. He also hopes to be able to erect a memorial to Toplady in Harpford churchyard.

mented tower, in 1884. Toplady, who resolved to keep only a modest establishment, let his vicarage at Harpford to a farmer, and took up his residence in a small hired house at Fen Ottery. The idea of our Lord as a rock and hiding-place continued to fascinate him, and he dwells upon it in one of his letters¹ of this period. "Only flee to Him for refuge," he says, "fly to the hiding-place of His righteousness, death and intercession. Resign yourself to His will in every dispensation; be passive in His hand, stir not from His footstool, take all your spiritual distresses as commissioned from Him."²

During the early years of his ministry he had preached chiefly on the general outlines of the gospel, with the result that while the majority of his hearers expressed pleasure, very few were converted. He had no sooner settled at Fen Ottery, however, than he began to declare with clarion voice the great central doctrine of predestination³—to declare that men are chosen not because they are holy, but because they should be holy; and the numbers of his converts increased rapidly.

In August, 1766, as his health had given way, he set out *via* Bristol and Abergavenny, whither business had called him, to London, which he

¹ 6th March, 1767.

² Works 6, p. 137.

³ As laid down in the eighth chapter of Romans and other parts of Scripture, and as insisted upon by the 17th Article of the Church of England.

always looked upon as a sanatorium; after staying there a short time, he proceeded to Bath, where he stayed several months; and thence he journeyed to Frampton, near Dorchester, where he wrote the following hitherto unpublished letter to William Lunell :

“ Frampton, near Dorchester,

“ January 25th, 1767, Sund^y Night.

“ Had I a less opinion of the reality of dear Mr. Lunell's friendship I should be apt to fear that my honoured, and even esteemed, correspondent would by this time begin to think himself at least neglected, if not forgot; but I have such absolute confidence in the sincerity of his regard as to rest satisfied that he believes me incapable of either. Even gratitude for the favours I have received, abstracted from the disinterested purity of Christian friendship, will forever bind you to my heart, and give you a distinguished place in my affection; such as time cannot impair; nor, I dare believe, death itself destroy. To account, however, for my long silence (which would be apt to rouse suspicions in any trust less generous than your own) I borrow an hour from sleep, though fatigued with the labours of the day. I left Devonshire, my dear Sir, the latter end of last August, and having a call of business in South Wales, went to London by way of Exeter, Bristol, Abergavenny, Gloucester, and Oxford, which I mention so particularly because it will, in part, apologise for

the length of time I have taken to acknowledge the receipt of your two kind, valuable letters, which I was so happy as to find on my return to town. Accept my thanks for the friendly intelligence they contain; but above all, for the important advice they convey. Indeed, my honoured and dearest friend, was you acquainted with the natural pride and naughtiness of my heart, you would know that I need all the admonition you can give. . . . To your wishes and advice add your prayers, and then regard, exalted as yours, can go no higher. I bless God, that I trust I can say, I was never so sensible of my own nothingness and my absolute dependence on Him as since I wrote to you last. An alarming complaint has been, in the hand of Divine grace, the means of this spiritual good; nor, if I know my heart, would I wish the cause to be removed, unless the effect was to continue. A little before I set out for Wales I had a stroke, which I apprehend to have been of a paralytic kind. It was on a Sunday morning while I was performing Divine Service in one of my churches. I was seized with a sudden impediment and faltering of speech, attended with a numbness in my left hand and left leg. I was for some time on the brink of leaving off every moment, but was enabled, though in a broken manner and with great difficulty, to go on with the prayers till they were ended. My heart had recourse to God, and He was merciful.

When I went into the pulpit I was equally thankful and surprised to find that I could preach with almost as much strength as usual. The numbness in my leg continued for several weeks, and from that day to this I have not been so well, nor so much myself as before. I trust, my faithful God will render these impressions indelible which so unexpected a visitation has produced. I consider it as a call to look out from earth and to look up to heaven, within the veil, whither Jesus, my Fore-runner, is entered. Till He takes me to Himself I desire to live solely on His fulness; and to derive all my strength and consolation from His Spirit, His righteousness, and His love. Worldly success and human favour are apt to draw aside the mind even of a renewed person from Him, the Centre of Blessedness: it is wise, it is gracious in Him to drop wormwood on the nipple of earthly comfort: and thereby attach us simply to Himself. Every affliction is a nail, intended to crucify us to the world and hasten the death of that man of sin, that degenerate lust, which is so deeply entrenched in every human heart. . . . My kindest respects attend Mrs. Lunell, and all your family—Mr. and Mrs. Fenwick with Mr. Manypenny share my best wishes. May the unalterable consolations of the Divine Fellowship be with my friend in life, in death, and to eternity! So prays from his heart the unworthiest, though not the least grateful of

those whom you honour with your
will cease to be . . . Augustus [Toplady].

“P.S.—I should have told you, dear sir, that my stay in London was but short. I was advised to go to Bath, which I did, and, blessed be God, I found considerable benefit by the waters. Some time before Christmas I was so well as to come from Bath hither on a visit, intending not to prolong my stay beyond a month, but the rigour of the weather has detained me till now. We have had so vast a fall of snow, succeeded by so intense a frost, that it was impossible to travel without the utmost danger. As the weather is growing milder a friend of mine in Somersetshire, whose coach conveyed me hither, will send it this week to convey me back to Bath, where I purpose continuing but a short time, and to go thence into Devonshire to visit my flock. So that, if you are so good as to indulge me with a line, which I entreat you soon to do, the direction will be to me at Harpford, near Ottery St. Mary, Devon.”

Apparently Toplady returned to Harpford in February. We have noticed his lament because “Brother Allen,” of Back Lane, had embraced Sandemanianism. On 14th June, 1767,¹ we find him writing to another of his old acquaintances who had taken the same step—the Rev. Mr. Huddleston. “Your old friend,” he says, “has written you a pretty many letters, but his correspondent

¹ Letter preserved in the “Gospel Magazine,” 1797, page 45.

thinks it, I suppose, beneath the dignity of so high a proficient in the new divinity of Professor Sandeman to give even an answer to a poor dull undergraduate, who hardly knows the A B C of Christianity." After denouncing Sandemanianism, Toplady continues, "Indeed I can rally you no longer. The remembrance of what you was melts me into tears, when I consider what you are. . . . Oh, come back, come back, to the religion of the gospel. Little did I ever think to see the day when you would labour to destroy the precious faith which you once preached." Toplady then recalls the "many comfortable and improving hours" they had spent together in conversation on the best subjects. "If," he adds, "the remonstrances of a living friend are ineffectual, yet listen, oh listen, to the dead. Remember that dear man of God, Mr. Rutherford, your intimate friend and mine. You have doubtless many letters of his by you; look them over; and while you read, may the ancient fire of divine love (so long smothered) revive and spring up in your soul. Recollect the ministry of that eminent labourer. Think upon his holy conversation and his prayers. For my own part, I trust I shall never forget them till death is swallowed up in victory. What would he say, did he know your unhappy revolt! My heart is full."

In July, 1767, Toplady paid another visit to London, and the notes of a sermon[†] which he

[†] Job xxii. 21.

preached on the 16th of that month at Hampstead have been preserved.

Notwithstanding the useful work that he was doing at Harpford and Fen Ottery, he felt unhappy, for he could not forget the circumstances that had brought him into the parish; consequently, when at the close of 1767 the Rev. Francis Luce, Rector of Broad Hembury, eight miles distant, suggested an exchange of livings, he readily consented. The story of the negotiations between the two clergymen is told in a diary written by Toplady, which embraces the period 6th December, 1767—3rd December, 1768—a record that throws a flood of light on his character and manner of life. It touches upon his friendship with Mr. Holmes,¹ of Exeter, and other neighbours; it mentions the books he read; and it summarises not only his correspondence with men, but also his “correspondence with God.”² He found particularly helpful the hymns of Joseph Hart, which to the end of his life were his special delight,³ and the works of Dr. Gill, Stephen Charnock, Edward Polhill of Burwash, and John Bunyan.

¹ See also Autobiography of Rev. William Jay, p. 42.

² Toplady's phrase. See Works 2, p. 137.

³ Other works referred to by him are the sermons of John Whitty, of Lyme Regis, Jeremiah Seed and Ralph Erskine; Cripplegate Morning Exercises (four volumes of sermons, 1661, 1672, 1682, 1690); Cave's "*Historia Literaria*;" and the works of Anton Van Wale (Professor Walæus, as he calls him); John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester (died 1762); William Wall (died 1728); Francis Turretin; Dr. Sibbes (died 1635); and John Downname, Bishop of Derry.

Elsewhere he expresses his admiration for Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, which he styles "the most valuable ecclesiastical history extant in our language."¹

But the Bible was, of course, his mainstay; and of the books of the Bible two had for him a peculiar fascination:—Canticles and Revelation. "Whenever I preach from any passage in the book of Canticles or in the book of Revelation," he says,² "I consider myself as standing on ground peculiarly consecrated and mysterious. The Scripture in general may be considered as the temple at large; but these two books as the Holy of Holies."³

In respect to the proposed change, he writes on 7th December: "Received a letter from Mr. Luce. Gracious God, dispose of the event to which it relates as seemeth best to Thee!" Writing to his mother on the 10th, he says, "There is one thing that pleases me much about Broad Hembury, and makes me hope for a blessing on the event, viz., that it was not from first to last of my own seeking; and every door without any application of mine has hitherto flown open, and all seems to point that way. As a good man somewhere says, 'A believer never

¹ Works 1, p. 237.

² Works 4, p. 269.

³ For a meditation on Cant. viii. 14, see Works 3, p. 433. Toplady's hymn, "I saw, and lo a countless throng," is founded on Rev. vii. 9—17. For additional Thoughts on this passage, see Works 3, p. 414.

yet carved for himself but he cut his own fingers.'"¹ Then follows the golden passage on Life by Faith: "The all-wise God, whose never-failing providence ordereth every event, usually makes what we set our hearts upon unsatisfactory, and sweetens what we feared; bringing real evil out of seeming good, and real good out of seeming evil; to show us what short-sighted creatures we are, and to teach us to live by faith upon His blessed Self."

"In the meanwhile," he continues: "add your prayers that God Himself would be pleased to choose my heritage and fix my lot; command His gracious blessing on the event, turn the balance as seemeth good in His sight, and make it entirely His own doing, not mine." The diary contains many references to prayers made both for himself and his people. Thus under date 11th December, he says: "At night was earnest with God in private prayer for a blessing on my to-morrow's ministrations; and received an answer of peace;" and under 27th December, 1767: "Lord, keep me to the end stedfast in Thy truths. Let me but go experimentally and sensibly to know Thee; and then it will be absolutely impossible for me to depart from the precious doctrines of grace: my early insight into which, I look upon as one of the distinguishing blessings of my life."

¹ In a letter to Serle, 8th July, 1774, he says of the Almighty, "With Him all events must be ultimately rested . . . nor would I have a single incident removed out of His hand, were I possessed of all power both in heaven and earth." Works 6, p. 225.

In the stillness of the night on 29th December, 1767, he heard speaking to him a voice which he took to be the voice of God. "He assured me," says Toplady, "of His faithfulness, and I trusted Him. It was whispered to my soul, 'Thou shalt find Me faithful'; my soul answered, 'Lord, I believe it: I take Thee at Thy word,'" "This," continues Toplady, "I am certain was more than fancy. It was too sweet, too clear and too powerful, to be the daughter of imagination. There was a *nescio quid divini*, attended with joy unspeakable, as much superior to all the sensations excited by earthly comforts, as the heavens are higher than the earth."¹

While at Fen Ottery, Toplady wrote one of the most popular of his hymns, namely, "What though my frail eyelids refuse,"² with its superlively third verse:

"Kind Author and Ground of my Hope,
Thee, Thee, for my God I avow,
My glad Ebenezer set up,
And own Thou hast help'd me till now.
I muse on the years that are past,
Wherein my defence Thou hast prov'd;
Nor wilt Thou relinquish at last
A sinner so signally lov'd."

The sweet and impassioned hymn, "Compared

¹ It will be recalled that some other fervent souls had similar experiences; for example, Joseph Hart and William Huntington. See *Life of Joseph Hart*, p. 39. *Life of William Huntington*, p. 27.

² He quotes it in his diary under date, 1st January, 1768.

with Christ, in all beside,"¹ was also written at this period.

Although the actual exchange of livings made by Toplady and Mr. Luce, before witnesses, had taken place on January 23rd,² it had been decided that the removals should be delayed till April.

On March 8th, while walking with a friend on the top of Fen Ottery Hill, Toplady noticed a pillar of smoke rising at a little distance from the tower of Harpford Church.

"What do you think it is?" asked Toplady of his companion.

"I suppose they are burning stroil,"³ was the reply.

Imagining this to be the case, they continued their walk for several hours round Aylesbeare Hill and on to the hamlet of Metcombe, where a farmer named Francke asked them whether they had heard of the fire at Harpford. "According

¹ The first verse runs :

"Compared with Christ, in all beside
No comeliness I see ;
The one thing needful, dearest Lord,
Is to be one with Thee."

He quotes verse 4 in his diary, under date, 8th April, 1768—that is, a month before he removed to Broad Hembury :

"Loved of my God, for Him again
With love intense I burn ;
Chosen of Him ere time began,
I choose Him in return."

² With Broad Hembury was at that time linked the neighbouring parish of Sheldon. The Rev. A. P. Lancefield observes : "The present income of Harpford is about £180, while the combined incomes of Broad Hembury and Sheldon come to over £360, and the proportion must have been the same 140 years ago."—*Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 12th August, 1910.

³ Couch-grass.

to the best of what my son could discern," he continued, "it was Farmer Endicott's house that was burning."

If that was the case, Toplady knew that his own house which adjoined must be in danger. So he posted away for Harpford, and when he got within view of the village he plainly perceived by the course of the smoke that the vicarage had actually taken fire. A little further on he met a man who saluted him with, "Sir, your house is burnt down to the ground."

"Entering the village," says Toplady, "I found it almost literally true. The dwelling-house, the barn, the linhays, the stable, &c., with the back house were, as it were by sympathy, all in flames at once, and more than half consumed." He, thereupon, returned to Fen Ottery, and took horse for Exeter in order to call on the Insurance Agent, from whom he learnt, to his inexpressible relief, that as the fire had happened after the transfer of the livings the event could not possibly affect him.

In a passage of his diary, written with the crackling of the red embers still in his ears, he says, "Who would not trust in the Lord and wait until a cloudy dispensation is cleared up? Through grace, I was enabled to do this; and the result of things has proved that it would not only have been wicked, but foolish to have done otherwise. Oh that I may always be as well exalted to adopt and realize that Divine apothegm, 'He that

believeth shall not make haste.'¹ . . . What a providential mercy was it that I resigned the living before this misfortune happened! O God, how wise and how gracious art Thou in all Thy ways!"

As the Rev. Charles Hole² charitably observes, Toplady "must have been off a true balance of thought when he used these words, which implied that the wisdom and goodness of God was manifested in laying the affliction not on him but on Mr. Luce." "We have," however, adds Mr. Hole, "not a published statement³ deliberately maintained, but the record of a meditation penned in solitude and intended only for his own eye; we must consider it a false note, fit to be cited for our admonition in any unusual experience, but not to be fastened on as a characteristic of the man without the grossest injustice."

What made the matter worse for Mr. Luce was that he had neglected to have his own name substituted for Toplady's on the insurance policy. It should have been done, of course, immediately after the exchange of livings, and as he had neglected to attend to the matter the Sun Company, with which the property had been insured, was not technically liable. Toplady, however, wrote to the company, and endeavoured to influence

¹ Isa. xxviii. 16.

² Unpublished "Materials for a Life of Toplady," the MS. of which is preserved in the Church Missionary Society's House, Salisbury Square.

³ Toplady's Diary was not written for publication.

it in behalf of Mr. Luce. The letter,¹ which has never before been published, runs: "With regard to the recovery of the lost money, I have one observation to offer, which, I think, must have weight with the Trustees. Supposing I had died a little before the fire happened, the living would have been vacated of course, but my heirs, executors and administrators would have been able, I apprehend, to have a legal claim to the insurance, as the accident happened so much within the limit of the year insured for beforehand: which year, by the way, is not even now expired. To apply this—my late living of Harpford is indeed absolutely vacated by me as much as it could have been by death. As vicar of Harpford, I am, to all intents and purposes, dead in law. But may not my successor be considered as my heir, or assign according to equitable construction of the 8th and 9th Articles?"

Other correspondence ensued, but how it all ended we cannot say. Possibly the Sun Company showed itself generous, and if so, Mr. Luce's loss was far less than had been feared.² In any case, Mr. Luce and Toplady continued to be excellent friends, and often exchanged pulpits.

¹ Dated 15th June, 1768, that is, after Toplady had settled at Broad Hembury.

² The Rev. Francis Luce died in London, 11th August, 1778.

CHAPTER V

17TH APRIL, 1768—DECEMBER, 1769

EARLY DAYS AT BROAD HEMBURY

The village of Broad Hembury—and Toplady preached his first sermon there on April 17th—is situate five miles from Honiton, and fifteen from Exeter. The nearest station, Sidmouth Junction, being five miles distant, Broad Hembury is even at the present day one of the most isolated of villages. To the south rises, with sharp contour, the great, picturesque and breast-like eminence, Blackbutt Hill—a bastion of Blackdown. Whatever pictures fade from the mind of the visitor to Broad Hembury, he will not lose recollection of that great rounded height, which in Toplady's time blazed with the yellow of gorse and the amethyst of heather; and on which to-day, although parts of these uplands have been planted, wild nature still gorgeously asserts herself. Broad Hembury Church, which is of flint, roofed with lead, has a noble battlemented and pinnacled tower rising to a height of a hundred feet, and a remarkable porch with fan tracery and ancient black oak gates. Of the windows, all of which are fine, the most curious is

12. Broad
Hembury
and Sheldon.
Letter to
Morris. 2nd
Sept., 1768.

one which has on the inner side of its mullions richly carved figures of angels, and on the outer side figures representing the world, the flesh and the devil. The elaborately ornamented rood-screen that existed in Toplady's time has disappeared, but during recent years the church has been restored with taste, particular attention having been given to the quaint and beautiful gallery at the west end. The vicarage, although enlarged, has in the main preserved its original appearance. Could Toplady re-visit the village, he would recognise the cottages with their white cob walls and mouse-coloured thatched roofs, the church-yard wall also of cob and also thatched, the solemn and immemorial yew that casts its shadow over mound and tombstone, and the earth-walls, masked with herbage, which in Devon take the place of hedge-rows. He also had charge of the parish of Sheldon. As a rule he preached in its church (distant five miles from Broad Hembury) on Sunday mornings, and in Broad Hembury church in the afternoons and evenings. He refers in his diary to both of the great houses in the parish: — Grange, for so many years the seat of the Drewe family, and the Priory in Kerswell hamlet; and his sermons and essays are studded with ideas prompted by sights and occurrences in his vicarage and the neighbourhood. The labourer slouching past in "home-spun suit" is responsible for the thought that none can

appear acceptably before the tremendous Judge in a righteousness of his own weaving; a rat popping his head through a hole in the vicarage study at midnight, and venturing out or slinking back according as Toplady sat still or moved his book a little, reminds him of "the timid professor"; the sight of a stage-coach gives the idea that Arminianism is like the guard "who sees the passengers safe out of town for a few miles, and then, making his bow, turns back, and leaves them to pursue the rest of their journey themselves";¹ the directing posts set him thinking of the great way-marks in Scripture,² and particularly of John xvi. 8. When, cane in hand and dog at heel, he threads a deep, dark, narrow lane where his feet are embarrassed by the mire and the gnarled roots of the trees whose boughs meet over his head, he recalls the way of a Christian in a state of sin or temptation, and with a sense of guilt. When he emerges from the dark thoroughfare and mounts a hill, the light, the clear sky, and the widening prospect give him the idea of this same Christian in a state of assurance—in the enjoyment of a season of holy rejoicing, when seraphic love wraps the elevated soul to heaven.³ That he continued to write hymns need scarcely be said; but he also thought it not beneath his dignity to compose verses for children's samplers, and one of them,

¹ Works 3, p. 186.

² Works 3, p. 340.

³ Works 3, p. 338.

worked by a Miss Shiles, daughter of a Payhembury tanner, was for long preserved,¹ and handed about the parish with pride.

To the unwise habit of reading and writing till past midnight Toplady was for years addicted. While the owls were hooting from the ivy of his church tower, and the foxgloves in the hedge-rows were steeped in moonlight, there sat he in his study, poring over Charnock, or Polhill, or Waterland. The habit impaired his constitution, gave him a white, etiolated appearance, and shortened his days. With his dog and his cat²—for he kept a cat too—he led in this isolated village an almost Crusoe-like existence; and he was so much in the company of his dumb friends, and he watched their behaviour so narrowly, that at last he came to believe that beasts, like human beings, have souls, and that there will be places for them in heaven. Although he lived so far from a town he rarely used a horse; and his friend, Mr. Northcote, of Honiton, once observed: “Mr. Toplady believes in absolute predestination, and yet he is loth to ride on horse-back for fear of breaking his neck.”

“True,” replied Toplady, “and perhaps that very fear may be an appointed means of preserving my neck unbroken.”

Notwithstanding the amenities of Broad Hem-

¹ *Gospel Magazine*, 1802, p. 76, where the wording is given.

² See also Works 3, p. 461.

bury, Toplady was unsatisfied; for beneath his apparent calm there burnt in reality a raging ambition—the ambition to reach men as his friends Romaine and Gill had reached and were still reaching them. In Broad Hembury, he felt like a caged tiger. He felt that he could do, that he ought to be doing, something greater. There have, indeed, been few instances of so fierce a fever of life.

He had not been long at Broad Hembury when he heard that James Morris, to whose preaching he had been so deeply indebted, was “waxing cold in the work of the Lord.”¹ Consequently, “in fulfilment of a debt due to friendship and to the cause of God,” he wrote to him as follows: “2nd September, 1768. It is now above eight years since I saw or heard from my ever dear Mr. Morris. . . . How has my heart burnt within me, and how have my tears flowed like water from the smitten rock, when I have heard you preach the unsearchable riches of His grace, blood and righteousness. . . . And is it true, can it be possible, that you should cease from your work of calling sinners to repentance? . . . I am told so; but I cannot believe it. O man of God, stir up the gift that is in thee: let it not rust and moulder, by lying useless. The Lord hath often

¹ John Wesley writes from Wexford, 12th July, 1769: “Near twenty years ago all this county was moved by the preaching of James Morris. Thousands flocked to hear him; but one false step of his quite scattered them again.”—*Journal*, Dent's Ed., Vol. 3, p. 379.

spoken to me by your mouth: oh that He would now speak to you by my pen! Do, at my request, meet the dear people of Cooladine, and who knows, but there may, once more, be showers of blessing?"

At the end of 1768, Toplady was in London, and he speaks of hearing Dr. Gill preach on the 11th December.¹

Earlier in the year had occurred that extraordinary event, the expulsion from the University of Oxford of six young men who were found guilty of the monstrous misdemeanour of having taken

13. The Church of England Vindicated, 13th Feb., 1769.

part in a prayer meeting.² Among the pamphlets provoked by this arbitrary act was one entitled *Pietas Oxoniensis*, by Richard (afterwards Sir Richard) Hill. It was replied to by the Rev. Dr. Nowell, Principal of St. Mary Hall, and public orator of Oxford University, in a publication, *An Answer to a Pamphlet entitled, "Pietas Oxoniensis,"*³ in which he endeavoured to prove the Arminianism of the doctrines of the Church of England. Two replies promptly followed—one by Hill—*Goliath Slain*⁴—the other by Toplady, *The Church of England vindicated from the charge of Arminianism*⁵—a

¹ Works 4, p. 415.

² New light has recently been thrown on the subject by the Rev. S. L. Ollard, M.A., Vice-Principal of St. Edmund Hall, in his admirable monograph: *The Six Students of St. Edmund Hall expelled from the University of Oxford in 1768* (A. R. Mowbray & Co.).

³ Noticed in *The Monthly Review*, November, 1768, p. 415.

⁴ Noticed in *Monthly Review*, January, 1769, p. 70.

⁵ Dated 13th February, 1769, and signed "Clerus." See Toplady's Works (1825 ed.), Vol. 5, p. 1.

pamphlet written in the lucid, terse and nervous style which is so marked a distinction of his prose writings. The two grand questions on which he joins issue with Dr. Nowell are: (1) not so much whether the Calvinistic doctrines are right or wrong in themselves as whether they are, or are not, the doctrines of the Church of England; and (2) whether, on proof of their actually being the doctrines of the Church, Arminians can, with a safe conscience, and *bona-fide*, subscribe to those doctrines *ex animo*. On the matter of the guilty six he says little, but he points out that they were expelled for "their attachment to the doctrines of predestination unto life, regeneration by the Spirit of God, and justification by faith alone," that is to say, "for believing and asserting the leading truths of that very Church with which the expellers, no less than the expelled, profess to agree." He then sets himself to prove, mainly by numerous citations from the Liturgy, the Articles and the Homilies, that the doctrines of the Church of England, the doctrines to which all her clergy have subscribed, are uncompromisingly Calvinistic. He admits that there have been traitors in the Church, and that, owing to human frailty, traitors there will always be; and he adds, "On such a theme 'twere impious to be calm." He proves that the Five Points of Calvinism—Original Sin, Election, Particular Redemption, Effectual Calling, and Final Perseverance—are again and again insisted

upon both in the Prayer Book and the Book of Homilies.

It is when dealing with the Homilies that Toplady is at his best. He ardently admired these fine old compendiums of gospel teaching expressed in the noblest of noble English. He said it grieved him to the heart that the doctrines of the Church were ignored by many of his brother clergy, and he continues, "While our churches in many places are empty, dissenting meetings are generally as full as they can hold. The plain, but melancholy, truth is, that in various parts of this kingdom multitudes of persons, who are churchmen upon principle, are forced to go to meeting in order to hear the doctrines of their own Church preached."

Among Dr. Nowell's deprecable ideas one was that prayer is inconsistent with the notion of absolute predestination and indefectible assurance. "So far is this from being true," says Toplady, "that the belief of God's immutable purposes is the very thing which excites and warrants effectual, fervent prayer, and puts life and confidence into our approaches to the throne of grace." After illustrating his statement by citations both from the Bible and the Liturgy, he adds, "Prayer, therefore, and the other means of grace are not superseded, but even rendered needful, by the certainty of God's predestination: for *Qui vult finem vult etiam media ad finem.*"¹

¹ He who has determined the end has determined also the means to that end.

Again, Dr. Nowell had declared good works to be the *cause* of justification. Not so, observed Toplady. They are the *effects* of justification. We Calvinists value sanctification and good works as the writings of our heavenly estate; which, though they have no hand in procuring the estate itself (for that is already done by the precious merits of the sole Mediator between God and men), yet prove that the estate is ours through the free grace of God and the alone righteousness of Christ.¹ "The grand unerring chart of direction to men on which they should constantly fix their eyes is God's declared will of command, set forth in the written Word."²

This pamphlet is altogether admirable—admirable in argument, in language, in tone and in spirit. If Toplady's blade is of the keenest steel, if he is pitiless in exposing the sophistries of a scholarly opponent, he is also persistently courteous to that opponent. Grieved rather than angered on account of the errors which he combated, he prays that Dr. Nowell's eyes may be cleared, his heart suppld. It is the address of one cultured gentleman to another cultured gentleman. Toplady's arguments have never been answered, simply because they are unanswerable.³ As he says, and as he proves to the hilt, open the

¹ Works 5, p. 116.

² Works 5, p. 39.

³ To the Rev. Walter Sellon's attempt to answer them reference will be made later. See Toplady's Works, Vol. 6, p. 189.

Prayer Book, open the Book of Homilies, almost where you will, Calvinism—that is to say, New Testamentism—stares you straight in the face.

Those who wish for further information on the subject of the Expulsion of the Six Students should consult *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1768; *The Life of Sir Richard Hill*, by the Rev. E. Sidney; *The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*; the *Historical MSS. Commission Reports*; Dartmouth MSS., Vol. III.; the Rev. John Newton's *Cardiphonia* (which contains five letters, dated March, 1765, to July, 1772, to the Rev. Thomas Jones, one of the six students); and the Appendix of the Rev. S. L. Ollard's monograph, to which reference has already been made.¹

¹ *Note to the Reader.*—After page 63 of this work had been printed, I received a letter from the manager of the Sun Insurance Company, in which he says respecting the fire at Harpford Vicarage, "The only record on which we can lay hands is that contained in the minute of a Committee of Management of this office of the 14th July, 1768, when a loss of £168 19s. 4d. was ordered to be made payable to the Rev. A. M. Toplady, of Harpford, Devon." This, therefore, was the sum which, thanks to Toplady's efforts and the generosity of the Sun Office, found its way to the Rev. Francis Luce.

CHAPTER VI

SEPTEMBER, 1769—MARCH, 1770

THE EXPLOSION

By this time Toplady had formed friendships with the Rev. George Whitefield, under whom, as we have seen, he had often sat, and whom he regarded as the prince of preachers, and “the least imperfect character” he had ever known; the enthusiastic, original and facetious Rev. John Berridge, of Everton; the tall, majestic and lute-voiced Rev. Martin Madan, of the Lock, a man more remarkable for the liveliness of his imagination than for solidity of judgment;¹ the venerable Rev. Dr. Gifford,² savant, numismatist, and saint—loved by Toplady *ab imo pectoris*³—whose house in Brunswick Court, Queen Square, was the favourite meeting-place of the Free Grace divines; the learned and devout Ambrose Serle; the judicious, equable and lovable Rev. Edward Hitchin;

14. Edward Hitchin, John Ryland, and other Friends.

¹ Cowper's Letter of 18th March, 1780.

² Andrew Gifford (1700—1784), Librarian at the British Museum, and pastor of the Baptist Church in Eagle Street, Holborn. He had “something heavenly in his every look.”—Richard Burnham: *Elegy on the Death of Andrew Gifford, D.D.* See *Life of Countess of Huntingdon*, ii. p. 151.

³ Works 6, p. 187.

and the burly and explosive Rev. John Ryland,¹ of College Street Chapel, Northampton. To Hitchin and Ryland Toplady was drawn by ever-strengthening bonds of affection. Hitchin, whom he calls "that amiable and precious man of God, whose grace was as solid as his parts were shining," was pastor of a Baptist meeting in White Row, Spitalfields—the largest Dissenting chapel in London. Hitchin's attitude towards the world may be gauged by a passage in his sermon² occasioned by the death of his sister, Mrs. Tate. "The rich man," he says, "whose hopes rise no higher than the stocks, funds, &c., is an object of pity; they sink and fall as the interest of his substance does; whereas the believer, who casts his anchor within the veil, is very easy, for no earthly change makes an alteration there. The believer's treasure is beyond the force of an enemy or the failure of a creature." It was this attitude towards life that imparted to him the unruffled serenity, repose, suavity of manners, and holy charm which endeared him to all his contemporaries, and to Toplady in particular.³

John Collett Ryland⁴ was a man of an utterly

¹ John Collett Ryland (1723—1792). He was "awakened" under Rev. Benjamin Beddome, Baptist minister and hymn-writer, of Bourton-on-the-Water. He settled at Northampton, in 1760. Dr. Ryland, author of "Sovereign Ruler of the skies," and other hymns, was his son.

² Printed in 1758.

³ Toplady has preserved many of Hitchin's sayings. See Works, Vol. 4, pp. 403, 436, 453; Vol. 6, p. 217. Our portrait of Hitchin is from the *Gospel Magazine* for Feb., 1774.

⁴ Ryland was 47, that is to say, 17 years Toplady's senior.

different, but of an equally attractive, character. If Hitchin was a placid and pellucid lake, smilingly reflecting the beams which it received from heaven, Ryland was a plunging, roaring mountain cataract, returning the sunlight from a myriad facets. His massive, dignified person commanded awe and struck terror. His domed forehead, his sharply-closed lips, his eye full of sparks, his square-toed shoes, "his wig five-storeyed behind," his coat with sleeves profusely large and open, his vast snuff-coloured waistcoat, "with flaps encroaching upon his knees"—each proclaimed a characteristic or predilection of the man—whether his capacity for thought, his dogged determination, his pent-up fire, his ingenuousness, his originality, his contempt for conventions, his indifference to the opinions of the world. The richness and raciness of his conversation, his amazing flow of spirits, his sonorous voice, his masculine eloquence, and the vehemence of his manner, rivetted the attention of any thoughtful person who had the privilege of being in his company; for if in one moment, impelled by passions which he governed with difficulty, he uttered some remark that caused a dead and uncomfortable silence, he invariably, in the next, amply atoned for his error by some flash of genius provocative of novel and delightful transports. His conversation not only stimulated and vivified, it fired his hearers with the longing to do great and noble deeds. His

hero was Demosthenes,¹ his aversion Mrs. Diffidence, wife of Giant Despair. "Don't go to school to that harridan!" he used to say. He himself fell upon a thing with the velocity and voracity of a jaguar. All his victories were the result of sudden impulses. He was incomparably the finest pulpit orator in an age when to be a minister and to be an orator were synonymous terms. His sermons were "sublime and terrible as the overflowing lava of a burning mountain." "I should despair," says Robert Hall, "of conveying to the mind of one who never heard him an adequate idea of the majesty and force of his elocution. He was always above other men, and sometimes above himself:" when he read the historical parts of the Bible—those chapters, for example, describing the meeting of Joseph and his father, the necromantic scene at Endor, and the gruesome ending of Jezebel; or that chapter in which one sees a malefic "goblin tear a poor boy to pieces,"² he moved his audience at will. After hearing his sermon you felt as though you had just come out of an earthquake. In his energy, indeed, he swept everything before him. Whatever his faults, every word he uttered came straight from the heart. Inactivity was torture to him.

It is probable that Toplady's friendship with him originated in their common and per-fervid

¹ He annotated for Dr. Thomas Leland the translation of Demosthenes published in 1777.

² Ryland's expression. See Mark ix. 17—27.

admiration of the works of Hervey, of Weston Favell, who had been a personal friend of Ryland. Ryland's enthusiasm for Hervey expressed itself in unmeasured panegyric. "When I came into his presence," he says, "I was struck with veneration and delight: he seemed to me above the rank of other men, a being descended from the celestial world, and breathing the air of Paradise."¹ "Christ," he continued, "could see more beauty in Hervey than in the sun and moon, the planets and all the millions of the fixed stars. He could see more beauty in this one soul than in all the wicked monarchs, the profligate lords, the proud philosophers, the artful statesmen and haughty conquerors of the whole earth. . . . If you compare Hervey with all the most celebrated geniuses of modern times, he will appear to great advantage on the comparison: call up to view Shakespeare, Pope, Bolingbroke, Hume, Hobbes and Lord Herbert. Go over to France, compare him with Voltaire and all the herd of infidels! what do you think of him now, when set in contrast with such saints as these? O Hervey! the palm is thine! for ever thine!"

One's first inclination is to smile at this passage as mere declamation, but on second thoughts it is seen to be perfectly sane; Ryland's sole object

¹ "The Character of the Rev. James Hervey, M.A., with sixty-five of his original letters to the author of this Life, 1791." This work was finished in 1788-9, being dictated to the Rev. Wm. Jay, who was then in charge of Surrey Chapel. Portions of it, however, were probably written many years before.

being to show the inferiority of the most exalted geniuses, the inferiority of even the most splendid objects of nature, to a heart that is rich toward God. Similar ideas have been expressed by other men. Even the unimpassioned Emerson, for example, after enumerating and eulogising the mellow beauties of a glorious wood, could but add, "And yet before the beauty of a right action all this beauty is cold and unaffecting."¹

Although there is nothing in Toplady to parallel Ryland's extraordinary dithyramb, nevertheless he, too, paid glowing tributes to the author of the *Meditations among the Tombs*, and *The Way of Holiness*,² describing him as "A true disciple and imitator of Christ; a faithful dispenser of the mysteries of God, a denizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, an angel upon earth, a heavenly man, a genuine servant of Christ, a treasury of virtues."³

Besides administering to his Northampton congregation, Ryland conducted an academy in the town, and he had at one time as many as ninety pupils. He was also an indefatigable author. The burning design which he kept in view, whether

¹ *Journals*, Vol. 3, p. 342.

² Ryland and Toplady by no means stood alone in their admiration of "the seraphic Hervey." Henry Venn said of him, "He is the most extraordinary man I ever saw in my life." *Life of Rev. Henry Venn*, p. 332.

³ With the Rev. Moses Browne, Vicar of Olney, who had been Hervey's curate, Toplady was on terms of intimacy. He quotes a saying of Mr. Browne in *Works* 4, p. 319, and in his *Essay on "Natural History," Gospel Magazine*, 1777, p. 222, he quotes some of Browne's poetry.

as minister, teacher, or writer, was "to display the glorious character of God, and by placing it in the most beautiful point of light possible, to endear God's nature and attributes to all serious Christians." He held the proper education of the young to be the crying need of the age. Aware of the depravity of the human heart, and its mad inclination for the world, the beast,¹ and the devil, he earnestly in season and out of season warned his pupils and the public against all three. It was the "horrid neglect of parents and tutors," he said, "that enabled Popish priests to make such ravages on the British youth." He directed against that insidious enemy of true religion, the Church of Rome, some of the most forceful of his diatribes, and he pictured with wondrous pomp of language the beatific time when Popery and all its ill effects would be destroyed and the Song of Moses sung,² and the shout of victory shouted by millions at once standing on the sea of glass.³ His estimate of the world has passed into a proverb. "As for the world! the world!" he cried, "tis all title-page and no contents; it is all vexation, in getting, in keeping, in losing it; and whether we get or lose we are still dissatisfied."⁴ An enthusiastic teacher, his constant habit was to

¹ The Papacy. Ryland understood the first beast (Rev. xiii. 1-10) to be the Papacy; the second beast (Rev. xiii. 11) to be the Jesuits. See also Ryland's *Character of Hervey*, p. 236.

² Ex. xv. 1, 2.

³ Rev. xv. 2-4.

⁴ *Contemplations* 1, p. 216; 3, p. 73.

allure his pupils into the paths of knowledge, and to endeavour to infuse into their breasts a taste for the intrinsic delights of literature. Much of his teaching was done in the fields and meadows round Northampton when he took his pupils out "simpling"¹ as he called it. "I should," says Toplady, "as a well wisher to mankind, deeply lament the want of such tutors as Aristotle, Witsius, Rollin and Watts, if Providence had not given us a Ryland;"² and when one recalls the names of Robert Hall, Samuel Baxter, and others who were educated under him,³ and received from him their first lessons in taste, Toplady's eulogy cannot be pronounced excessive. As a writer, Ryland's salient fault was his habit of attempting too much. If he did more than any other man to promote polite learning among the Dissenters, nevertheless one criticism applies to everything that left his pen.⁴ His books are amorphous and untidy, and bristle with repetitions, but on the other hand they have the saving virtue of being—as their writer himself was—intensely and startlingly alive. They give thrills, one becomes attached to them. They could scarcely be otherwise than loosely and unskilfully put together, seeing that they were rushed to the press with the ink on

¹ Collecting wild plants; botanizing.

² Works 4, p. 104.

³ Charles Lamb's friend, George Dyer, studied under him.

⁴ His largest work is *Contemplations on the Beauties of Creation*, 3 vols, 1779—80. It displays more than any other his enthusiasm for God. He published many educational works, and also packets of cards with mnemonical features. There are specimens of them in the Free Library, Northampton.

them still wet. No printer, no publisher, could turn out work half fast enough for him. His life was an orgy of preaching, teaching, writing and printing. "My dear friend," said Toplady to him, "you would have done more if you had done less." If Toplady did not shut his eyes to Ryland's faults, on the other hand Ryland was as keenly alive to Toplady's. He never ceased, for example, to declaim in affectionate terms against Toplady's owl-like and insensate habit of toiling at night. "The morning," he would say, "with the dew, the lark and the sunshine, is the time for study. You are killing yourself, my friend." Toplady has preserved a number of Ryland's sayings. For example: "Creature comforts are often to the soul what suckers are to a tree; God takes off these that this may thrive." "A cool and cowardly defence of Christian principles will always embolden the enemies of the gospel, and discourage its friends. Be resolute for God, or give up His cause." On hearing that the Bible was to be translated into French, Ryland burst out excitedly with: "If that happens, and five millions of boys and girls have the Scriptures put into their hands, all hell will be hung with mourning!" Under so electric and vigorous a character it is not surprising that the cause at Northampton prospered, nor that the chapel had

¹ For a portion of a letter of Ryland to Toplady, see Toplady's Works, Vol. 3, p. 334.

² Toplady's Works 4, p. 425.

to be enlarged three times. The list of subscribers is still preserved in the vestry there, and among the names is that of Toplady.

A more harmonious friendship than that between Toplady and Ryland never existed. The books they read and relished bear witness to the congeniality of their tastes—as, for example, the works of Witsius, Quarles,¹ Bunyan, Pope,² Charnock, Waterland, Elisha Coles,³ Brine,⁴ Grove, Gill and Hurrion⁵—the great Hurrion, as both Ryland and Toplady called him. Of these and other Puritan and post-Puritan divines and poets they never tired. Then, too, Ryland shared Toplady's consuming passion for the books of Canticles and Revelation. But what impresses us most in the two men is their perpetual, not cheerfulness, but joyousness—a characteristic that was common to Hitchin, Serle, Gifford and all the other members of their circle—men of a joyous temperament, it is true, but whom Calvinism made more joyous. Persons who talk of the gloom of Calvinism, talk about what they do not understand. If Toplady held tenaciously to the end of life the doctrines of Free Grace, so did Ryland. Each preached and wrote what he believed to be

¹ An edition of *Quarles's Emblems*, issued in 1777, contains commendatory letters by both Toplady and Ryland.

² See Toplady's Works 4, pp. 120, 290; 5, pp. 159, 160.

³ Toplady's Works 4, p. 285.

⁴ Rev. John Brine (1703—1765), Pastor at Currier's Hall (Cripplegate Meeting).

⁵ Rev. John Hurrion (1675—1731), Pastor of Hare Court Chapel, Aldersgate Street.

right, regardless of the opinions of men. Neither would hear a word against the other. They were like the two rare old Kings of Brentford, sitting on one throne, "smelling at one rose."¹

From June to December, 1769, Toplady, who had left Broad Hembury in charge of a curate, was in London, preaching in the leading Evangelical churches every Sunday and enjoying spiritual conversations with his friends, Romaine, Madan, Hitchin, Gifford and Ryland.²

Towards the end of the year he revised and prepared for publication his rendering of Zanchy, which had been laid by for nine years. "I literally," he says, "fulfilled Horace's direction: '*Nonumque prematur in annum.*'"³ Here and there he retrenched from the original, and here and there he enlarged a passage, his object being to put before the public the spirit of Zanchy rather than that writer's very words. In a com-

¹ For further particulars of Ryland, see *Autobiography of Rev. William Jay*, p. 286; *The Three Rylands*, by the Rev. Dr. Culross; and *The Life of Charles Lamb*, by E. V. Lucas, vol. 1, pp. 145-147.

² He records conversations and sermons in London as follows: June 21st, Madan (iv. 440); 22nd, Ryland (iv. 446); 28th, Madan (iv. 393). July 3rd, Ryland (iv. 391); 4th, Ryland (iv. 413); 7th, Ryland (iv. 364); 11th, Ryland (iv. 163); 14th, Gifford (iv. 437); 18th, Hitchin (iv. 403, 436; vi. 217), Ryland (iv. 403), Madan (iv. 441), Romaine (iv. 335). July 23rd, preaches at Hampstead (2 Cor. v. 1; John xi. 40); 26th, preaches at St. Anne's, Blackfriars. August 11th, Madan (iv. 421); 18th, Gifford (iv. 161). September 6th, Miss Southgate, of Hampstead (iv. 378); 22nd, Gifford (iv. 168). October 21st, Gifford (iv. 181); 24th, Rev. Moses Browne (iv. 319); 25th, Rev. Thos. Chorlton. November 8th, Rev. Mr. Townshend (iv. 433). December 15th, Mr. Storer (iv. 345); 23rd, Ryland (iv. 347); 24th, Madan (iv. 374); 25th, Madan (iv. 438); 28th, Madan (iv. 368).

³ Let it [anything you write] be suppressed till the ninth year. *Ars Poetica*, line 388.

pendious and forceful preface, which exhibits a sure grasp—a grip—of the subject which is delightful to contemplate, he thus addresses those who are embarrassed and distressed by the consideration of the subject of reprobation: “Bless God for His electing love; and leave Him to act as He pleases by them that are without. Simply acquiesce in the plain Scripture account, and wish to see no farther than revelation holds the lamp.”¹ After insisting that there is no such thing as casualty or accident, even in things of temporal concern, much less in matters spiritual and everlasting,² he quotes with hearty approval Pope’s lines:

“All nature is but art unknown to thee:
All chance direction which thou canst not see.”

The Preface is followed by “Observations on the Divine attributes necessary to be premised in order to our better understanding the doctrine of Predestination;” an Essay studded with fine passages—one of the best being the following on the Omnipotence of God: “The comfortable belief of this doctrine has a tendency to excite and keep alive within us that fortitude which is so ornamental to and necessary for us while we abide in this wilderness. . . . This was Job’s support; he was not overcome with rage and despair when he received news that the Sabeans had carried off his cattle, and other ill tidings; he resolved all these

¹ Works 5, pp. 159, 160.

² Works 5, p. 161.

misfortunes into the agency of God, His power and sovereignty, and even thanked Him for doing what He would with His own. If another should slander me in word or injure me in deed, I shall not be prone to anger, when, with David, I consider that the Lord hath bidden him."

Finally there is the main work, *The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination Stated and Asserted*. Its finest passage is the one which points out that faith is a fruit, not the cause of election. "If faith or works," it runs, "were the cause of election, God could not be said to choose us, but we to choose Him; contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture.¹ . . . They who are predestinated to life are likewise predestinated to all those means which are indispensably necessary in order to their meetness for entrance upon and enjoyment of that life.² . . . As for charging God with partiality for not electing all mankind, we might as well lay upon Him this charge for not making all His creatures angels."³ Again, "Election is the golden thread that runs through the whole Christian system."⁴ After declaring that it is impossible for any of the elect to perish, Zanchy says, "Every converted man may and ought to conclude himself elected. . . . When a converted person discerns the signs of election, not only in himself, but also in the rest of his fellow believers, how must his heart glow with love to them! How feelingly

¹ Works 5, p. 242. See also John xv. 16, and this Work, § 13.

² Works 5, p. 243. ³ Works 5, p. 265. ⁴ Works 5, p. 272.

will he sympathize with them in their distresses! how tenderly will he bear with their infirmities! Nothing will so effectually knit together the hearts of God's people in time, as the belief of their having been written by name in one book of life from everlasting."¹

The work appeared at the end of 1769. Naturally it delighted the Calvinists; naturally it disturbed the Arminians.

The Rev. John Wesley, writing to his colleague, the Rev. Walter Sellon (formerly a baker), described Toplady as "that lively coxcomb," and the publication as "a slander on the Church of England;" but Wesley's method of combating Toplady's doctrines was one which his most ardent admirers must regret. He issued in March, 1770, a tract of twelve pages, *The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination Stated and Asserted, by the Rev. A. T.*, which purported to be an abridgment of Toplady's edition of Zanchy. At the beginning was a stinging "advertisement" from Wesley's own pen, and at the end was a paragraph, also by him, which ran: "The sum of all this: one in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can. Reader, believe this, or be damned. Witness my hand, A— T—."²

¹ Works 5, p. 297.

² See Toplady's Works 5, p. 321.

Toplady was furious, and in his heat he wrote a reply which took the form of *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*.¹ In it he charges Wesley with having abridged the pamphlet unfaithfully and unfairly; with having drawn up "a flimsy, partial compendium of Zanchius, a compendium which exhibits a few detached propositions placed in the most disadvantageous point of view, and without including any part of the evidence on which they stand; and with having given a false colouring to the whole by foisting in here and there a sentence foreign to the original; and he adds, "After which you close the motley piece with an entire paragraph, forged, every word of it, by yourself; and conclude all, as you began, with subjoining the initials of my name, to make the ignorant believe that the whole, with your omissions, additions, and alterations, actually came from me—an instance of audacity and falsehood hardly to be justified." There is much more in the same strain. Toplady's blood was up, and the bitterness of his attack has scarcely a parallel in religious history. He piled contempt upon contempt, invective on invective; he dragged to light all Wesley's weaknesses.

Thus began the portentous fight—a fight without quarter—between Toplady on the one side and Wesley, to whose aid came his henchmen, the volatile Walter Sellon, and the uncultivated, fiery-tempered and corrosive, though naturally gifted,

¹ It appeared 26th March, 1770. See Toplady's Works 5, p. 318.

Thomas Olivers,¹ formerly a shoemaker, and now remembered as author of the noble hymn, "The God of Abraham praise,"² on the other.

Sellon, whom Toplady called a "pygmy on stilts," wrote, with pen dipped in vitriol, pamphlet after pamphlet against Toplady. Olivers—"Cobbler Tom" as Toplady styled him—in some respects the most remarkable, as he was certainly the most unmanageable of Wesley's preachers, was low of stature, of a full make, with a pale, broad, honest-looking face, which was thickly pitted by small-pox, as well it might be, for he had been stone blind with the disease for five weeks, and his whole body had been "covered with one scab, a great part of an inch thick." He wore a wig that would have been extravagant for an archbishop. Sent out by Wesley, he had preached for many years in Cornwall and other parts, and had travelled 100,000 miles on one horse. An incomparably more able man than Sellon, he was, next to Sellon, by far the most bitter of Toplady's antagonists; and Wesley seems to have been relieved to see thus engaged a man who, had he not been at hand-grips with the enemy, would have spent his strength in struggling first

¹ Our portrait of Olivers is from the *Arminian Magazine*, Feb., 1779.

² Thomas Olivers (1725—1799). As a youth he was restless and idle. After his conversion he spent twenty-two years as an itinerant preacher. In 1775 he was appointed by Wesley supervisor of the Methodist press, a position which he held till 1789. His portrait is among the collection of portraits of Wesleyan Methodist ministers, which was lent by Mr. George Worrall to the Old Dundee Exhibition, 1892-3. Among his publications are a Letter to Toplady, a Pamphlet against Richard Hill, and an Answer to Rowland Hill.

with one member and then with another of his own party.

In the contest between Toplady and these opponents was wasted on both sides much energy which might advantageously have been directed into other channels. Unhappily, too, in the toss of passion each antagonist frequently so far forgot himself as to indulge in the most regrettable personalities. Thenceforward, although courtesy itself to all other opponents, Toplady, whenever Wesley was under consideration, displayed a truculence which, exasperating as were the tactics of his opponents, is not for one moment to be defended. Wesley, in his eyes, was thenceforward a wily, noisome beast, "of more than serpentine elability," who "cast his slough not once a year, but almost once an hour;" the parent of a horrid rabble of unhal- lowed, frontless, obsequious, rancorous, cobbler- parsons, baker-pamphleteers, and other blind bigots and hideous abortions, in whose veins ran gall in the place of blood; Arminianism, nothing but a red and venomed pestilence. Righteous indignation is pardonable—nay, even commend- able—but personalities, whether indulged in by a Toplady or a Wesley—and under this head the two leaders were equally to blame—provide but painful reading. Moreover, it ill became one who held in honour Syrian fishermen and a Cilician tentmaker, to cast at an Olivers that he had mended shoes, or at a Sellon that he had baked bread.

Nature, indeed, who revels in contrasts and inconsistencies, had in Toplady a son entirely after her own heart; for this tempestuous, vocabulary-exhausting, flaming opponent of Wesley and Wesley's veterans, was at the same time one of the most polished and courteous men of his day. Lady Huntingdon has left on record that even at court she never saw a more finished gentleman, and she pays a glowing tribute to his "most polite and captivating manner, both of speaking and acting, accompanied by not the least degree of affectation, and to his delightful urbanity."

CHAPTER VII

MARCH, 1770—DECEMBER, 1771

THE BROAD HEMBURY HYMNS

In February, 1770, Toplady made another journey to London, chiefly for the purpose of seeing his mother, whose broken health gave him continual anxiety, but also in order to take duty in one or another of the leading evangelical churches, leaving his parish, as on former occasions, in charge of a curate, of whose doctrinal soundness he was assured. In London he occasionally met the Rev. John Berridge, with the clay of Bedfordshire still on his boots. They used to chat together in some particularly inconvenient coffee-house, which Berridge, who objected to comforts because they saddled him with self-sufficiency, had at considerable trouble discovered; and at such times Berridge would regale Toplady with accounts of his apostolic journeys, made in defiance of the bitter enmity of the hard-riding parsons and drinking squires, his neighbours, and in illustration of his favourite saw, "Prudence is a rascally virtue." On February 6th Toplady visited his friend Hitchin,¹ and on February 16th another friend, Mrs. Bacon,

16. Death of
his Mother,
April, 1770.

¹ Works 4, p. 453.

of Islington.¹ On April 22nd he preached at St. Matthew's, Bethnal Green, the sermon afterwards published with the title *A Caveat against Unsound Doctrines*. When, in the course of his remarks, he had occasion to refer to Timothy, whose "regenerate, heaven-born soul dwelt in a sickly, infirm body," his hearers could scarcely fail to see the resemblance between the description of the apostle and the appearance of the preacher. In this sermon Toplady directs the shafts of his eloquence chiefly against Arminianism, which he calls "the gangrene of the Protestant churches." In the midst of a masterly defence of the doctrines of election and justification by faith, he enquires, "Do you imagine that God could foresee any holiness in men which He Himself did not decree to give them? . . . We did not bribe God to create us; and how is it possible that we should pay Him anything for saving us?" Like Epictetus, he differentiates between what God actually gives us and what He merely lends, and he draws illustrations from books that he had just been reading.² "Remember," he concludes, "that a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven."

On the following Sunday he preached, by request, the same sermon at St. Ann's, Black-

¹ Works 4, p. 342.

² For example, the observation, tinged with the prejudices of the time: "A person of amplest fortune cannot help the harbouring of snakes, toads, and other venomous reptiles on his lands," was evidently suggested by a passage in John Mitchell's *Female Pilgrim, or the Travels of Hephzibah*, published in 1762. Ed. of 1814, p. 106.

friars. Before, however, it could be sent to the press, the Rev. Haddon Smith, curate of St. Matthew's, Bethnal Green, thought fit to preach and publish "a silly, scurrilous and ungrammatical attack upon it." Consequently Toplady appended to his sermon a postscript addressed to the parishioners of St. Matthew's in which, to use his friend Ryland's comment, he displays "sublime contempt for a foolish puppy."¹

If Timothy was a favourite with Toplady, so also was another afflicted New Testament person—Gaius.² In an unpublished sermon on 3 John 2, after giving an outline of Gaius's life, as gathered from Scripture, Toplady says, "But as no man on this side heaven is in all respects perfectly happy, so Gaius, though blest with a remarkable portion of divine grace, and likewise with a large measure of worldly riches, nevertheless wanted one thing to render his felicity complete, and that was health. Indeed, it is necessary for the people of Christ to have something to keep them humble, and remind them of their latter end, otherwise even *they*, especially when fortune smiles and all things go smoothly with them, might be apt to give way to the world, and set up their rest here, and forget to press forward to the prize of their high calling."

Shortly after delivering the Bethnal Green sermon, Toplady set out in order to return to

¹ MS. note by Ryland in a copy of the sermon.

² A Roman of "distinction and fortune," who resided at Corinth; apparently the same as the Gaius mentioned in Rom. xvi. and 1 Cor. i. 14.

Devonshire. He broke the journey at Salisbury, where he was the guest of a friend, the Rev. Dr. Baker,¹ Rector of St. Martin's, in that city; but the day after his arrival there came to him the sad tidings of the death of his mother. "It pleased God," he says, "to remove from me the desire of my eyes at a stroke"—and he at once returned to London.

After the funeral he removed part of his mother's furniture to a house of his own in town—probably that at Knightsbridge, where he afterwards resided—and the rest he sent to Broad Hembury. On May 18th he visited his uncle, Francis Toplady,² at Rochester. In a letter³ written to Dr. Baker during the confusion caused by his loss, he says, "It has pleased God to carry me through the trying scene which called me so suddenly from your agreeable conversation with a degree of ease and firmness I could hardly have expected. But my old enemy, sultry weather, which seems now to be setting in, obliges me to lie by from business. I am more afraid of summer than of the anonymous antagonists who are continually pelting me with printed squibs, ten thousand of which would not singe a hair of my head."

The death of his mother seemed to hang London

¹ John Baker, LL.D., born at Salisbury 1720, son of John Baker and Elizabeth, daughter of Robert and Mary Cooper, of Salisbury. Appointed in 1776 Domestic Chaplain to Jacob, Earl of Radnor. He died at Freshfield, Somerset, 21st January, 1812.

² See Works 4, p. 328.

³ 7th June, 1770. Printed in Winter's *Life of Toplady*, p. 26.

with black. For long it was to him a sorrowful place, peopled with painful memories. "He would be glad," he wrote later from Broad Hembury, "to revisit it, but the sight of persons and places associated with her would recall her so strongly to his remembrance that he feared his nerves would hardly bear it. I am thankful," he continues, "that she never accepted any of my invitations into Devonshire, as it would now have only tended to revive those ideas which I should be happier never to recollect. The higher a departed satisfaction is, the more painful is its remembrance. Philosophy may censure these feelings as a weakness; but they are such a weakness as I cannot help. Resignation is one thing, insensibility is another."¹ Toplady made his return journey about the middle of July, and as usual broke it at Salisbury.²

On Christmas Day, 1770, he preached at Broad Hembury the two golden sermons, *Jesus seen of Angels* and *God's Mindfulness of Men*. In those noble compositions he is impassioned, sublime, convincing. Referring to the prayers of our Lord, he says, "Oh, how unlike these prayers are the frozen, careless, languid, wandering, unfelt devotions of those on earth who call themselves His disciples." Perhaps the finest passage is that about the sixty soldiers guarding our Lord's tomb. Even in cold print these sermons set the blood

¹ Works 6, p. 162.

² Works 4, p. 430.

bubbling. Transfigured by his marvellous powers of delivery, they must have strangely agitated all hearers, as for example when he spoke the words, "They also see Him NOW. At this very moment they are beholding Him in glory! Angels, who were never incarnated, view with wonder the exalted humanity of Him that wept in the manger and hung on the tree!" A copy of this sermon found its way to Ryland, who read it in the quiet of his study. When he reached this passage he leaped up and cried in his excitement, "Angels all on fire, fire, fire! of wonder and joy!" In a calmer moment he entered on the margin, "Hypotyposis paints objects to the life."

In no other sermon does Toplady draw with greater effect upon the history and literatures of Greece and Rome. "Veni, vidi, vici,"¹ he observes, "may be inscribed by the Saviour on every converted soul."² Not less apposite is his application of the story of Xenocrates of Chalcedon. For the sorrow-laden he has many a word of solace. "God," he says beautifully, "deals out our comforts and our sorrows with exact, unerring hand, in number, weight and measure. Hence we have not either of joy or adversity a grain too little or too much."³ From the second sermon, *God's Mindfulness of Man*, we would cite: "It may truly be

¹ "I came, I saw, I conquered," written by Julius Cæsar after one of his victories.

² "Fine application!"—Ryland's Notes.

³ "Beautiful painting!"—Ryland's Notes.

asserted of every elect sinner that he is immortal till he is born again ;”¹ “Grace in the soul resembles a glimmering taper, exposed to all the storms that blow, yet unextinguished and inextinguishable ;”² and “Communion with God leaves a calm and a sweetness upon the soul which are remembered after many days: as a vase of rich perfume or of odoriferous unguent scents the air with fragrance, even after the vessel that contained it is stopped up and put by.”³

With Toplady’s settlement at Broad Hembury commenced his golden period as a
 17. Broad Hembury Hymns. hymn-writer. The more important of his hymns appeared in *The Gospel Magazine*. This periodical, founded in 1766⁴ as *The Gospel Magazine or Spiritual Library*, was discontinued with volume 7, in 1772, and revived in 1774 as *The Gospel Magazine or Treasury of Divine Knowledge*.⁵ It would be well if we could arrange Toplady’s hymns in the order in which they were written, but as the dates are wanting this is impossible, so our only course will be to give the year and month in which they were published. The following list contains the dates when the hymns appeared in the *Gospel Magazine*, the page on which they will be found in Vol. VI. of Toplady’s Works (1825 ed.), and the number in Denham’s Collec-

¹ Works 3, p. 112.

² Works 3, p. 113.

³ Works 3, p. 120.

⁴ Editor, Mr. Gurney.

⁵ Editor, Mr. Mason, author of *The Divine Treasury*.

tion, where perhaps more are to be found than in any other hymnal.

"Gospel Magazine, or Spiritual Library."

| | Vol. | Month | Year | Page in Vol. VI. of Top-lady's Works | No. in Den-ham's Collec-tion |
|--|------|-------|------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Offspring of God, whose birth divine | VI. | April | 1771 | | |
| 2 How happy are we | " | " | " | | 438 |
| 3 King of glory, sovereign God | " | May | " | | |
| 4 A debtor to mercy alone | " | " | " | 402 | 290 |
| 5 Formed for Thyself | " | " | " | | |
| 6 Jesus, immutably the same | " | June | " | | 258 |
| 7 Thou Fountain of Bliss | " | " | " | | |
| 8 Oh it is sweet employ | " | " | " | | |
| 9 Why, Lord, art Thou so kind? | " | Sept. | " | | |
| 10 Bought with a price I am | " | " | " | | |
| 11 Giver of every perfect gift | " | " | " | | |
| 12 Awake, sweet gratitude | " | " | " | | 140 |
| 13 The Father we bless | " | " | " | 400 | |
| 14 Whom have I in heaven but Thee? | VII. | Feb. | 1772 | | |
| 15 Encompassed with clouds of distress | " | " | " | 399 | 291 |
| 16 From whence this fear and unbelief? | " | " | " | | 252 |
| 17 Your harps, ye trembling saints | " | " | " | 407 | 567 |
| 18 Compared with Christ in all beside | " | " | " | 406 | 83 |

"Gospel Magazine, or Treasury of Divine Knowledge."

| | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|-----|-----|
| 19 Happiness, thou lovely name | I. | Oct. | 1774 | 398 | 569 |
| 20 I saw, and lo, a countless throng | " | " | " | 395 | |
| 21 Eternal Hallelujahs | " | Dec. | " | 414 | |
| 22 How vast the benefits divine | " | " | " | 415 | 474 |
| 23 What though my frail eyelids refuse | " | " | " | 412 | 937 |
| 24 Rock of Ages | III. | Mar. | 1776 | 413 | 227 |

| | Vol. | Month | Year | Page in Vol. VI. of Top- lady's Works | No in Den- ham's Collec- tion |
|--|--|-------|------|---|---|
| 25 | Since my Redeemer's Name is Love ¹ | | | | |
| | | | 1796 | | |
| 26 | Complete in Christ, tho' in myself | | | | |
| | | | " | | |
| <i>Not published first in the "Gospel Magazine."</i> | | | | | |
| 27 | When languor and disease invade | | | 420 | 611 |
| 28 | Deathless principle | | | 422 | |
| 29 | Courage, my soul, Jehovah speaks | | | | |
| 30 | O precious blood, O glorious death | | | 405 | |
| 31 | Holy Ghost, dispel our sadness | | | 403 | |

The hymns from April, 1771, to February, 1772, are unsigned; those from October, 1774, to December, 1774, are signed "Minimus." The following hymns, which appeared in the volume of 1759, were re-published in revised form:—

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Emptied of earth I fain would be | April, 1771 |
| O Thou who didst Thy glory leave | May, 1771 |
| Surely Christ thy griefs hath borne | Dec., 1774 ² |

One of the most noticeable characteristics of a hymn by Toplady is the forcefulness, the arresting power of the opening line. There is no waiting; you are under his spell in a moment. "A Debtor to Mercy alone," "Jesus, immutably the same," "Awake, sweet gratitude," how subtly they steal upon the soul!

In "A Debtor to Mercy alone," Toplady proclaims with clarion voice the great doctrines of imputed righteousness and final perseverance. Its

¹ Also printed in *The Gospel Advocate*, vol. 5, p. 266.

² "Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire," often attributed to Toplady, is by John Cosin, D.D., Bishop of Durham, who died in 1672.

final stanza has thrilled with joy the hearts of countless Christians :

“ My name from the palms of His hands
 Eternity will not erase ;
 Impressed on His heart it remains
 In marks of indelible grace.
 Yes, I to the end shall endure,
 As sure as the earnest is given ;
 More happy, but not more secure,
 The glorified spirits in heaven ! ”

Toplady's staunch adherence to the doctrine of final perseverance is illustrated by his remark in a letter of 6th September, 1768, respecting the defection of a certain Mr. H. “ If,” says Toplady, “ he was ever of us in reality God will in due time bring him to us again.”¹

The most striking stanza of “ Jesus, immutably the same,” built upon the text, “ I am the true Vine,” is the second :

“ Quickened by Thee and kept alive,
 I flourish and bear fruit ;
 My life I from Thy sap derive,
 My vigour from Thy root.”

Toplady's note is ever clearest in the face of threatened trouble. At such times more than at any other there comes upon him the *awen*, as the bards call it—the divine rapture—and he was in that mood when he wrote the glorious hymn from Ps. cxxxvii. 1—5 :

“ Your harps, ye trembling saints,
 Down from the willows take ;
 Loud to the praise of love divine
 Bid ev'ry string awake.

¹ Works 6, p. 142.

When we in darkness walk,
 Nor feel the heavenly flame;
 Then is the time to trust our God,
 And rest upon His name.

Soon shall our doubts and fears
 Subside at His control :
 His loving-kindness shall break through
 The midnight of the soul.

Blest is the man, O God,
 That stays himself on Thee ;
 Who wait for Thy salvation, Lord,
 Shall Thy salvation see."

In a letter of 20th November, 1772, Toplady says of our Saviour, "To those who believe He is *τιμη* preciousness, in the abstract." This idea is expanded in the beautiful hymn, "Happiness, thou lovely name!" with its oft-quoted second and third verses :

"Object of my first desire,
 Jesus crucified for me!
 All to happiness aspire,
 Only to be found in Thee.
 Thee to praise and Thee to know
 Constitute our bliss below ;
 Thee to see and Thee to love
 Constitute our bliss above.
 Lord, it is not life to live,
 If Thy presence Thou deny ;
 Lord, if Thou Thy presence give,
 'Tis no longer death to die.
 Source and Giver of repose,
 Singly from Thy smile it flows ;
 Happiness complete is Thine !
 Mine it is—if Thou art mine."

To the hymns, "Compared with Christ in all beside," and "What though my frail eyelids

refuse," written at Fen Ottery, I have already referred.¹ Those splendid flights, "I saw and lo! a countless throng," and "Deathless Principle," were, of course, not intended for singing. The latter, suggested, like Pope's "Vital Spark," by the Emperor Hadrian's *Animula vagula, blandula*, was not published till after Toplady's death.² From its surpassingly sublime opening to the perfect conclusion, all is joyous, glorious, triumphant. The stream of death can have no terrors for him who allows these sentiments to transfuse his being:

"Not one object of His care
Ever suffered shipwreck there;
See the haven full in view!
Love divine shall bear thee through,
Trust to that propitious gale:
Weigh thy anchor, spread thy sail."

"The Five Points" of Calvinism are illustrated again and again, as we have seen, in Toplady's hymns; but in one hymn, "The Method of Salvation," he deals with the whole of them, taking them in order, and devoting one verse to each point. In the first, "The Father we bless," we are reminded of the doctrine of *original sin*, and God's method of saving us from it. In the second, the doctrine of *election* is set out, together with the love of Jesus in concurring with the "Father's most gracious design." The third reflects the doctrine of *particular redemption*, "We attain to the glory for

¹ See p. 59.

² It first appeared in *A Memoir of some Principal Circumstances in the Life and Death of the Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady*. London, printed for J. Matthews, 1778.

which we were made." The burden of the fourth is *effectual calling*, "The sweet Spirit of grace" being blessed for His "eminent share in the council of peace." The fifth concerns itself with the great doctrine of *final perseverance*. We are kept in God's love "to the end of our days," and the hymn concludes rapturously with:

" Father, Spirit and Son
 Agree thus in One,
 The salvation of those He has marked for His own ;
 Let us too agree
 To glorify Thee,
 Thou ineffable One, Thou adorable Three !"

Of the hymns which Toplady republished in revised form the best known is "Emptied of earth I fain would be," to which he added the exquisite stanzas:

" At anchor laid, remote from home,
 Toiling I cry, 'Sweet Spirit, come ;
 Celestial breeze, no longer stay,
 But swell my sails and speed my way.'
 Fain would I mount, fain would I glow,
 And loose my cable from below ;
 But I can only spread my sail ;
 Thou, Thou must breathe th' auspicious gale."

With the hymn, "When languor and disease invade," I shall deal in a later chapter.

Toplady's masterpiece is founded on the marginal reading of Isaiah xxvi. 4, "For
 18. **Rock of** in the Lord Jehovah is the Rock of
 Ages. Ages."¹ To the fact that the idea of

¹ It was from these words that the Rev. James Ormiston preached at Broad Hembury, 20th January, 1899, on the occasion of the unveiling of the Toplady Memorial there.

our Lord as a Rock had fascinated Toplady even in his Trinity College days; to the tradition that the hymn originated from an incident that occurred at Burrington; and to the passages which indicate that the idea was still haunting Toplady at the time he wrote his diary, reference has already been made. There is another very interesting allusion to the Rock of Ages in an unpublished and undated sermon of Toplady's (founded on Isaiah xlii. 11) in which Christ is regarded as a Rock, three ways. Toplady says: "Inhabitants of the Rock, i.e. of stony Arabia, &c. Let even those rugged regions of ignorance and barbarism resound with the high praises of God and of His Christ. . . . Chiefly may they sing who inhabit Christ, the spiritual Rock of Ages. He is a Rock three ways: as a Foundation to support; a Shelter to screen; and a Fortress to protect, Matt. xvi. 18 and vii. 25; Isa. xxxii. 2; Cant. ii. 14. We are apt to build houses of self-righteousness for ourselves; the Lord send you a writ of ejectment and compel you to the Rock. If God is your Father He will turn you out of doors from the Babylon you have built. Better you should go out of the house of Free will and Human merit than have it fall about your ears and you buried in its ruins."

In another unpublished manuscript, which is entitled *Plummet of Faith* and which seems to be part of a sermon on Psa. cvii. 30, Toplady says: "The finest sight in the world is a stately ship,

lying at anchor, by moonlight in the mouth of the harbour, in a smooth sea, and under a serene sky, waiting for high water to carry it into the haven. Such is the dying Christian at anchor, safely reposed on Christ, the Rock of Ages."

No portion of Toplady's hymn found its way into print until October, 1775. In the *Gospel Magazine* of that date appear in Toplady's beautiful essay, *Life a Journey*, the first two lines of stanza one :

" Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee,"

and the last two lines of stanza three :

" Foul, I to the fountain fly ;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

The complete hymn was printed in the *Gospel Magazine* for March, 1776, and again in Toplady's *Psalms and Hymns* (No. 337), published the same year, with two small alterations in the last verse, "whilst" being altered to "while," and "through tracts unknown" to "to worlds unknown." Many as were Toplady's efforts, both in poetry and prose, on behalf of the doctrines of Free Grace, they have all been surpassed in popularity by this wonderful flight. He has set Christians in every country of the world singing :

" Not the labours of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demands ;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save, and Thou alone !"

He has put the doctrines of Free Grace on a sky sign that arches from the Ganges to the Amazon, and from the Amazon to the Ganges again. Even those pitiable victims of delusion who think to gain heaven by means of penances, pardons, Peter's Pence, and the ten thousand other profitless labours of men's hands, have seen, if they have neglected to benefit by, its flaming characters. It is beyond the ingenuity of Satan to blot it from sight. How Toplady would have rejoiced could he have foreseen—not the popularity of his great hymn, for he cared nothing for popularity¹—could he have foreseen that it was to be the appointed means of diffusing a knowledge of the way of salvation over the whole of the Christian world, and of leading tens of thousands to the Intercessor who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him!

“Of all English hymn-writers,” says the Rev. J. C. Ryle, afterwards Bishop of Liverpool, “none perhaps has succeeded so thoroughly in combining truth, poetry, life, warmth, fire, depth, solemnity and unction, as Toplady has. I pity the man who does not know, or knowing does not admire, those glorious hymns of his, ‘Rock of Ages,’ ‘Holy Ghost, dispel our sadness,’ ‘A debtor to mercy alone,’ ‘Your harps, ye trembling saints,’ ‘When languor and disease invade,’ or ‘Deathless Prin-

¹ In an unfinished hymn of his occur the lines,

“Careless (myself a dying man)
Of dying man's esteem.”

See chap. 10.

ciple.' The writer of these seven hymns alone has laid the Church under perpetual obligation to him." Of the effect of Toplady's great hymn on later poets, the most interesting instance, perhaps, is the impression which it made upon the brilliant and mystical William Blake, who introduces the term, Rock of Ages, into three of his remarkable prophetic books—*Milton*,¹ *Vala*² and *Jerusalem*,³ and who has in his *Jerusalem* a most striking plate representing "the Saviour receiving the pale limbs of man's eternal individuality in His arms, and reposing it on the Rock of Ages."⁴

¹ Page 14, line 36, and p. 34, line 46.

² Night 1, lines 406—409.

³ Page 48, lines 1 to 5.

⁴ Illustrating *Jerusalem*, p. 48, lines 1 to 5, and *Vala*, Night 1, lines 406—409. The influence of Toplady's hymn on Blake is further illustrated by Blake's expressions, "Plough of Ages," *Vala*, Night 7, line 14, and "Morn of Ages," *Vala*, Night 7, line 269.

In the *Strand Magazine* for July, 1911, p. 106, it is said that the "first suggestion" of "Rock of Ages" "was scribbled on a playing card—the six of diamonds." The writer, who adds that the card bore, besides the first two lines of the hymn, the date "Mar. 12," and that it is now in America, does not give his authority.

CHAPTER VIII

17TH JULY, 1771—DECEMBER, 1771

THE ATTACKS OF THOMAS OLIVERS AND OTHERS

For many months the Church of England had been disturbed by a section of the clergy, headed by Archdeacon Blackburne and the Rev. Theophilus Lindsay,¹ who desired certain changes in its doctrines and forms of worship. Further advance by them was made early in 1771, when Blackburne published *Proposals for an Application to Parliament for Relief in the Matter of Subscription to the Liturgy and the XXXIX. Articles.*² As a result of this step, a number of sympathisers with the movement met, on 17th July, at the Feathers Tavern, Strand,³ and a petition, drawn up by Blackburne and adopted by the Feathers Tavern Association, as they called themselves, was circulated throughout the country with the object of obtaining signatures previous to the meeting of Parliament. The occasion gave Top-lady the opportunity to produce a characteristic

19. Of the
Feathers
Tavern Asso-
ciation. 17th
July, 1771.
A shaft from
Olivers.

¹ See *Life of the Rev. Theophilus Lindsay*, p. 37.

² Noticed in *Monthly Review*, September, 1771, p. 238.

³ See *Life of Countess of Huntingdon* ii. p. 285.

piece of sarcasm, *Free Thoughts on the Projected Application to Parliament.*¹

“It is not subscription itself,” he says, “which so much constitutes the grievance complained of, but the stubborn orthodoxy of the things subscribed. Castrate the Liturgy, Articles and Homilies of their Calvinism, and I will answer for it, subscription will no longer be considered ‘a yoke of bondage.’ . . . These men were not compelled into the Church, and if they cannot freely and conscientiously subscribe to its forms, their only honest course is to leave it.” Then falling to badinage, he suggests certain paragraphs which would serve to embellish the intended petition, for example: “And whereas there is a certain obsolete Work made up of divers treatises, collected into a thick Volume, which Volume was, by the ignorance and superstition of our blockheaded forefathers, looked upon as sacred, and as written under the influence of Divine inspiration . . . which Volume . . . is stuffed with improbable facts . . . such as . . . the wicked doctrines of election, justification, atonement, imputed righteousness, original sin, efficacious grace, regeneration, the indwelling of the Spirit, final perseverance, &c.; therefore it is high time that both they and the Book which inculcates them were dead, buried, and forgot.

“Your petitioners do also beseech the wisdom of this nation in Parliament united to relieve us

¹ Works 2, p. 425.

reverend divines from another very irksome grievance. We mean the superstitious observance of what is commonly called the Lord's day. On this day we are forced to undergo the intolerable drudgery of reading public prayers, and of preaching eight, ten, and sometimes fifteen minutes, both which burthens are very oppressive and unreasonable, seeing the Sabbath was intended for a day not of labour but of rest. And whereas—"but further citation is unnecessary. It is sufficient to say that, continuing in the same vein, Toplady administered condign castigation on those illogical gentlemen who, while "dehorting"^r from predestination as a poison, regarded the preferments, appended to the supposed belief in it, as nectar. Toplady subjected "the Feathery Divines," as he called them, to another hearty hammering in a sermon entitled *Clerical Subscription no Grievance*, preached at an annual visitation of the clergy of the Archdeaconry of Exeter, held at Columpton, on Tuesday, 12th May, 1772—a sermon in which the doctrines of Free Grace are vigorously defended, and in which the position of the Arminians is as vigorously assailed. No fighter had an armoury more finely equipped than Toplady, and none as a rule kept his weapons sharper or more brightly burnished; but in this sermon, oddly enough, his best blade is broken at the point. He likens the Arminians to "that proud and pre-

^r Toplady's word.

sumptuous cardinal [Wolsey] who was deservedly impeached for putting himself into co-partnership with his earthly sovereign by writing in his public letters, "The King and I." The charge, however, against Wolsey was that of writing *ego et rex meus*' (I and my king), that is, of putting himself not on an equality with his sovereign, but above him. It was a curious oversight in so relentless a combatant as Toplady.

"Let us be careful," he says towards the end of this earnest discourse, "to stand in the good old ways, and stedfastly abide by the doctrines of the Reformation, which are found to quadrate so exactly with the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

The Feathers Tavern petition, presented to Parliament on 6th February, 1772, was rejected by 217 votes to 71; and on being presented again the following year, it was again rejected. As a result a few persons separated themselves from the Church of England, among them being Mr. Lindsay, who founded a Unitarian cause in Essex Street, Strand.²

Some time in 1771, Thomas Olivers, who had so often attacked Toplady, poured another broadside into his enemy—that is to say, he printed and published a pamphlet entitled *A Letter to the Reverend*

¹ Which is correct Latin, but Wolsey should have made a nice custom curtsy to a great king.

² On 22nd May, 1774, Toplady was one of "a coachful" of friends who went to hear Mr. Lindsay. He describes his impressions in a letter written on the following day. Works 6, p. 218.

Mr. Toplady, occasioned by his late Letter to the Reverend Mr. Wesley. Olivers, who calls Toplady "a man of yesterday," "a beardless bachelor of arts, just stept piping hot out of a university," reproaches him with the "almost unparalleled contempt with which he had treated Mr. Wesley, a gentleman whose literary accomplishments, as well as indefatigable labours, are hardly to be equalled." After denouncing Toplady for "scurrility and personal abuse"—though nobody was more open to censure under this head than the censurer himself—Olivers proceeds: "O Mr. Toplady, how you are changed from what you were a little while ago, when a student at Dublin! Then you thought it an honour if a lay preacher belonging to Mr. Wesley^r would permit you to sit at his feet for instruction. . . . What an honour to Dr. Gill that he has been able, in so short a time, so thoroughly to complete a most humble admirer, and to make him (*from his heart*) so great an admirer, not of the Anabaptists, but of the Church of England!" Of the argumentative part of the pamphlet it is sufficient to say that it shows Olivers to have been an antagonist of considerable powers.

While these events were in progress, Dr. Gill lay upon a bed of sickness, and his life was seen to be drawing to a period. His closing hours comported beautifully

20. Death of
Dr. Gill,
14th Oct.,
1771.

¹ Toplady used to declare that James Morris was *not* one of Wesley's lay preachers, and certainly one would not infer from the reference to Morris in Wesley's *Journal* that Morris had worked under Wesley. Apparently Olivers was in error.

with his pure career and his Scriptural teaching. With the words on his lips, "O my Father, my Father!" he passed straightway into that holy Father's presence.

On receiving the affecting news, Toplady at once wrote to the deacons of Carter Lane Chapel, requesting that he might officiate at the grave. It was considered, however, that as Gill had been a Dissenter, it would be more appropriate for a minister of his own denomination to perform the sad duty; but the request was thoroughly appreciated, and Toplady was warmly thanked by the Carter Lane congregation. Gill's remains were conveyed to Bunhill Fields; the address at the grave was delivered by the Rev. Benjamin Wallin,¹ and the funeral discourse at the chapel was preached by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Stennett.² Toplady's tribute took the form of an article prefixed to the quarto edition of Gill's works. He says: "If any one man can be supposed to have trod the whole circle of human learning, it was Dr. Gill. . . . Perhaps no man since the days of St. Austen has written so largely in defence of the system of grace; and certainly no man has treated that momentous subject, in all its branches, more closely, judi-

¹ Benjamin Wallin (1711—1782), educated under Rev. John Needham, of Hitchin, father of the hymn-writer of that name. He was pastor of Maze Pond Baptist Church from 1740 to 1782. In 1750 he published *Evangelical Hymns and Songs*. Two of his hymns, "Hail, mighty Jesus, how divine," and "When I the holy grave survey," appeared in Toplady's *Psalms and Hymns*, 1776.

² Samuel Stennett (1727—1795), pastor of the Baptist Church in Little Wild Street. He was the author of many hymns.

ciously, and successfully. . . . His doctrinal and practical writings will live and be admired, and be a standing blessing to posterity, when their opposers are forgot, or only remembered by the refutations he has given them. While true religion and sound learning have a single friend remaining in the British Empire, the works and name of Gill will be precious and revered."

Wesley's own reply to Toplady's "Letter to the Reverend Mr. Wesley," shaped itself into *The Consequence Proved*, a pamphlet as thin almost as the abbreviation of Zanchy; and Toplady replied to him and Olivers in a volume of a hundred and five pages, entitled, *More Work for Mr. John Wesley; or, a Vindication of the Decrees and Providence of God, &c.*¹

21. The
Pamphlet
War.

"Mr. Wesley," says Toplady in an unpublished manuscript, "is singularly infamous for the grossest *misrepresentations* of men he does not like, and of doctrines he opposes. He first dresses up hideous figures, and then pretends to be frightened at them, like the insane man who employed himself in drawing monstrous images upon the walls of his cell, and then battered his knuckles in fighting with them."

At this juncture "Mr. John," as the Methodists called their venerable white-haired leader, seemed to retire from the conflict; but the retirement was only apparent, for his influence continued to be seen in

¹ Published in 1772. Preface dated 28th November, 1771.

the output of Fletcher¹ of Madeley, who wrote a number of *Checks to Antinomians*, Walter Sellon, and Thomas Olivers. Toplady, too, had the assistance of several brothers in arms, the most doughty of them being Richard, afterwards Sir Richard, Hill.

Fletcher replied heatedly to Toplady's *More Work for Mr. John Wesley*, with *An Answer to the Rev. Mr. Toplady's Vindication of the Decrees*;² and Hill published in July, 1772, *A Review of all the Doctrines Taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*.³ "Go on, sir," wrote Toplady to Hill, 11th December, 1772, "in the strength of Him who has made you so able an assertor. 'I pray God you may never unbuckle your armour until you put on your shroud.'"⁴ "I am informed," writes Toplady⁵ to another friend, "that inveterate troubler in Israel, Mr. John Wesley, has lately published a fourth squib against Mr. Hill. I should be glad to see it. . . . Oh that He in whose hand the hearts of men are, may make even this opposer of grace a monument of its almighty power to save! God is witness how earnestly I wish it may consist with the divine will to touch the heart and open the eyes of

¹ Rev. J. W. Fletcher.

² See Toplady's Letter to Hill, 12th March, 1773, Works, Vol. 6, p. 166; and *The Correspondence of William Cowper*, edited by Thomas Wright, Vol. 1, p. 415.

³ It consisted of *Six Letters to the Rev. J. W. Fletcher*, and a *Farrago of hot and cold Medicines Extracted* from Wesley's publications, in order to show Wesley's inconsistencies. Noticed in *Monthly Review*, August, 1772.

⁴ Quotation from Young.

⁵ 27th November, 1772.

that unhappy man. I hold it as much my duty to pray for his conversion as to expose the futility of his railings against the truths of the gospel."¹ A little later Toplady did see this "fourth squib," but the sight of it could not have been an unmixed pleasure, for one of the passages that met his eye was the question how it is that as soon as a man comes to a knowledge of *the truth* it spoils his temper. . . . "Does it naturally turn a man into a cynic, a bear, a Toplady? Does it at once set him free from all the restraints of good nature, decency and good manners? Cannot a man hold *distinguishing grace*, as it is called, but he must distinguish himself for passion, sourness, bitterness?"

Richard Hill's brother, Rowland Hill, then a young man and a not very wise one, also came slightly into touch with Toplady. Rowland Hill, it seems, having written a pamphlet against Wesley, gave it in confidence to Toplady, with the request that he would criticise it. Toplady complied, making very numerous corrections and additions, and the pamphlet in due time appeared; but when Thomas Olivers fell upon it with his customary savageness (as he promptly did) Hill, smarting under the lash, was indiscreet enough to publish the fact that the work was to all intents and purposes Toplady's. Naturally this gave offence, and a connection which might have ripened into friendship was suddenly severed.²

¹ Works 9, p. 152.

² *Gospel Magazine*, 1833, p. 236.

In a burlesque entitled, *Dialogue between Wesley and Sellon*, Toplady makes Wesley say of Olivers :

“ He with one brandish of his quill
Can knock down Toplady and Hill.¹

Of all my ragged reg-i-ment,
This cobbler gives me most content :
My forgeries and faith’s defender,
My barber, champion, and shoe-mender.”²

There are many more lines in the same style ; and although Toplady certainly did not shine as a writer of burlesque, it is necessary—if his character is to be correctly delineated—to give an occasional glimpse of him even in that capacity.

¹ Doubtless Richard Hill is here intended.

² *Gospel Magazine*, 1809, pp. 244—249.

CHAPTER IX

1773

THE MEETING WITH OLIVERS AND DR. JOHNSON

One day in April, 1773, Toplady, who was staying in London, set out, walking-cane in hand, to call on his friend, the Rev. Edward Hitchin. On his way, having occasion to pass Wesley's centre, the Foundry, which stood close by the old Bedlam madhouse, he stepped into the book-room, then in the charge of Thomas Olivers, with the object of purchasing a copy of Wesley's "last printed Journal." There were several men and women, including "a fat lady," in the shop. "Having paid for the Journal," says Toplady, "I was coming away, when one of the men, who proved to be Mr. Joseph Cownley [a Methodist minister], asked me whether my name was not Toplady. My answer was, 'Yes, sir; at your service.' All present immediately assumed an air of much civility. I stopped and chatted with them for, I believe, ten minutes."

22. Toplady
at the
Foundry,
8th April,
1773.

While he was chatting, the fat lady—who proved to be Mrs. Olivers—slipped out of the room "to announce to Cobbler Tom the tidings of the unexpected visitant."

“As I was going out,” continues Toplady, “the fat lady stood on the right hand, and a man in black on the left without side the door. In passing I moved my hat. ‘Sir,’ cried the lady, pointing to the other side of me, ‘that is Mr. Olivers.’ I said, smiling, ‘What, my famous antagonist?’ Olivers smiled and bowed. ‘Mr. Olivers,’ added I, ‘give me your hand; cudgel-players shake hands, though they mean to break each others’ heads.’ He made me no verbal answer, but, repeating his bow, shook me by the hand, and seemed pleased. As I was not willing to have quite a silent meeting on his part, I began afresh: ‘Your complexion, Mr. Olivers, seems to indicate too close an intensesness of thought. Do not study too hard, lest the sword be too sharp for the sheath.’ He then began to open. ‘Oh, Sir, I do not study too closely. I do not hurry myself; I take my time.’”

Toplady having observed that he should be glad of a quarter of an hour’s conversation, Olivers invited his visitor to an upstairs room, where was a table strewn with pamphlets and writing papers.

“So here,” said Toplady, “is the whole polemical apparatus, ready to fire off. When do you intend to publish against us?”

Olivers. It seems, Sir, that you are going to publish a book against Mr. Sellon.

Toplady. Perhaps so; and I will give you a friendly hint. Do not be too hasty in printing your next attack. If you will have patience to

wait, you may have an opportunity of killing two or three birds with one stone. You know, if we write a folio, it is but your printing a penny sheet, and we are answered at once. Nay, write but a single page, and call it an answer, and we are knocked down flat.

The conversation then turned on Wesley's abridgment of Zanchy, and Toplady spoke sarcastically of Wesley's honesty, Fletcher's meekness, and Sellon's politeness.

Olivers. O Sir! surely you will not talk about meekness.

Toplady. Certain I am that your writers have no more right to arrogate meekness to themselves than many of your preachers and perfectionists have to set up for a monopoly of holiness.

Here Olivers, turning to his wife, said, "Sally, do fetch a bottle of wine. Mr. Toplady, perhaps, will drink a glass."

Mrs. Olivers went and returned in half a minute.

Toplady. To show you that I bear you no enmity, I will drink your health in a single glass.

Olivers having said that he had studied logic, Toplady commented: "The poor predestinarians had need look about them then."

Olivers. Before I would be a predestinarian I would suffer myself to be tied hand and foot and carried through this window to yonder mad-house—and he pointed to the heavy-looking gates and low dismal facade of the old Bedlam.

Toplady. Should you stand in need of confinement, there would be no occasion for removing you out of your present quarters. The Foundery would answer all the purposes of a mad-house, without conveying you out at the sash. I should vote for keeping you where you are.

Olivers. Ha, ha, ha! Well. But smartness is not argument.

The conversation then turned on Free Will.

Toplady. But are men's volitions independently free?

Olivers. Most undoubtedly.

Toplady. Men, in determining their own wills, are independent of their Maker Himself?

Olivers. They must be so; or the will would cease to be free.

Toplady. Do not let me misunderstand you. You hold that men are absolutely independent of God so far as relates to the management and actings of their own wills?

Olivers. I believe it firmly.

Toplady. You are honest and consistent, but I cannot call you orthodox. You suppose man to possess a degree of independence and self-command, which not an angel in heaven can dare lay claim to.

Olivers. You have it, and I have it, and every man has it, except he sins away his day of grace. If I should say to this cane [taking up *Toplady's* walking cane, which happened to lean near him],

“O cane, repent, believe, and obey the gospel;” would not you think me out of my senses?

Toplady. That I should indeed.

Olivers. If a man has not free will, to what end are exhortations?

Toplady. Among other useful ends, they are made instrumental, under the influence of God’s Spirit, to convince men that they have, by nature, neither will nor power to do what is good.

Olivers. I have many strong objections against that doctrine.

Toplady. Then put your strong objections into the book you are going to publish, and we will consider them at leisure. In the meanwhile let me put one question to you. You have been talking largely in favour of man’s free agency. Allow me to leave argument and come to experience. I trust you have experienced something of a work of God upon your heart. What say you? Did you choose God, or did God choose you? Did *He* lay hold on you, or did *you* lay hold on Him?

Olivers. I must own to you that before my conversion I was one of the most abandoned swearers and drunkards in England. I received my serious impressions from Mr. Whitefield.

Toplady. Then it is very clear that your conversion, at least, was not conditional.

Olivers. I will not say that I procured grace of myself. Nor will I say how far I might have resisted it.

Toplady. I plainly perceive that you are not disposed to return a direct answer to my first question. But, if you will not answer it to me, let me request you to take an early opportunity of answering it on your knees before God in prayer. Beg Him to show you whether you were converted by free will or by free grace alone.

Olivers then "very civilly" attended Toplady downstairs. As they passed through the preaching place, Toplady said, "This, I presume, is looked upon as your cathedral."

"We have lately had it repaired," said Olivers. "We are not without thoughts of building it anew."

"A good scheme," said Toplady; "new doctrines deserve a new place."

"Ours," Olivers rejoined, "are the true old doctrines."

"There we differ," observed Toplady, "but let it be our mutual prayer that we may experience the efficacy of God's Word in our hearts, and evidence the power of it by the holiness of our lives."

Thereupon they shook hands and parted.¹

Olivers also has left an account of this visit. "Mr. Toplady," he says, "stayed about three hours. We soon entered on a debate about our different sentiments, which we carried on from first to last without one unkind or uncivil expres-

¹ For another curious dialogue in which Toplady took part, see *Gospel Magazine*, September, 1797.

sion. I mentioned several reasons why I could not be a predestinarian." After setting down his reasons, he concludes, "As Mr. Toplady did not offer any solid answer to these reasonings, I told him that as an honest man I could not be of his opinion till these difficulties were fully removed. We then parted, as good friends, at least, as we met."¹

Toplady records nothing further of that day's experiences, but we can picture him at Hitchin's door—and can, in fancy, hear the hearty greeting of the two friends. Toplady, no doubt, related his experiences at the Foundery, and Hitchin, who had himself received a troublesome shaft or two from Olivers' bow, probably made strictures in his amiable way on Olivers' general wrongheadedness. Toplady never conversed with Hitchin without feeling strengthened by the composure of his friend's mind, by his friend's firm confidence in God. "A few more revolutions of time," Hitchin once said in his serene way, "and the whole providence will appear, not to the eye of faith, but open vision, transparently clear." On another occasion he observed to Toplady, "The more advanced we are in holiness, the more we shall feel our need of free justification."²

On the following Wednesday, Olivers, impelled by curiosity, went to hear Toplady preach at

¹ *Wesley's Veterans*, Vol. 1, p. 240. Pages 197 to 251 of this useful work are devoted to Olivers.

² Toplady's Works 4, p. 436.

St. Ann's, Blackfriars. Toplady, who was near-sighted, thought he recognised Olivers in the congregation, so he threw out some remarks which otherwise he would not have made; during the whole of the sermon Olivers was almost too agitated to contain himself; and when the sermon was over, he turned to the gentleman next to him—who proved to be Toplady's friend, Mr. George Flower¹—and said, with much 'rancorous emotion,' "Believe this and be damned."

"No, sir," said Flower, "believe this and be saved."

A few days later, Olivers, who had not forgotten the penance he had undergone at Blackfriars in having to sit out a whole sermon on free grace and finished salvation, had occasion to preach in one of Wesley's chapels. The attendance was sparse. Addressing his auditory, he said, "I went last Wednesday morning to a famous Antinomian church in the City to hear one of the Antinomian clergymen. I expected to see but very few people there. But alas! though it was on a week-day, and a rainy morning, and though the church is large, it was quite full. What a shame it is, my brethren, that an Antinomian preacher should have so many people to hear him, when I, who preach the pure gospel, was forced but now to

¹ Flower was for many years deacon of Mr. Hitchin's Church (White Row, Spitalfields). His daughter Mary married Rev. John Clayton, of the Weigh-house Chapel; another daughter, Jane, married Mr. John Dawson, of Aldcliffe Hall, Lancaster. See Bull's *Letters of Newton*, p. 326.

wait a considerable time for my congregation ; and after waiting long, to begin to eighteen or twenty people."

Toplady, however, spoke well of Olivers "in several places," as Olivers himself learnt ; but neither of them abated in print even to the extent of one jot his asperity towards the other.

On 7th May, 1773, Toplady was present at a dinner given by Messrs. Edward and Charles Dilly, booksellers in the Poultry, to a number of men of letters,

23. The Dinner at Dilly's, 7th May, 1773.

among them being Johnson, Goldsmith, Boswell, Boswell's friend, the Rev. W. J. Temple, and the Rev. Dr. Henry Mayo, a dissenting minister.¹ Among the subjects discussed was that of toleration, and Johnson not only put forward authoritatively the preposterous declaration that "no member of a society has a right to teach any doctrine contrary to what the society holds to be true," but deduced from it that a magistrate has a right to enforce what he thinks—that is, to persecute. If Johnson had worded it, "No one who has voluntarily entered a society has a right," &c., he would have been in a secure position ; and Toplady, fresh from the Feathers' Association controversy, could have heartily supported him. The words standing as they did, however, naturally provoked a resolute attack, and Goldsmith and Mayo again and again drove Johnson into a

¹ Pastor of the church meeting in Nightingale Lane, London. He died in 1791.

corner, from which he escaped in his usual manner, namely, by roaring them down. Finally, the dear old tyrant and bigot covered his retreat by throwing into the eyes of the company the observation, "Old Baxter, I remember, maintains that the magistrate should 'tolerate all things that are tolerable.' This is no good definition of toleration upon any principle; but it shows that he thought some things were not tolerable." This strategic move, combined with the roar, led Toplady, who was himself not absolutely free from intolerance, to make the astounding observation—that is to say, if Boswell has reported him correctly—"Sir, you have untwisted this difficult subject with great dexterity."

During the argument, Goldsmith sat in restless agitation, as well he might—not, however, "from a wish to get in and shine," as the antipathetic Boswell unkindly alleges—but because Johnson, who was in reality badly beaten, was posing and trumpeting as the conquering hero.

"Finding himself excluded," says Boswell, "he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand, like a gamester who at the close of a long night lingers for a little while to see if he can have a favourable opening to finish with success. Once when he was beginning to speak he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith's

attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the attention of the company, Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat, looking angrily at Johnson, and exclaiming in a bitter tone, 'Take it.' When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound which led Goldsmith to think that he was about to begin again, as probably he was, and to take the words from Toplady. Whereupon Goldsmith, to quote Boswell, "seized this opportunity of venting his own envy and spleen under the pretext of supporting another person. 'Sir,' said he, to Johnson, 'the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour: pray allow us now to hear him!' Johnson (sternly), 'Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman. I was only giving him a signal of my attention. Sir, you are impertinent.'" Goldsmith made no reply, but continued in the company for some time.

The delightful sequel to this incident is well known. In the evening at the club, Johnson, noticing that Goldsmith sat silently brooding over the reprimand, said aside to some of the company, "I'll make Goldsmith forgive me;" and then called to him in a loud voice, "Dr. Goldsmith, something passed to-day where you and I dined; I ask your pardon." Goldsmith answered placidly, "It must be much from you, Sir, that I take ill." And so at once the difference was over, they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away in his usual style.

Writing a little later to a friend, Toplady says of Johnson, "I have some personal knowledge of him ; and, however I dissent from various of his principles, nor can avoid smiling at some of his not unpleasing oddities, he still passes with me for one of the ablest and honestest men who now adorn the republic of letters."¹

¹ Works 6, p. 212.

CHAPTER X

MAY, 1773

THE SALON IN BERNERS STREET

Toplady was in Johnson's company only occasionally, but with another litterateur whose name carried in those days great weight, he was on terms of close and even affectionate intimacy—Catharine Macaulay, the historian. Mrs. Macaulay was tall and graceful, with an oval face, dark hazel eyes, a profusion of soft brown hair, and a graceful neck; and added to the symmetry and beauty of a goddess the distinguished air of a princess. She was forty-two, and her husband, a medical man, had been dead seven years.¹ The first volume of her *History of England* appeared in 1763, and it achieved with its successors a popularity absurdly incommensurate with its feeble merits. Cowper read it in the wainscoted parlour at Olney; Walpole in his Gothic library at Strawberry Hill. Both Pitt and Mirabeau praised it profusely. In the columns of the reviews the author was invariably "the fair historian," "the learned lady." Nevertheless, she possessed scarcely one of those qualities which we now regard as indispensable to

24. Mrs.
Macaulay,
May, 1773.

¹ They had one child, a daughter, Catharine Sophia.

the historian. She had no sort of genius for amassing materials, she displayed only a novice's skill in utilising those that came to hand, she lacked intuition, and her style was poor and loose. Her readers thought they were admiring a book, whereas they were in reality admiring the ivory throat, the delicately-chiselled arm, and the red coral lips of a beautiful woman in her bloom. As time elapsed she drew towards her a number of persons of distinction who sympathised with one or another of her propensities—her republicanism, her enthusiasm for liberty, her antiquarian tastes, and her Evangelicalism. Among her admirers were Thomas Hollis,¹ man of wealth, philanthropist, bibliophile and virtuoso, who hated the "priest-rid Italian Stuart"² as furiously as he adored the memory of his hero—Algernon Sydney; the Rev. John Ryland, whom she toasted "in public and mixed companies;"³ the Rev. Thomas Wilson, who although formerly, as we have seen, an opponent of Evangelicalism, had since been drawn into its ever-widening and deepening current; and other friends and acquaintances of Toplady. Hollis had supplied Mrs. Macaulay with much material for her history, and he is supposed to have "designed" the portrait of her

¹ Thomas Hollis (1720—1774). An excellent account of him appeared in *The Bibliophile* for March, 1908. Hollis wrote under the pen name of Pierce Delver. See *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis*, 2 vols., 4to, by Archdeacon F. Blackburne.

² The Young Pretender.

³ Toplady's Works 6, p. 247.

which is placed in some of the copies of the quarto edition.¹ Toplady also was under indebtedness to Hollis. "I stood obliged to him," says Toplady, "for a number of scarce and curious tracts relative to the time of Charles I.; and he would have favoured me with incomparably more solid tokens of his esteem had I been capable of feigning myself a republican, and of dissembling my sincere attachment to the Scriptures and to our ecclesiastical establishment."²

When Toplady himself became drawn into the vortex is uncertain; but as early as 26th October, 1764, Mrs. Macaulay had heard him preach in Wells Cathedral, though the only effect the sermon had on her was to lead her to compose a foolish rebus founded on his name:

"The schoolboy's diversion and wish of the sparks,
Gives the name of a man who makes pretty remarks."

They may have first met at the house of their common friends, Mr. and Mrs. Northcote, of Honiton,³ whom Mrs. Macaulay often visited. Like so many of his contemporaries, Toplady admired Mrs. Macaulay's History as a whole, though he criticised certain of its features, and in particular her indiscriminate abuse of Cromwell, and the praise bestowed upon Cromwell's adversaries, the Levellers. Mrs. Macaulay, indeed, could never mention Cromwell without breaking

¹ Blackburne's *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis*.

² Works 6, p. 213.

³ See Toplady's Works, Vol. 6, p. 181.

out into invective. He was usually "that usurper." In his breast "rankled the most sordid principles of self-interest." He "was enabled," it seems, "to obstruct more good and to occasion more evil than has been the lot of any other individual."

"As greatly, madam," says Toplady,¹ "as I revere your uncommon talents, and as sincerely as I regard your public and private virtues, there are two or three minutiae on which I respectfully dissent. It is not, for instance, clear to me that the Levellers were a "brave and virtuous party," nor that Cromwell was so utterly destitute of conscience and principle as, to you, he seems to have been. . . . I perceive, in various features of his mental character, some striking symptoms of magnanimity and virtue which leave me in suspense as to the total corruption of his heart." In the light of modern knowledge it is hard to say which is the more irritating—the rancour displayed towards Cromwell by Mrs. Macaulay, or the half-hearted defence of him put forward by Toplady. Hollis, whose attitude towards Cromwell resembled Toplady's, used to say,

"I am frankly for old Noll;
Though his Government did a tyrant's resemble,
He made England great and her enemies tremble."

A little later Toplady enjoins on his fair friend not to impair her health by too close an application to her historical studies; nor could better advice

¹ 11th June, 1773

possibly have been given, seeing that the world would have lost absolutely nothing had she never written a single line. That, however, was not Toplady's opinion. "When you perceive fatigue and languor approaching," he said, "lay down your pen for that day; and imagine that I am at your elbow, requesting and adjuring you, with all the earnest importunity of respectful friendship, to be tender of that exquisite machine which Providence has formed into the distinguished tenement of so much exalted reason and virtue. . . . Valuable as your History is, it is not of equal value with the historian."

In one of his letters, having occasion to mention Mrs. Macaulay, Toplady takes upon himself to describe a collision which took place between that lady and Dr. Johnson. Mrs. Macaulay and Dr. Johnson (who never had a very cordial esteem for each other) met, he says, at the house of a third person who had invited them to spend the day. Before dinner the conversation turned on the nature of civil government. Johnson, as usual, declared in very strong terms for monarchy, Mrs. Macaulay for a republic, and she pressed him sore. The announcement of dinner occasioned a truce to debate, but the company were no sooner seated than Johnson set himself to renew hostilities. "Mrs. Macaulay's footman was standing, according to custom, at the back of his mistress's chair, when Johnson, addressing him, said, 'Henry, what

makes you stand? Sit down. Sit down. Take your place at table with the best of us. We are all Republicans, Henry. There's no distinction here. The rights of human nature are equal. Your mistress will not be angry at your asserting your privilege of peerage. We are all on a level. Do take your chair and sit down.' Mrs. Macaulay coloured a little and drew up her head, but made no answer. If I had been there," commented Toplady, "I should not have let the doctor off so easily for this savage piece of spurious wit. It is true his great parts are entitled to proper respect, but, as Mrs. Macaulay was observing to me when she was last in Devonshire, with reference to this very Dr. Johnson, 'A learned man is not so miraculous a phenomenon in this kingdom that he should expect to be honoured with divine worship.' Though," adds Toplady, "it must be owned there are very few Johnsons in any kingdom, or in any age."¹

Dazzled by her success both as a writer and as a conversationalist, Mrs. Macaulay became desirous of establishing in London a kind of salon. So she furnished her house in Berners Street in modish and sumptuous style. Her servants, to use an expression of the period, were clinquant with gold lace. She treated cleverly and elegantly.

* A little distance off, on the other side of Oxford Street, stood the famous haunt of fashion and

¹ See also Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (Malone's Ed., 1823) 1, p. 381; 2, p. 221; 3, pp. 75, 189.

frivolity—Carlisle House,¹ which was conducted by the enterprising and notorious Madame Cornelys and her daughter, Sophia.² Their dancing pavilion was banked with choice flowers, and “ceiled with looking-glasses;” and the company, tricked out in the latest fashions, used to stream upstairs to the supper room headed by a band of music. But as Thomas Hollis in one of his vilely written letters observed, Mrs. Macaulay “out-cornelysed the Cornelysians.”³ The entertainments at Berners Street, however, were on a far smaller scale than those at Carlisle House; and they were also characterised by considerably more culture and refinement. Whereas Carlisle House was the lode-star of the light o’ love, the wit, the frivol, and the voluptuary; the fane in Berners Street attracted chiefly the virtuoso, the man of letters, the philosopher, and the divine. In it Hollis talked of books bound in smooth, costly green or red morocco, and stamped with figures of owls, the caduceus of Mercury cut by the medalist Pingo, and of his precious portrait of Milton, which when his house caught fire he snapped up, abandoning everything else; in it Ryland discoursed about Polhill of Burwash, Waterland, and his other favourite writers; in it Gifford talked of Jupiter with the hammer, and

¹ In Soho Square.

² They figure largely in *Casanova's Memoirs*. Casanova was Miss Cornelys' father.

³ Letters of Thomas Hollis, in *Memoirs of Rev. Theophilus Lindsey*, p. 361.

kindred figures on antique Greek coins; in it Toplady gave rein to his absorbing passion and inveighed against Arminian and Deist, and exhibited skill as a debater.¹ In it, in short, the muses took hands with the hours. The chaplets in the one house were of roses, in the other, of bay. There was the difference, too, that while at Carlisle House Madame Cornelys² was merely an incident in the entertainment, in the Temple in Berners Street Mrs. Macaulay presided as unrivalled goddess. She claimed deference and submission not only from her circlet, but from mankind in general. To her marmoreal and statuesque beauty, her humanitarianism, and her literary pretensions, were directed flattering speeches without number. Of incense, indeed, by whomsoever offered, she could never have enough, and in order to attract it she threw out a hundred lures. Nor was she particular as to its quality, so only it was incense.

As Toplady was a sincere admirer of Mrs. Macaulay's talents—and he went so far in one of his essays³ as to refer to "Mrs. Macaulay, the great political luminary"—it is not surprising that he was often

25. Was Toplady ever in "Love?"

¹ One of the debates was on whether evil may be committed in order to bring about a great further good. Mrs. Macaulay held the affirmative, and Hollis strenuously held the negative. All the frequenters of her Salon, Toplady included, were Wilkesites. "The cause of Wilkes," Hollis used to say, "is, in a degree, that of the public."

² She became a bankrupt in November, 1772, and Carlisle House was advertised to be sold by auction. She subsequently, however, conducted sumptuous fêtes in London. She died in the Fleet Prison, 19th August, 1797.

³ Unpublished.

a guest at Berners Street. He was partial to female society, and he certainly speaks with far more feeling of Mrs. Macaulay than of any other lady. On 11th June, 1773, he writes to her, "I reap too much pleasure and improvement from the privilege of your conversation to be distanced in the desire of seeing you by the warmest of your admirers;" and as may be deduced from the tenor of the letter that succeeded, they corresponded very frequently. Toplady's accurate description in one of his Essays¹ of a man in love permits the supposition that he himself had loitered in love's borderland. He says of the lover, "The charms or assemblage of sensible qualities in a particular lady are exactly adapted to strike with rapture a system of senses so fabricated as his; and, of course, to fall in with his ideas of beauty, merit, and accomplishment. What is the consequence? He becomes her captive, and can no more avoid becoming such than an aspen leaf can resist the impulse of zephyr. Hence she is necessarily considered by him as a Helen, a Venus, a Pansebia."

Toplady's friend, Mrs. Baker, once said to him, "Mr. Toplady, go wherever you will you will be sure to meet with instances of connubial infelicity."

"No remark," replied Toplady, "was ever more just. They really occur to me on every hand;

¹ Works, Vol. 6, p. 129.

and yet (you will smile, if not triumph, at such declaration from me) I am really and literally tired of being a bachelor; not unwilling to try a certain hazardous experiment, though half afraid to venture." From this it may be surmised that Toplady had a particular lady in view. Undoubtedly the lady was Mrs. Macaulay. It is true she was seven years his senior, but it was her habit to smile on men younger than herself. Her presence never failed to soften, relax, enervate, and melt. Then there was an air of mystery about her, an impenetrability, an elusiveness, an impassiveness that also acted as a magnet, and the better one knew her the more opaque, enigmatical and inscrutable she became. Toplady was not blind to her cardinal weakness—her insatiable appetite for praise; but for many of her qualities he had, as we have seen, a sincere admiration; and she honestly valued him both as a writer and as a theologian and preacher. They were the best possible of friends, and there were certainly times when his feelings towards her were of a tender nature. But as Toplady could only too plainly see, death was already beckoning him with persistent finger. He felt that there was work to be done in the world that nobody but he could do, and that if he was to do it he had no time to lose in dalliance even with the representative of all the muses; so he withdrew from the pleasing borderland whither he had momentarily wandered, and

directed his gaze exclusively in another direction—"on the land that is very far off." He remained her friend; and in her eternal welfare he continued, consistently with his character as a minister of the gospel, to take a lively interest. "Allow me, madam," he concludes a letter, "to express my wish that the precious blood and the imputed righteousness of the adorable Messiah, who lived and died for sinners, may present you in the hour of death and in the day of judgment faultless and complete before the uncreated Majesty."

Toplady seems to have returned to Broad Hembury at the end of May [1773].

In the autumn he prepared his "bachelor house," as he called it, for visitors, the arrangements being left chiefly to

26. Serle and Romaine at Broad Hembury. Sept., 1773.

his housekeeper, Mrs. Lane, a thrifty matter-of-fact person, who was as "lively at seventy-seven as she could be at thirty," and "Mrs. Lane's husband," who had the strength and gaiety of a boy of sixteen. The first of the guests was Ambrose Serle, who had but a little previous been appointed under-secretary to William Legge, 2nd Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State for the Colonies—the nobleman described by Cowper as one "who wears a coronet and prays." The information that Serle's knowledge of Lord Dartmouth amounted to an intimacy, led Toplady to write to his friend: "I thank you for informing me of it,

as it gives me a double pleasure. You may easily guess that I mean the pleasure of congratulating you on such a connection; and the pleasure of knowing that so worthy a personage has the happiness of so valuable a friend."¹

To Toplady's affection for Serle several letters bear witness. "The person does not breathe," Toplady writes in one of them, "whom I love and respect more than you." In a letter containing some "versus inertes"²—for the friends exchanged poems—Serle calls Toplady a giant, and himself a dwarf. "If you love me," follows Toplady, "treat me as (what I am) an ignorant, feeble, dying sinner." "Mr. Serle," says Toplady in a letter to Ryland, "is one of the most learned, most devout and most valuable men I know. With all his choir of respectable and of amiable qualities he possesses this crowning one, namely, a heart like yours, capable of friendship."³ In praising Serle, Toplady exceeded not his friend's deserts, for Serle stands revealed both in his letters and his books as one of the most devout and lovable of men. He had a little before lost his wife, to whom he had been devoted, but the way in which he received the blow may be judged both from his motto, *Deo duce, omnia bona*,⁴ and from the passage on Adversity in his *Christian*

¹ Works 1, p. 161.

² Unskilful verses. Works 6, p. 205.

³ "Your heart," wrote Hervey, of Weston Favell, to Ryland, "is made for friendship." Letter, 21st April, 1753.

⁴ God being the Leader, all is well.

Remembrancer—in which he says sweetly, “God sends adversity as a medicine for the soul. When it comes with grace into the spirit of a Christian, how doth it soften and blunt his rough and acid dispositions.” Toplady calls Serle’s motto, “the language of reason not less than of faith;” adding, “It is a text on which Eternity itself will be an everlasting comment.”¹ Serle loved books according as they led him to the Bible, or enabled him to understand its texts better.² He knew, however, that it requires something more than either man or book to cause that Treasure House to reveal its treasures. “The Spirit alone,” he says, “can make the perusal of the Bible a profitable, intelligent and delightful study.”³

The conversation of Serle and Toplady at Broad Hembury bore largely upon two books upon which Serle was then engaged: *Thoughts on the Origin of the Soul*, and a work on *The Divinity of Jesus Christ*, the substance of which seems to have been embodied some time after in *Horæ Solitariae*, the book by which he is best known. “Next to your conversation,” said Toplady to Serle, “I can receive no higher intellectual feast than that which results from a perusal of your writings.”⁴

Another topic that occupied the two friends was

¹ Works 6, p. 159.

² *Letters to a Lady*.

³ *Horæ Solitariae*, Vol. 1, p. 150.

⁴ Works 6, p. 205.

the conflict which had that year raged with exceptional heat between the Free Grace and the Free Will parties. Hill had published his *Logica Wesleyensis; or the Farrago Double Distilled*,¹ attacking both Wesley and Fletcher; Fletcher had replied with *Logica Genevensis*, and Wesley with *Some Remarks on Mr. Hill's Farrago Double Distilled*.² Hill had replied to Fletcher with *The Finishing Stroke*, and Olivers to Hill with *A Scourge to Calumny*. The poor *Monthly Review*, deafened by the din, could only run backwards and forwards, crying piteously for an armistice. "We believe," it said conciliatorily, "that the celebrated leaders of our Methodists, both Arminian and Calvinist, have really been instrumental to the reformation of many an idle and vicious person."

The various incidents of this warfare, we read, engaged the tongues of the two friends as they sat in Toplady's parlour, and Serle summed up his remarks with, "Everything is within the reach of free grace, but nothing is within the reach of free will."³ The conversation having turned on the subject of the Scriptures, Serle observed, "When a believer is in a state of comfort and prosperity, he can read other books beside the Bible; but when he is in temptation or burdened with distress, he betakes himself to the Bible alone. He wants pure wine, without any mixture of water. This

¹ Noticed in *Monthly Review*, March, 1773, p. 240.

² Noticed in *Monthly Review*, September, 1773, p. 235.

³ Toplady's Works 4, 368.

shows the worth of the Bible above all other books."

Toplady loved to dwell on the belief that friendships with the elect whom we know and love below will be continued in heaven. "I would hardly give sixpence," he told Serle, "for a friendship which time and death are able to quench. Our friendship is not of that evanid species."¹

Soon after Serle's departure, "dear and honoured" Mr. Romaine and his wife accepted Toplady's invitation to Broad Hembury. They broke their journey at Tiverton. While there Romaine had occasion to go into a shop in order to get change for a guinea. Who should happen to walk in but the ubiquitous Thomas Olivers! also come westward on a preaching tour.

While Romaine waited for change, the pugnacious and irrepressible Olivers observed to him, "They say there's an act of grace coming out for the release of imprisoned debtors; but I deny it to be an act of grace."

"What, then," said Romaine, "would you call it?"

"Oh," replied Olivers, "I would call it an Act of Insolvency, for nothing can be an act of grace but what is absolutely universal."

"You are in error," said Romaine; "for if the king were to release only one debtor out of a hundred, it would certainly be an act of grace to that one."

¹ Works 6, 202.

“I do not think so,” commented Olivers.

“Then enjoy your opinion,” said Romaine, and taking up his change he went away.

When Romaine arrived at Broad Hembury, he naturally gave Toplady an account of the singular interview, and Toplady, in a letter written a little later, indignantly retailed the narrative in order “to show the rudeness and impertinence of the illiterate and self-sufficient Arminian who wanted to draw into dispute a man of Mr. Romaine’s eminence, with whom he had never before exchanged even a single word.”¹

On the following Sunday Toplady had the gratification of hearing his friend preach in Broad Hembury Church.² The subject of the sermon is unrecorded, but we may safely assume that Romaine had something to say on his favourite topic, “the love of Christ and a recumbency on Him.”

When Toplady told Romaine that their friendship was one that nothing could sever, Romaine replied, “The reason is because God is not left out of it.”

The Sunday after Romaine left Broad Hembury he preached at Columpton, and among the audience who should there be—oddly enough—but Mr. Thomas Olivers. Romaine, who preached a Free Grace sermon from Lam. v. 16, “The

¹ Letter to Mrs. L. Written from Broad Hembury 1st January, 1774. *Gospel Magazine*, 1797, p. 170.

² Toplady’s Works 4, 164.

crown is fallen from our head," "prodigiously offended" Olivers, who in the afternoon endeavoured to unsay, at the Methodist meeting-house, "all that Romaine had been advancing in the morning."¹

At the end of September, Serle submitted to Toplady his manuscript of the *Origin of the Human Soul*,² and on October 1st Toplady offered some criticisms on it. Apparently Serle and Toplady never afterwards met, for in 1774 Serle went to America,³ and he did not return till after Toplady's death.

The same day that Toplady wrote to Serle he also wrote to his friend Mr. George Flower a letter,⁴ in which he opens his mind on the subject of games and pastimes, which he would allow, he says rather oddly, under due restrictions, if, for example, they are resorted to for the purpose of unbending the mind or "to promote digestion." He could not, for example, he said, blame the holy martyr, Bishop Ridley, for frequently playing tennis before he became a Prelate, or for playing "the more serious game of chess" afterwards; and he defends the relaxations of Luther, Latimer, Hervey, and other gracious men.

¹ Toplady to Mrs. L. 9th January, 1774.

² Published in the *Theological Miscellany*.

³ He accompanied the British Army from 1776 to 1778, during which time he had control of the press of New York.

Unpublished.

CHAPTER XI

JANUARY, 1774—MAY, 1774

LAST DAYS AT BROAD HEMBURY

The new year opened with the loss to Toplady of his valued friend, the Rev. Edward Hitchin, who after suffering for months “under a dropsy and the black jaunders,” died on 11th January, 1774, at the early age of 48.¹ Mr. Hitchin had endured his intense sufferings with Christian fortitude and dignity. “His steady faith and his calm unruffled departure amid circumstances of such bodily pain,” says Toplady, “can only be attributed to that everlasting love and to that atoning blood which made him more than conqueror.” Mr. Hitchin’s remains were interred “with grand funereal pomp”²—there were twenty mourning coaches—in Bunhill Fields, and over 5,000 persons assembled to do honour to the memory of an esteemed pastor, and to hear the funeral oration, which was delivered by one of the leading ministers of the day—the Rev. Thomas Towle.³

¹ He had been pastor at White Row for 23 years. See *Evangelical Magazine*, 1793, p. 180.

² *Evangelical Magazine*.

³ See also *Solitary Walks*, by George Wright (3rd edition, 1775), which contains a portrait of Hitchin, and “A Pathetic and Interesting Address to all, but particularly to the late Congregation of the Deceased, being a Funeral Discourse on the Death of the Rev. Edward Hitchin, B.D.”

Among those who supplied at White Row after Hitchin's death was John Ryland. "I rejoice," says Toplady, "to hear of dear Mr. Ryland's liberty and sweetness in his ministrations to Mr. Hitchin's widowed flock. Our Northampton friend is an Israelite without guile; and he is among those who stand highest in my regard. . . . In heaven we shall be all together for ever and ever."¹

The same month Toplady lost another friend, Thomas Hollis, the philanthropist, who fell down in a fit when walking on his estate at Corscombe, and died immediately. By his desire he was buried at a depth of ten feet in one of his fields, and immediately afterwards the plough was run over his grave.² "His great abilities and his vast fortune," writes his biographer, "were entirely devoted to acts of public and private good."

The literary event of the spring of this year was the publication of the *Letters*³ of Lord Chesterfield, who had died on March 24th, 1773⁴; and Toplady, who, as we have seen, had from boyhood been intimate with that nobleman, read them with unflagging interest. Writing to Madan from Broad Hembury, on July 8th, 1774, he says, "My few *horæ subsicivæ*⁵ since my return hither have been

28. Lord
Chesterfield's
Letters,
Spring, 1774.

¹ Works 6, p. 217.

² See *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis*, by Archdeacon Blackburne (1780). Some of the plates in it are by William Blake.

³ To his natural son, Philip Stanhope.

⁴ Reviewed in *Monthly Review*, April and May, 1774.

⁵ Leisure moments, a favourite expression of Lord Chesterfield. Toplady subsequently often used Lord Chesterfield's phrases. See Works, Vol. 6, p. 79.

devoted chiefly to the perusal of Lord Chesterfield's Letters." After condemning, as must every well-wisher to youth, the "looseness of religious principle"¹ that underlies them, he says, "Do you not also complain of a negligence in point of style, composition and connection; really to be wondered at in even the running productions of so masterly a hand? . . . I own myself, however, extremely entertained and improved by this publication. There are almost an infinity of rules and remarks, respecting both men and *les manières*, founded on the deepest worldly wisdom and truth; yet so intermixed with dross and refuse that, had I the care of a young person, I would not venture to put those letters into his hands without the precaution of an *index expurgatorius*. But was anything ever like his portrait of the female sex? He traduces them all, without making a single exception. I know but one way to bring him off, and that, I fear, will be far from doing it effectually, viz., by supposing that when he sketched that caricature, his mind was acidulated by a recent *fracas* with Lady Chesterfield, and that in revenge he instantly libelled the whole sex." Toplady returns to the subject in a letter of 13th February, 1775. "Seriously," he says, "poor Mr. Philip Stanhope was greatly to be pitied for falling under the management of such a father, who was at once capable of guiding a son into the ruinous paths of vice; and of pretending,"²

¹ Lord Mahon.

² Toplady is unjust to Lord Chesterfield, who, unhealthy as was some of his advice, had the welfare of the young man really at heart.

at other times, to give him a few squeamish cautions against it. . . . Moreover, after all his lordship's attention to the 'graces' of his disciple, the poor young gentleman lived and died almost as great a stranger to the graces of politeness as to those of the Holy Spirit." In other places, too, where Toplady quotes Lord Chesterfield, he has an eye rather to the flaws than to the amenities of the famous Letters. Thus, in his article on "Sagacity of Brutes," he says of the elephant, "Do him a material injury, and he will act as if he had been tutored by the late Lord Chesterfield, that is, if it be in his power he will immediately revenge the affront ; but if restrained for the present . . . he will retain the offence in his memory, and take care to repay it with interest the first favourable opportunity."¹

He is still more severe on Lord Chesterfield in his sarcastic *Christianity Reversed, being a Summary of Lord Chesterfield's Creed*, in which he makes the sponsor say, "I believe that this world is the object of my hopes and morals ; and that the little prettinesses of life will answer all the ends of human existence. . . . I believe that there is no sin, but against good manners ; and that all religion and virtue consist in outward appearance."

Toplady, indeed, whose bitterness increases as he continues, meets out but scant justice to a book which, despite its shortcomings, has been the

¹ Works 4, p. 208.

delight, and justifiably, of generations of readers; but perhaps so devout a man could hardly be expected to deal leniently with one who showed himself so lamentably ignorant of the great things of religion. Apart from that, the characters of the men differed widely. There was scarcely anything in common between the suave and diplomatic statesman and the open and impulsive clergyman. Had the latter been able to peruse these letters at an earlier date, and had he taken to heart Lord Chesterfield's favourite motto—the motto quoted so persistently in the Letters: "*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re,*"¹ he would have appeared to far greater advantage in his contest with Wesley and Wesley's lieutenants. Toplady appreciated, in a way, both this motto and many another good thing in the book, but the advice came a little too late for the impetuous man who, with never a thought of the *Suaviter in modo*, had endeavoured to sweep everything before him by virtue of the *fortiter in re*.

While Toplady was immersed in Lord Chesterfield's Letters, Mrs. Macaulay was posting to Bath on account of her health. On her arrival there she placed herself in the hands of the spectacular and famous empiric, James Graham. Everything relating to Graham was gorgeous. His house blazed with colour. His stained-glass

29. Mrs. Macaulay again. Spring, 1774.

¹ Quiet in manner, determined in action.

windows threw down their cadmium yellows, their peacock blues, and their rich carmines. His statuary and his collection of coins and medals also gave to his house an individuality. Although Graham claimed to be able to effect cures, and to perform other wonders beyond human skill, by means of liquid amber, æthereal balsams, and other pleasantries, he was at the same time in some respects in advance of his age. He insisted on the open window night as well as day, on food and drink simple in quality and moderate in quantity, and on abstinence from tobacco and spirituous liquors. He required his patients to sluice themselves every day with cold water. As a physician, indeed, along with many grave shortcomings, he had only one trifling virtue. Instead of killing his patients he almost invariably cured them. In a very few weeks he restored Mrs. Macaulay to perfect health; and when the people who frequented hot rooms and kept their windows shut saw the blush rose bloom once more on her face, they flocked to Graham, and paid any price he cared to ask for his farcical ambers and balsams. But not only all Bath, all England rang with his fame, for he advertised furiously. The news sheets vied with one another in bawling out his miracles. Toplady heard of them down in Broad Hembury, and the information also reached him that Graham was more devoted to Mrs. Macaulay than the best friends of that lady could have wished; that

Graham in his white coat, waistcoat and breeches, and black silk stockings, had been seen in the streets with Mrs. Macaulay; and that tongues had already begun to wag. Toplady, with his knowledge of the weaknesses of Mrs. Macaulay's character, and particularly of her intense vanity and her vulnerability to flattery, considered it his duty to send her a word of warning. "Let me," he says, "submit a single caution to your candour, viz., Be careful not to renew your acquaintance with the dapper doctor, and, above all, beware of being seen with him in public. *Hic niger est: hunc tu, Romana, caveto.* He would derive lustre from you; but, like a piece of black cloth, he would absorb the rays without reflecting any of them back. The world is very malicious; and a character so eminently conspicuous as yours is a mark at which envy and censure delight to seize every opportunity of discharging their arrows."

Toplady further observed that he expected to be in London in April, and that he would, if possible, take Bath on his way home, and he continues: "As you give me hopes of seeing you in this county (Devonshire) during the course of the ensuing summer, who knows but I may have the honour of escorting you hither, through the whole length of Somersetshire? But I must not detain you from the Pump-room by my tedious speculations. So, for the present, farewell. God give you good spirits, for where they lead the van, good health generally brings up the rear."

Toplady had warned Mrs. Macaulay against Graham, but of the attitude of a still more ardent devotee of hers, Dr. Thomas Wilson, already several times alluded to in these pages, he seems just then to have been unaware. Wilson, who still held his London preferments, and had amassed wealth, had settled at Alfred House, No. 2 Alfred Street, Bath; and although close on 72 he had fallen a victim to Mrs. Macaulay's charms. He was never happy except when in her presence; his attitude towards her was almost one of adoration. He regarded her as physically, mentally and morally perfect. His passion for her seems to have been a sentimental one, and similar to that of Sterne for Kitty de Fourmentelle, or Eliza, though of a much more intense nature. Independent of this hallucination, Wilson preserved a perfectly clear brain. His temper had sweetened with his years. He had entirely abandoned his prejudices against Evangelicalism, and his name is to be found on the lists of subscribers to the works of Ryland and other Free Grace ministers. If he was wealthy he was also generous. Toplady calls him "the present venerable and munificent Thomas Wilson, D.D.,"¹ and everyone else had a good word for him. All his admirable qualities, however, showed to disadvantage owing to his one absorbing and ridiculous passion—nay, not a passion, but a burning and perpetually

¹ Some Account of Dr. Thomas Wilson (The Bishop). Works 4, p. 97. footnote.

heightening fever. He had become that compassionate object—"a woman's property."

Toplady's visit to London was made later than he had anticipated. He did not set out till the middle of May, but he broke the journey at Bath in order to see Mrs. Macaulay, whom he found "very weak and languid." On arriving in London he had the pleasure of meeting again his friends John Ryland and Martin Madan. On May 25th he preached at St. Ann's, Blackfriars, the sermon, *Free Will and Merit fairly Examined*¹—in which appears his famous pronouncement: "Not one grain of Arminianism ever attended a saint into heaven. If those of God's people who are in the bonds of that iniquity are not explicitly converted from it while they live and converse among men, yet do they leave it all behind them in the river of death." On June 19th he preached at the Lock the yet more notable sermon, *Good News from Heaven*. The principal feature of the Lock was a gallery before which was spread a large green curtain. Behind that screen sat the "poor loathsome patients"—the assemblage of all the horrors—who could thus hear "the Word of God without offending by their sight the rest of the congregation," which when Toplady preached was always large, and included persons of title and distinction. Among the listeners on this occasion was

¹ Works 3, p. 161.

a young man named Paul Avril, whose religious experiences, in which he records his heartfelt indebtedness to Toplady, have found their way into print.¹

On June 21st Toplady and Ryland dined with a common friend, Mrs. Bacon, of Islington, and called on Mr. James Burgh,² free-willer, and author of *Political Disquisitions*, between whom and Toplady ensued a heated controversy, of which no fewer than three accounts appear in Toplady's Works.³

Although Toplady, in accordance with his promise, broke his return journey at Bath, he did not, as he had hoped, have the pleasure of escorting Mrs. Macaulay to Devonshire. In September, however, she paid a visit to the Northcotes, of Honiton,⁴ with whom she stayed three months, during which period she and Toplady often met. Writing on 18th November, 1774, to Dr. Baker, Toplady says, "Mrs. Macaulay has lately left us, in a more vigorous state of health and spirits than I ever yet remember to have seen her enjoy. . . . You have really sustained a loss by not being here during her long residence in this neighbourhood."

During the year it seemed likely that Toplady would obtain a living in Northamptonshire, and

¹ *Gospel Standard*, 1865, p. 106.

² James Burgh, 1714—1775. From 1747 to 1771 he kept an Academy at Stoke Newington. He devoted the last four years of his life entirely to literature. He died 26th August, 1775.

³ Vol. 3, p. 164. Vol. 6, pp. 103, 220.

⁴ Five miles from Broad Hembury.

several of his letters touch upon the subject. The prize, however, was given to another. "Had it fallen to my lot," wrote Toplady to Ryland, "I should have been a very troublesome neighbour to you. Not a sixpenny pamphlet would I have sent to the press without previously soliciting your corrections and amendments." The close of the year was marked by the commencement of a correspondence between Toplady and Dr. Priestley, who had just settled at Calne, in Wiltshire, as literary companion to the Earl of Shelburne. Although Toplady and Priestley had little in common beyond an enthusiasm for "the great doctrine of Necessity," and an antipathy to its three Northern opponents, Doctors Reid, Beattie, and Oswald, they continued to exchange letters and compliments until Toplady's last illness.

Of the attacks made upon *The Church of England vindicated from the Charge of Arminianism*, the most important was that by "Wesley's pack-horse," as Toplady terms him, the vainglorious Rev. Walter Sellon, who attempted to prove the Arminianism as against the Calvinism of the Church of England.² Spurred by the assumption that Sellon was merely Wesley's mouthpiece, Toplady set about, with

31. Historic Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England.¹ 1774.

¹ Works, Vol. 2, p. 1.

² See Works of Walter Sellon, Vol. 1. Vol. 2 of Sellon's Works contains an attack on Elisha Coles's work, *A Defence of God's Sovereignty*.

fiery impatience, to compose as answer to "the two associated heroes," the work entitled, *Historic Proof of the doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England*.¹ In it he gives the history of the Church from the time of Wycliffe, quoting copiously from its leading dignitaries, and he pours out almost without cessation his scoriæ—ashes and molten lava—on the devoted persons of his opponents and their sympathisers. To his great hero, Archbishop Bradwardin, he assigns no fewer than twenty-five pages; but Bradwardin is only one of a mighty host of holy bishops, learned theologians, faithful martyrs, and poor peasants, who adhered, notwithstanding ill-report, prison, sword or flame, to the doctrines of eternal election and particular redemption. It is impossible to read without deep emotion the brief but pathetic biographies of martyr after martyr who went to the stake for these doctrines—while a rabble of bestial and disgusting priests gloated over their sufferings, and mocked their dying groans.

Though Toplady had for fifteen years been solidly and clearly convinced of the original and intrinsic Calvinism of the Established Church, still he did not know until he made the researches for this work that his contentions were supported by so vast a confluence of positive authorities. Toplady's *Historic Proof*—written, like his other

¹ It was in the press as early as 30th April, 1773, and still in the press in the following September. It is noticed in the *Gospel Magazine* for June, 1774.

prose works, in clear and beautiful English—is a truly noble monument to a truly noble army of martyrs. His main object, however, had not been to write a martyrology. He had set himself to prove historically the doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England. He proves it.

The work was scarcely finished when Toplady received from Martin Madan a tract by Wesley, entitled, *Thoughts upon Necessity*, and in the same package a copy of Lilly's *Astrology*.¹ Toplady, aware that a leaning towards Astrology was one of Madan's foibles, smiled when he opened Lilly; but the sight of Wesley's tract filled his mind with tumult. He had no sooner read it than, with his usual impetuosity, he seized a pen and stood—for he "generally wrote upon his feet"—to reply to it; with the result of *The Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity Asserted*, which, although in ill-health, he completed within a fortnight.²

¹ He received the package 22nd January, 1775, but owing to ill-health he did not acknowledge the receipt of it till April 5th.

² See Works I, p. 90.

CHAPTER XII

MAY, 1774—SEPTEMBER, 1775

SOME HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

Among the unpublished letters of Toplady in my possession is one to the Rev. Erasmus Middleton, author of the *Biographia Evangelica*, dated February 5th, 1775. In it Toplady not only combats Wesley's doctrines, but charges Wesley with having been a Lothario. Accompanying it are copies of a number of letters from various Methodists, which reveal that Wesley was very frequently far more zealous than discreet; and some manuscripts dealing with the unhappiness of Wesley's married life, under which head Toplady, with all his bitterness, shows himself steadily sympathetic towards his great opponent. The subject is continued in a doggerel poem—an imaginary dialogue between Toplady and Wesley—most of which is unquotable. Towards the end Toplady is supposed to disappear, and the remainder consists of a soliloquy put into the mouth of Wesley, who thus reels off the names of the most redoubtable of his opponents :

32. John Wesley as Pictured by Toplady.

“ There’s Townsend,¹ Shirley,² Foster,³ Venn,⁴
 With Madan,⁵ Conyers,⁶ and Romaine,
 And that proud Vicar down in Devon,
 All deeply tinged with Calvin’s leaven.”

Early in April a son was born to Toplady’s friend, Mr. Hussey, and the news was duly despatched to Broad Hembury. In his letter, Mr. Hussey mentioned that Martin Madan was dangerously ill; and he expressed the hope that Toplady would leave Devonshire and settle in London, whether as successor to Mr. Madan or in some other capacity.

In reply Toplady says⁷: “ May your son in due season be born again of the Holy Spirit. . . . Oh for a springtide of faith, which may enable us to cast, in future, all our cares, both for ourselves and for others, on that Jehovah whose heart is love, and whose arm is everlasting strength!” After stating that he and his household had been ill, and that two⁸ out of his three domestics had “ been called into eternity,” he goes on: “ My spiritual experience in the midst of all was such as made me sing, and feel as well as sing, ‘ His

¹ Rev. Joseph Townsend, Rector of Pewsey, Wilts. See *Life of Countess of Huntingdon*, 1, p. 479; 2, p. 159.

² Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley (1725—1786); see *id.* 2, pp. 145, 201, 291.

³ Rev. Henry Foster, who in 1784 became Lecturer at Long Acre Chapel. See *id.* 2, p. 409, and *Works of Richard Cecil*, Vol. 1, p. 14.

⁴ Rev. Henry Venn (1724—1797). Vicar first of Huddersfield and afterwards of Yelling.

⁵ Rev. Martin Madan.

⁶ Rev. Richard Conyers, of Helmsley, and afterwards of Deptford.

⁷ Unpublished letter, 7th April, 1775.

⁸ One was Mr. Lane, who died in December, 1774. See *Works* 6, p. 246.

mercy endureth for ever.' I was not afraid of going home. The prospect of the harbour rejoiced me, though, as the event proved, the time for my landing was not yet come. I can testify that Christ and Free Grace are never more sweet and precious than when mortality is going, in all appearance, to be swallowed up of life eternal." He then expresses sorrow for the news of "dear Mr. Madan's complaints;" observes that he is by no means solicitous for a settlement at the Lock, and declares that he could listen to no proposals unless they issued from Mr. Madan himself. "The Lock duty," he says, "even were it offered to me in form, could not be accepted by me but under such conditions as perhaps the governors would scruple at. I must have my week-days, for instance, to myself, else I must cease to print. But as the Arminians, I suppose, will never cease from attacking me, it is absolutely necessary that I should continue to write and to publish. . . . All things rest with God, and I leave them, with perfect ease and cheerfulness, to the disposal of His Providence and grace. The continual dampness of this air and situation has compelled me, though with much reluctance, to resolve on living either at Bath or in London, as soon as the gentleman who has agreed to be my curate can settle here. This also is of the Lord, and what He wills is best."

It was not, however, health alone that led Top-

lady to direct his thoughts to London. His chief anxiety was not for his own comfort, but to use his talents in the best possible way in the service of God. "My good Sir," Whitefield¹ had said to him many years previous, "why do you not come out? You might be abundantly more useful were you to widen your sphere and preach at large, instead of restraining your ministry to a few parish churches." "The same Providence," Toplady had replied, "which bids others roll at large, seems to have confined me to a particular orbit." The time, however, had at last come for Toplady, in Whitefield's phrase, to widen his sphere. He felt that he had a larger work to do than to preach to a few peasants in a sequestered Devonshire village. The brilliance of his genius had made his name a household word in London, and it was there that God seemed to call him. He longed to draw in a rich harvest of the elect, just as he had seen the fishermen on his Devon coast draw in their nets full of silver, tumbling fishes. The intensity of his desire for activity is reflected in all that he wrote, and especially in one of his letters to Dr. Baker. "I could wish, indeed," he says, "to be ever on the wing, ever on the stretch, but it is impossible in this present state."²

¹ Toplady calls Whitefield "that great man of God," Works 4, p. 133; and in 4, p. 156, he refers to him as "Dear Mr. Whitefield (whose name I can hardly think of without tears)."

² Works 6, p. 162, 4th February, 1773.

The country had never been in a gloomier condition. War had broken out with our American colonists, and Lexington and Bunker's Hill had already been fought. In Toplady's words, "a black and dismal storm" seemed to be bursting over the British Empire."¹ He himself stood unruffled amid the turmoil; nay, he not merely stood unruffled, he sang, as the storm-cock sings in the face of the tearing gale. While the forest oaks go under, and lofty towers crash down, his voice is heard high amid the tumult. "Providence, unerring Providence, governs all events;" and "Grace, unchangeable, grace, is faithful to its purpose."² Both in his London sermons and in the press,³ he had strenuously protested against the American War, but his warnings had fallen on deaf ears; and now that war had come about, with all its humiliations to our country, his perpetual cry was for Peace. "Not slaughter, but the olive branch," he said, "must decide the fate of the British Empire. Subduing the bodies of the Americans will not subdue their minds;" and he wished to deliver his message at this critical time to the great City, for he knew that there were many in London who were propitious to the gospel, and that crowds would flock to hear him. "It is in things civil," he said, "as in things spiritual; and I regard my

¹ Works 4, 299.

² See also Dan. iv. 35, and Rom. viii. 28.

³ His letters, signed "Regulus," appeared in a daily journal called *The Gazetteer*. See also *Gospel Magazine*, 1832, p. 133.

country and myself in a similar view. Considered in myself, I am a most unworthy and sinful creature; considered in Christ, I am without fault before the throne of God. Consider the state of public affairs as they are in themselves, and hardly anything can be more threatening, cloudy, or unfavourable. Consider them in a providential view, and whatever is, is right. This is my sheet-anchor." It was in this strain that he hoped to speak to the citizens of London.

After consulting his Bishop, he made his final arrangements for the transference of the duty at Broad Hembury, and prepared for his removal. While these events were happening, John Wesley was taken ill at Lisburn, in the north of Ireland. "His tongue swelled and turned black, his heart did not perceptibly beat, neither was any pulse discernible;"¹ and the news flew east, north and south that he was dead. Toplady, who was at Plymouth when he heard it, wrote² at once to his London publishers, who were printing his *Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity*, requesting them to stop the press, in order that he might cancel all passages which had personal reference to Wesley, retaining only as much as bore upon the naked argument. Wesley, however, was not to die in the North of Ireland. He recovered, and although he had reached the age of seventy-two, sixteen more strenuous years lay before him.

¹ *Wesley's Journal*. Dent's ed. 4, 49.

² 7th July, 1775.

A little later, Toplady's *Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity Asserted*,¹ left the press. That a profound and elegant mind like his should deal satisfactorily with a subject which he had for long made peculiarly his own, is no more than might be assumed. But it is one of the best of his prose productions. It abounds in stirring passages, the offspring of red-hot zeal. Only one shall be cited, but that one, which has more than the value of Ethiopian topazes, should add a new joy to every good man's heart: "Nothing can hurt us, except God's own hand first sign the licence. . . . He never will sign any such licence but to answer the best and wisest ends."² The work closes with the expression of satisfaction that the doctrine of Christian Necessity was making progress in the kingdom.

From Plymouth Toplady travelled to Bath, where he was the guest of Lady Huntingdon, at whose chapel, "a most plain but elegant building,"³ he preached for several Sundays, and where he renewed his acquaintance with Mrs. Macaulay and other friends.⁴

On July 25th [1775], he wrote⁵ from Bath to a friend, Mr. John Evans, to thank him for the gift of a snuff-box ornamented with a portrait of

¹ Printed in Toplady's Works, Vol. 6.

² Works 6, p. 83.

³ See *Life of Countess of Huntingdon*, 1, p. 477. For anecdotes told Toplady by Lady Huntingdon on this occasion see Toplady's Works 4, pp. 140, 151.

⁴ Among these friends were Mr. Derham, wine merchant, Green Street, and Rev. C. Johnson, Vicar of South Stoke, near Bath.

⁵ Hitherto unpublished letter.

Calvin. He says: "Through the good hand of God upon me, I arrived here safely last Saturday. I am likely to be detained in this place about a week. I drank tea yesterday with Lady Huntingdon, whose conversation was very polite, very friendly, and very spiritual. I had not parted from her more than ten minutes, when I met the Bishop of Exeter, with whom I walked up and down the North Parade for half-an-hour. I told him with whom I had been spending the afternoon, and he mentioned her ladyship with great, but very cool, civility.

"I must trouble you with my written thanks for the polite instance of your esteem, which arrived here to-day. You have made me the obliged owner of the neatest snuff-box I ever possessed. Nor can I at any time have recourse to its contents without being reminded of two most valuable persons, namely, the donor, and of that admirable Reformer whose profile decorates the cover. What will the Arminians say, should they hear of my receiving such an 'Antinomian' present? Snuff-taking will be doubly heretical out of a box ornamented with John Calvin's head in demi-relievo. Every blessing attend you, and may God's Holy Spirit give both you and me to experience daily and hourly the refining and enlivening power of the gospel."

Toplady was still at Bath on August 4th,¹

¹ See Works 4, 299.

and owing partly to his ailments, for he dragged his poor shattered body along like a wounded snake, and partly to "interjacent friends," who delayed him at various places, he did not arrive in London till the end of August.¹ Of the numerous sermons preached by Toplady at Broad Hembury, notes of thirty-four, with dates and text, have been preserved,² and one sermon, *Jesus Seen of Angels*,³ has been printed. The following citations will give some idea of the unpublished material :

Happiness in Three Worlds.—Isaiah lvii. 2.—Godliness, or real grace in the heart, brings with it two worlds for its portion: the world that now is, and that which is to come. I should have said *three* worlds, for between the present world and the enjoyment of complete glorification in the ultimate state of blessedness, the millennium (whose seat is to be the new air and earth) will take place.

Apparitions.—Matt. xvii. 5.—Men of learning have been not a little divided concerning apparitions, or the appearance of departed spirits. On this article I would neither be so rashly incredulous as to deny the possibility of the thing; nor so implicit as to believe every story that is told. Truth and fact commonly lie between extremes. With the ancient Sadducees to deny the existence of disembodied souls were not only to degrade man of his real dignity, but would lead to atheism; for

¹ Works 4, 355; 6, 265.

² For List see Appendix.

³ Works 3, p. 55.

God Himself is a Spirit. And if spirits really exist, why may they not, on occasions of special exigence and importance, appear? And, indeed, if they have *not* appeared, and cannot possibly appear, we must give the lie to all history, sacred and profane, ancient and modern. Scripture is for it, Luke xxiv. 37, 39. But what will put the matter beyond all doubt to true believers is the account of our Lord's transfiguration, where express mention is made of *two* apparitions at once; though but one [Moses] of them was disembodied.

Rev. v. 7.—The gospel key will not fit the wards of the human heart till God makes it effectual. A key made out of a small piece of iron not worth a halfpenny, yet may open the largest treasures. Ministers are like children who try at a hard lock and hurt their hands; they go to their Father and beg Him to open it Himself. Door fast locked, barred and bolted. Christ takes the key, and with one turn of His hand lets Himself in. The iron door of unbelief grates upon its hinges. Christ has an abundant and triumphant entrance. He is the true Churchwarden, who keeps the key of the Church, the house of David.

Psalms xlvi. 5.—I once saw a soldier shot for desertion. Handkerchief over eyes, knelt down, signal given. Oh for a reprieve! But I wish for none for *you*. The Lord shoot you *all* to the heart to-day.

Hebrews ii. 9.—"We see Jesus." Thrice blessed

sight! Mr. Pope, the poet, reckoned it among the felicities of his life that he had "once seen Dryden." If the sight of one eminent person could give such satisfaction to another, how transcendent the blessedness of seeing Him, whom to see is life eternal!

Boldness for God an effect of conversion.—When a believer gets to be strong in the Lord, he has no notion of sneaking to heaven in a close-covered litter, but wishes rather to go thither in an open chariot, so as to be seen and known of all men as they pass.

Everything a gift.—Even worldly prosperity and success are not at man's disposal, nor merely of man's acquisition. Now if earthly things are above our reach, and beyond our power to obtain without the special blessing of God, why should it be thought strange if privileges of a much higher kind should be the result of mere grace, seconded by almighty power? for instance, we are expressly assured not only that faith itself is the gift of God, but that the very measure and degree of it are from Him: "According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith," says the apostle.

Philippians ii. 5.—"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God," &c. Perhaps the finest inverted climax in the world. You are led lower and lower, till you can descend no farther.

Characteristics of the mind of Christ: I His is a

heavenly mind ; 2 Upright and sincere ; 3 Zealous and fervent ; 4 Humble ; 5 Loving and gracious ; yet, 6 Bold and intrepid.

How may we attain His mind : 1 Read the Scriptures frequently and attentively ; 2 Meditate much on the life of Christ ; 3 Pray earnestly and frequently to Father, Son and Spirit ; 4 Particularly depend on the agency of the Holy Ghost.

How humbled ought we to be that we have no more of His mind. Remember that He is not only the Pattern, but also the Righteousness of them that believe.

1 Kings xvii. 3.—"Hide thyself by the brook Cherith," "among the rushes" [Gill]; like the Duke of Monmouth at Sedgemoor. Rather than God's people shall want, birds of prey shall bring them food.

1 Kings xvii. 10.—"A little water in a vessel;" probably, 'In this vessel,' a wooden dish of the prophet's own, which was his travelling vessel, and perhaps all the worldly goods he was possessed of. See Gill. Wonderful concatenation of events in providence. Elijah is sent of God to court; there his ministry met with such a reception as courts usually give to God's messengers; Ahab and Jezebel are offended. God forces Elijah to fly from Samaria; in the course of his journey he comes to Sarepta, where a poor widow was to sustain the prophet and to be converted by him. Luke [iv. 26] brings Elijah's visit to the widow as an argument in favour of election.

1 *Tim. i. 10.*—“And if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.” Many such things there are. Time will suffer me to mention only a few, of which I shall prove the falsehood from Scripture and our Church Articles:—

| | <i>Scripture.</i> | <i>Article.</i> |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Conditional Election, which represents the love and purposes of God as founded on the corrupt, changeable will of man. | Rom. ii. 5, 6. | XVII. |
| 2. The supposed dignity and rectitude of human nature in its fallen state. | | IX. |
| 3. Conditional Redemption. | | XXXI. |
| 4. Ineffectual Grace; as if God who made us without our leave must have our leave before He makes us anew. | | X and middle of XVII. |
| 5. Justification by Works. | Is. li. 11. | XI. and XIII. |
| 6. Antinomianism; or denying the necessity of personal holiness and obedience. If charged with Antinomianism, be revenged by shining. | | XII. |
| 7. The other extreme, Inherent Perfection. | | Middle of IX., XV. |
| 8. The peril of falling from grace. As if Christ's sheep might become goats; and all the purposes of God concerning them, the work of Christ for them, and the work of the Spirit for them, might come to nothing. ¹ | | Middle XVII. |

The different success of the Gospel on different persons furnishes me with another argument in proof of effectual grace. The same word of truth which to some is the savour of life unto life shall have no effect on others.

¹ These notes are evidently incomplete. Toplady doubtless intended to give more references to Scripture.

CHAPTER XIII.

SEPTEMBER, 1775—AUGUST, 1776

TOPLADY IN LONDON. EDITOR OF THE *GOSPEL MAGAZINE*

In the early weeks of autumn, 1775, Toplady
34. Orange
Street. 11th
April, 1776. preached, at the request of Lady
Huntingdon, in her ladyship's new
chapel at Brighton;¹ at the beginning
of October he was at Northampton with Ryland;
and on the 12th he and Ryland were together at
Woburn in Bedfordshire,² where Ryland gave
Toplady pleasure by quoting a fine saying of one
of the old Dukes of Bedford: "I consider the
prayers of God's people as the best walls round
my house." On the 29th, Toplady preached in
London the two sermons, *Joy in Heaven*³ and
The Existence and the Creed of Devils considered;⁴
but before the sermons left the press he set
himself the congenial task of castigating John
Wesley for plagiarising a pamphlet⁵ of Dr.
Johnson's.

¹ See Toplady's Works 6, pp. 266—270, and *Life of the Countess of Huntingdon*, I, p. 314.

² Toplady's Works 4, p. 162.

³ At St. Luke's, Old Street.

⁴ At St. Olave's, Jewry.

⁵ *Taxation no Tyranny*. Wesley's plagiarism is entitled, *A calm Address to our American Colonies*. See Toplady's Works, Vol. 5, p. 441.

On 17th December, 1775, Toplady preached at St. Botolph's Church, Aldersgate, before the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and common council, taking as his text, Acts xvii. 6, "These that have turned the world upside down."¹ After making a pointed attack on the Perfectionists, he gave out a hymn which he had found in the book used at St. Botolph's :

" Now, with impartial eyes, O Lord,
My upright dealings see !

For Thou has searched my heart by day,
And visited it by night ;
And on the strictest trial found
Its secret motives right."

" I would wish to turn upside down," he said, " this hymn. It is the height of impiety that such words should be uttered in a Christian assembly." It was certainly a curious object lesson to set a great congregation to sing a hymn with the sole purpose of impressing upon them the viciousness of its doctrines ; and we may safely assume not only that the congregation were embarrassed, and that the hymn was sung with no great fervour, but that every individual among them remembered the incident (and thus accomplished Toplady's desire) until his dying day.

On 4th February, 1776, Toplady preached a charity sermon at St. Sepulchre's, Holborn, taking as his text, Matt. xii. 36, 37.² Several persons of

¹ *Gospel Magazine*, 1832, p. 133.

² *Gospel Magazine*, 1819, p. 155, and 1831, p. 90.

rank being present, he pulled a newspaper—*The London Packet*—out of his pocket, and read a paragraph respecting a noble lord who had run his horse on a Sunday on the Romford Road against a well-known baronet, and who had beaten his opponent by jostling him into a ditch. "Take care, my Lord," commented Toplady, "lest you be jostled into hell;" and in the same sermon he made an exceptionally solemn protest against the American War.¹

On March 31st, he wrote to one of his friends that beautiful letter which appears in his Works² as an essay, with the title of *Thoughts on the Assurance of Faith*. In it he says, "Faith is the hand by which we embrace, or touch, or reach toward the garment of Christ's righteousness for our justification. Such a soul is undoubtedly safe. Assurance I consider as the ring which God puts upon faith's finger. Such a soul is not only safe but also comfortable and happy. Full assurance I consider as the brilliant, or cluster of brilliants, which adorns the ring, and renders it incomparably more beautiful and valuable."

Had Toplady been asked whether any of his friends possessed the gift of full assurance he would certainly have mentioned Ryland.

"Mr. Ryland," once said a friend to that good

¹ See also Dodsley's *Annual Register*, 1776.

² Vol. 3, p. 452. It is given in full in *Gospel Magazine*, April, 1776, p. 175.

man, "are you never afraid lest you should go to hell?"

"No, Sir," replied Ryland emphatically, "and if I were to find myself there I should say, 'I love the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart and all my soul;' and all the devils in hell would say, 'Turn that fellow out, he has no business here.'"

In April, 1776, Toplady accompanied Lady Huntingdon and Lady Anne Erskine to Norwich, where he preached to large and enthusiastic congregations;¹ but while he was away his friends had made an agreement in his behalf with the Trustees of the Huguenot or French Calvinist Reformed Church in Orange Street, Leicester Square,² for the use of their chapel on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. In due course the building was licensed by Dr. Terrick, Bishop of London; and Toplady, who preached his first sermon there on 11th April, 1776, continued to use it until his last illness.

His connection with Orange Street was the crowning event of his life. At last he had the satisfaction of being able to deliver his message regularly to a great and appreciative auditory in the metropolis. Of the value of his message he was no less certain than of his own existence. He knew also that there was no other preacher in London with a tithe of his power and influence;

¹ *Life of Countess of Huntingdon*, 2, p. 343. Toplady's Works 3, p. 167; 4, p. 182, 183.

² Saurin and other famous preachers had occupied its pulpit.

and finally, he knew that he was a doomed man. Death with curled finger never ceased to beckon him.

The chapel was a large galleried building; its most noticeable feature being its great pulpit with wings or rostra at a lower elevation; one of which was occupied by the Scripture reader, and the other by Toplady's curate, the Rev. Dr. Illingworth. Here Toplady preached regularly to huge and eager congregations, many of whose members had followed him from the Lock and other places of worship where he had occasionally taken duty.

It must have been a thrilling moment when the worshippers rose to sing one of his own hymns there—to sing, for example, "Holy Ghost, dispel our sadness":

" From that height which knows no measure,
As a gracious shower descend:
Bringing down the richest treasure
Man can wish or God can send.
O Thou Glory, shining down
From the Father and the Son,
Grant us Thy illumination!
Rest upon this congregation."

It must have been a thrilling moment, too, when the worshippers saw arise from the middle of the great triple pulpit that thin, frail, hectic young man—for Toplady was only thirty-six—of spiritual aspect, in wig, bands, and black gown. From so attenuated a figure, with death in its face, a hearer present for the first time could

scarcely expect any very remarkable word. But those who had heard Toplady before could have enlightened that hearer—nay, that hearer himself could not but become, without assistance, speedily enlightened. Toplady no sooner commences than the air seems alive with arrowy thoughts. He is magnetic. He is inspired. He has the vivid imagination of a Charnock, the volcanic force of a Knox. His earnest voice, his masculine and blazing eloquence, his illumined face, his luminous eyes, all rivet the attention of the congregation. They see before them a seer with soul on fire—a saint tranced in a beatific vision—"tortured with bliss." He sees not them alone. Before his unhooded vision the plastered ceiling and the octagonal lantern have dissolved into the vast concave of heaven. The firmament opens, and the volumed and transplendent cherubim, forsaking the abodes of bliss, descend into his presence, surge about him, and listen, enraptured, to his message. "I question," he says, in one of his sermons¹—and the idea is grounded upon Eph. iii. 10—"whether there be an individual minister upon earth who declares the whole counsel of God with power, and with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, but listening angels are part of his auditory, and sometimes reap instruction from the lips of a mortal man."

The splendour of the spectacle animates Top-

¹ Works 3, p. 259.

lady to the mightiest efforts. The charm, the gladness of his character, was never so evident as when he was in the pulpit. His heart glowed with love for his people. His spirit danced. His mouth was filled with laughter. His voice had at one moment the full sweet volume of melody that gives such charm to the Hebrew prophets; in the next, it was compact of that righteous indignation—that crash of invective—which in the same prophets thrills to the marrow and fills with indescribable awe. The audience are ravished. They see strange lights burning in the preacher's eye. They are unconscious of the presence of the celestial host, but they are alive to the consequences of its presence. They listen amazed. It was difficult to know which was the more remarkable sight, that of the preacher transported beyond himself, transfigured, lost; or that of the rapt, wondering hearers hanging on his lips. Words were wanting to them when they afterwards tried to describe their feelings. Some in their excitement blurted out, "Bless his dear and beautiful heart!" When they said that his sermons were "in a particular manner heavenly and enchanting," it was merely an admission that their words were miserably inadequate to express their feelings. For those who refused to listen to the Gospel message, Toplady held out no hope. For them hell yawned. Against the Arminians he in every sermon belches fire and smoke. Their

creed was a siren song, sweet but deadly; an adder of vermilion red and living green, but still a fanged and poisonous adder; an equestrian George the First in Leicester Square, golden only on the surface. Not that he expected to make any impression on their leader—that aged, white-haired man who had horn where others have only skin; and whose eyes, despite his years and his pretensions, were still in darkness. The Methodists on their part called him a “flaming Calvinist.” He was. Invective poured from him like hissing lava. The Philistines screamed. He delighted to hear them.¹ In reference to the fact that Wesley, instead of replying to him openly, continued to direct his attacks through the pens of Fletcher, Olivers, and Sellon, he said, “Let Mr. Wesley plead his own cause, and fight his own battles; I am as ready as ever to meet him with the sling of reason and the stone of God’s Word in my hand. But let him not fight by proxy. Let his cobblers keep to their stalls. Let his tinkers mend their brazen vessels. Let his barbers confine themselves to their blocks and basins. Let his bakers stand to their kneading-troughs. Let his blacksmiths blow more suitable coals than those of controversy. Every man to his own order.”² So spake “that proud vicar” not long since down in Devon.

¹ Works 1, p. 182.

² Works 2, p. 360.

If Toplady was bitter towards the Arminians, to the Papists he allowed no quarter, for he could not help recalling the time "when God's people were burnt in such numbers that it raised the price of wood."

When speaking of the clergy of the Church of England and others who flirted with the Papists, and put pit-falls in the way of their own children by sending them to Romanist schools, his lips quivered with scorn. "Our clergy and the Papists," he cried derisively, "kiss, like Pyramus and Thisbe, through a hole in the wall."¹ Had Toplady lived two centuries earlier he would certainly have finished his course at a stake in the adjoining Leicester Fields.²

Toplady's sermons, which are at once the utterances of a saint and a poet—indeed, almost every paragraph has a poetical colouring—display an opulence of imagination which has forced tributes even from his most pronounced adversaries. Nearly all his sermons, both published and unpublished, bristle with apposite illustrations from the classics. Indeed, in a sense, he is the Emerson of preachers. Almost the whole of the literatures of Greece and Rome are laid under tribute. We have already noticed a number of fine passages. To them the following may now be added:

¹ Unpublished sermon.

² Now Leicester Square.

“The salvation of every one of the elect is most infallibly certain, and can by no means be prevented. God knows nothing now, nor will know anything hereafter, which He did not know and foresee from everlasting.”

“Notwithstanding whatever can be said concerning the evidences of divine revelation, the most convincing argument and most infallible demonstration that the Scriptures are the Word of God, is to feel their enlivening, enlightening, and transforming power in our hearts.”

Once at St. Clement's Church, Strand, Toplady was so overpowered in addressing the unconverted part of his auditory that he was obliged to sit down for a few minutes in order to recover himself.¹

To read his sermons² in the third volume of his works, is to obtain an inadequate idea of those sermons as they were delivered in the electric atmosphere of Orange Street, when the preacher was also a seer, and men gazed upon him “with holy ecstasy of joy.” But if much is lost, something is also gained. We lose the heat and eloquence of the speaker—the lure of his voice—but on the other hand we are able to go over and over again the great passages, and to let them sink into our hearts. The following is the list of his printed sermons :

¹ *Gospel Magazine*, 1834, p. 432.

² They were taken down by Mr. Gurney, the well-known shorthand writer.

| <i>Date.</i> | <i>Subject.</i> | <i>Text.</i> | <i>Page in Vol. 3.</i> | <i>Where preached.</i> |
|----------------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (1) 1770 April 29 | A Caveat against Un- sound Doctrines | 1 Tim. i. 10 | 1 | St. Ann's, Blackfriars |
| (2) 1770 Dec. 25 | Jesus seen of Angels. Part 1 | 1 Tim. iii. 16 | 55 | Broad Hembury |
| (3) 1770 Dec. 25 | Part 2 | | 81 | " |
| (4) 1770 Dec. 25 | God's Mindfulness of Man | Psalm viii. 4 | 101 | ? |
| (5) 1772 May 12 | Clerical Subscription no Grievance | Mal. iv. 23 | 125 | Columpton |
| (6) 1774 Jan. 23 | Ye are My Witnesses | Is. liii. 12 | | * |
| (7) 1774 May 25 | Free Will and Merit fairly Examined | Psalm cxv. 1 | 161 | St. Ann's, Blackfriars |
| (8) 1774 June 19 | Good News from Hea- ven | Psalm lxxxix. 15, 16 | 193 | The Lock |
| (9) 1775 Oct. 29 | Joy in Heaven | Luke xv. 7 | 233 | St. Luke's, Old Street |
| (10) 1775 Oct. 29 | The Existence and the Creed of Devils con- sidered | Jas. ii. 19 | 265 | St. Olave, Jewry |
| (11) 1776 Dec. 13 | Moral and Political Moderation Recom- mended ¹ | Phil. iv. 5 | 291 | St. Mil- dred's, Poultry |

Among the worshippers at Orange Street were many of the most distinguished personages of the day—Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. William Robertson, Mrs. Macaulay and David Garrick being often present.² Did Garrick, we wonder, ever recall the little Westminster boy, who twenty years

* Printed in *Gospel Magazine*, 1796, pp. 29, 58, 97.

¹ Noticed in *Gospel Magazine*, 1777, p. 138.

² See also *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. 1, p. 70; a very sympathetic article written in 1835 by one who knew Toplady.

previous had placed, with so much assurance, in his hands, *The Shepherd's Dispute, or Rural Queen*, all in verse?¹ Perhaps not; but Toplady, looking down on the little weazenened face of the celebrated actor may have recalled, and probably did recall, the curious scene.

From the pulpit at Orange Street and Toplady as preacher we may turn to the study at Knightsbridge, and Toplady as essayist. In December, 1775, he had undertaken the editorship of the *Gospel Magazine*.² He had often previously enriched its columns; and both during his editorship and afterwards he continued his contributions—which usually took the form of essays or short biographies, the best of which—those of Knox and Foxe—are little masterpieces. Of his essays the finest are *Life, a Journey*,³ and the essays on Original Sin⁴ and Fears. In *Life, a Journey*, Toplady points out that the "two grand stated guides of the Redeemer's Church are the Spirit and the Word of God." [In a letter to Serle he calls God's Word the believer's chart, God's Spirit the believer's pilot.] "A minister without the written Word," he continues, "would bid fair to be a false guide, a mere will-of-the-wisp. . . . and the Word itself

35. Toplady
as an
Essayist.

¹ See §. 2, p. 14.

² In succession to Mr. William Mason. Mason (1719—1791) was a friend of Toplady. For account of his life, see *Evangelical Magazine*, 1794, p. 3.

³ *Gospel Magazine*, September—October, 1775; Works 3, p. 324.

⁴ *Gospel Magazine*, November—December, 1775; Works 3, p. 344.

without the Spirit, is but as a dial without the sun, a dead letter, and a book sealed." ¹ Speaking of the blessed visions with which God at times sweetens the fatigues of the pilgrim's way, he says: "Faith is the mount, and gospel promises and gospel ordinances are the pleasant windows whence (like Moses from the top of Pisgah) we survey that good land which is very far off." ²

Perhaps the most valuable passage in his essay on *Original Sin*,³ is that in which he draws his illustrations from the philosophers and poets of Greece and Rome. "Many of the truths revealed in Scripture," he observes, "require some intensesness of thought, some labour of investigation to apprehend them clearly, and to understand them rightly. But the natural depravation of mankind is a fact, which we have proofs of every hour, and which stares us in the face let us look which way we will." He then points out that even the heathen writers held that moral evil "is implanted in men from the first moment of their existence." Thus Plato in *De Legibus*, affirms "that man if not well and carefully cultivated is the wildest and most savage of all animals." Aristotle asserts the same truth, and almost in the same words as Plato. The very poets proclaimed the doctrine of human corruption; Propertius ob-

¹ Works 3, p. 335. See also 4, p. 289.

² Works 3, p. 337.

³ Among the unpublished MSS. is a sermon on this subject taken from 2 Kings xviii. 33.

serving that "Nature has infused vice into every created being;" and Horace, that "the seeds of vice are innate in every man." In this essay, too, he glances at his favourite idea that the brute creation will "at the time of the restitution of all things" attain immortality. "It is my private opinion," he says "(and as such only I would advance it), that Scripture seems in more places than one to warrant the supposition."¹

The tenor of the essay on *Fears*—every word of which glitters with gold dust and smells of sandal wood—may be gauged from the following passages :

"Were our graces complete, our bliss would be complete too; in which case we should no longer be men, but angels."²

"A mincing, timid, partial declaration of the Gospel is a virtual denial of Christ Himself."³

"For my own part, I look upon it as one of the best symptoms of a regenerate state when a person is ardently desirous to know his election of God. It is an enquiry which the generality of mankind never trouble themselves about."⁴

"Prudent fear is wisdom, but much fear is unbelief."

All the poet in the man flashes out in the description of the Christian at the river of death :

¹ e.g. Rom. viii. 19—21.

² Works 3, p. 366.

³ Works 3, p. 370.

⁴ Works 3, p. 372.

"Holy desire cuts the cable. Faith hoists the flag. Prayer spreads the sail, and God's Spirit breathes the auspicious breeze. All the graces of the heart are in exercise, and ply their oars to the music of hovering angels."¹

And if the poet is present, so, too, is the humorist, as when he refers to the poor Cornish woman who "was heard to say that she dreaded to open her Bible for fear of meeting with predestination and election."² Toplady also contributed to the *Gospel Magazine* a number of papers on Natural History and Astronomy.

Among the works projected by him and never finished were a translation of Witsius's *Animadversions*; a translation of Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio*, or a Demonstration of the Human Will; and *The Life of Archbishop Laud*.³

In the summer of 1776, he issued his well-known *Psalms and Hymns for Public and Private Worship*. In his Preface, which is dated 26th July, he tells us that in compiling the work he endeavoured to keep in view the fact that God is a God of truth, of holiness, and of elegance; and he included only such hymns as, in his opinion, were suggestive of these great attributes. A perfect hymn, he considered,

¹ Works 3, p. 368.

² Works 3, p. 372.

³ Of the materials for these three works only a few foolscap pages consisting of desultory notes have been preserved.

⁴ Noticed in *Gospel Magazine*, February, 1777, p. 96. A Second edition of Toplady's Hymnbook, edited by the Rev. Walter Row, appeared in 1787.

"could only be written by a spiritual person under the impressions of spiritual influence."

The hymns in this volume come under three categories. First, hymns by Watts, of whom he was an ardent admirer,¹ Miss Steele, William Cowper, John Newton, Joseph Hart, Benjamin Wallin, and others; secondly, hymns by Charles Wesley, and others, which for various reasons he altered; and thirdly, six of his own hymns.

Of Watts's hymns he includes:

- "O God, our help in ages past;"
- "Come, let us join our cheerful songs;"
- "Come, we that love the Lord;"
- "Oh for a thousand tongues to sing;"
- "This is the day the Lord hath made."

Of Cowper's:

- "Oh for a closer walk with God;"
- "There is a fountain filled with blood;"²
- "God moves in a mysterious way."

Of Newton's:

- "Safely through another week;"³
- "Let us love, and sing, and wonder."⁴

¹ For his Biographies of Watts and Watts's friend, Mrs. Rowe, see Works, Vol. 4, pp. 101—128.

² These hymns first appeared in the 2nd ed. of Dr. Conyers' *Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, 1772.

³ This hymn first appeared in "Twenty-six Letters on Religious Subjects; to which are added Hymns, &c. . . . by Omicron" [John Newton.] Published 6th July, 1774. The volume contained thirteen hymns. It also appeared in the *Gospel Magazine* for July, 1774. There are other hymns by Cowper and Newton in the *Gospel Magazine*, 1771—1778.

⁴ It first appeared in Dr. Conyers' *Psalms and Hymns*, 1774.

⁵ It first appeared in *Gospel Magazine*, May, 1774; and in Newton's *Twenty-six Letters . . . by Omicron*, 1774. It may be noted that *Olney Hymns*, by Cowper and Newton, was not published till 1779.

Of Hart's :

- "Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched ;"
 "This God is the God we adore ;"
 "Come, Holy Spirit, come ;"
 "Holy Ghost, inspire our praises ;"
 "A form of words, though e'er so sound ;"
 "Sons of God by blest adoption."

Of Miss Steele's :

- "Far from these narrow scenes of night ;"
 "Oh for a sweet inspiring ray."

Of Doddridge's :

- "Grace, 'tis a charming sound ;"
 "Not all the blood of beasts ;"
 "Hark, the glad sound, the Saviour comes."

He also includes, with but slight alteration, the whole of the twelve verses of that fine hymn of his old opponent Olivers: "The God of Abraham praise;" and he admits, also with but slight alteration, Charles Wesley's "Christ, whose glory fills the skies," and "Jesu, Lover of my soul."

As an example of the hymns which he radically altered may be mentioned Charles Wesley's "Lord, I believe a rest remains."¹ In the Methodist Hymnbook one of the verses runs :

- "A rest where all our soul's desire
 Is fixed on things above ;
 Where fear, and sin, and grief expire,
 Cast out by perfect love."

Toplady, who never ceased to inveigh against the doctrine of sinless perfection, altered the verse to :

¹ For particulars concerning these hymns see *Life of Joseph Hart* (Farncombe & Son).

² Toplady's *Psalms and Hymns*, p. 50.

"Then shall I sing, and never tire,
 In that blest house above,
 Where doubt, and fear, and pain expire,
 Cast out by perfect love."

Another of Charles Wesley's hymns which he used similarly was, "Blow ye the trumpet, blow,"¹ the third verse of which he altered from

,"Extol the Lamb of God,
 The all-atoning Lamb,"

to

"Extol the Lamb of God,
 The sin-atoning Lamb."²

It may be noted that there are two of Toplady's hymns in the Methodist Hymnbook, viz., "Deathless Principle," and "Rock of Ages." Of Toplady's own hymns, the following are included in the collection :

- "Holy Ghost, dispel our sadness ;"
- "A debtor to mercy alone ;"
- "Thou Fountain of bliss ;"
- "Rock of Ages ;"
- "What though my frail eyelids refuse ;"
- "How happy are we."

On 20th August, 1776, Toplady wrote³ to Mr. William Tucker, of Chard, Somerset, hymn-writer and author of *Predestination Calmly Considered*:⁴ "Dear Sir,—I had the pleasure (and a very great pleasure it was) of receiving your late favour from Chard, which should

37. Toplady
 relinquishes
 the Editor-
 ship of the
 "Gospel
 Magazine,"
 Aug., 1776.

¹ Toplady's *Psalms and Hymns*, p. 292.

² To chime, of course, with his belief that Christ died only for the elect.

³ Letter hitherto unpublished. It is addressed from "No 5 New Street, Covent Garden, London."

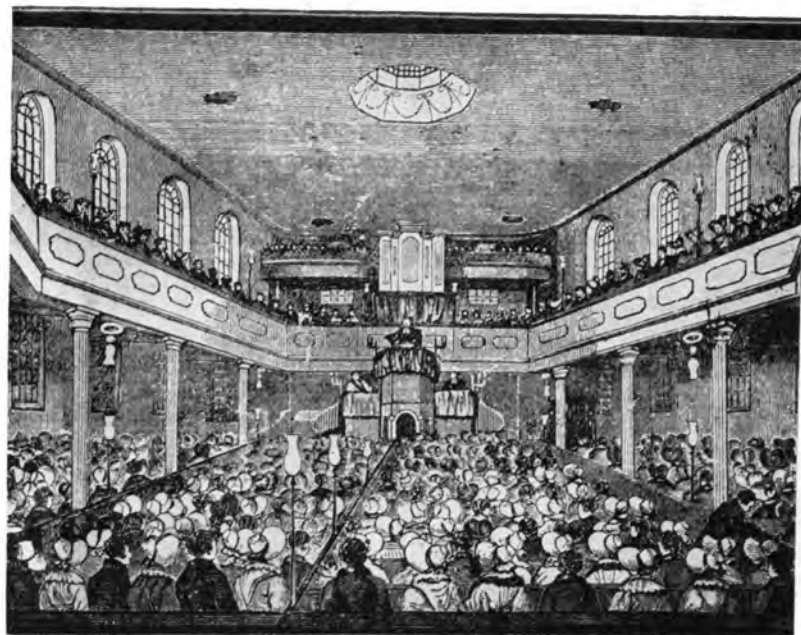
⁴ It first appeared as a series of letters in the *Gospel Magazine* for 1776—79.

have been much earlier acknowledged, but for a tour through the north-east counties, whence I returned to London but last night. This evening or to-morrow I design to set off for South Wales, on a short visit to dear Lady Huntingdon, after which I intend to see Broad Hembury for ten days or a fortnight.

“ The *Gospel Magazine*, concerning which you write, has been under my sole management from last January, inclusive. The present month of August, indeed, I have devolved on my good friend, Mr. Ryland, of Northampton, that I might have liberty to make any rural excursions, without impedimenta. Rest assured, dear Sir, that while I have the conducting of that publication, we shall be happy to have it honoured and enriched by your valuable correspondence. . . . I am very happy to find that the good Spirit of our God has directed your thoughts so greatly and so deeply to the grand Article of Predestination; the denial of which is neither more nor less than absolute and essential atheism: no grace, no happiness, no holiness, no salvation, without it. The Lord enable us to extract more and more honey from this precious rock; and may its heavenly streams replenish, enrich, fertilise, and adorn our conversation with increasing redundancy to the perfect day! Free will, left to itself, cannot fail of leading its wretched possessors to hell. Free grace alone can bring lost sinners to heaven. I am, dear



MEMORIAL TABLET
IN WHITEFIELD'S TABERNACLE, TOTTENHAM
COURT ROAD, LONDON.



ORANGE STREET CHAPEL (INTERIOR) IN TOPLADY'S DAY.

Sir, with earnest prayers for your present and eternal welfare, your affectionate friend and humble servant in Christ Jesus,

" AUGUSTUS TOPLADY.

" My kind salutations wait on our valuable friend, Mr. Pitts. You will please to direct your future favours for the Magazine to Messrs. Vallance & Simmonds, No. 120 Cheapside, London."

The management of the *Gospel Magazine*, which Toplady had temporarily shifted on to the shoulders of Ryland, he never again resumed, the cause of the change being, no doubt, his ill-health. He was succeeded by the Rev. Erasmus Middleton.¹

¹ In 1783 the *Gospel Magazine* ceased to exist, and the *New Spiritual Magazine* took its place. In 1796, the *Gospel Magazine* was revived by Toplady's friend, Mr. Walter Row, who continued the management of it till his death in 1838. For long it was conducted by the late Rev. Dr. Doudney. The present Editor is the Rev. James Ormiston, of Bristol.

CHAPTER XIV

AUGUST, 1776—17TH MARCH, 1777

FRIENDSHIP WITH LADY HUNTINGDON

On August 20th, Toplady set out, as he had planned, for South Wales, in order to take part in the Anniversary Celebrations in connection with Lady Huntingdon's College at Trevecca. On the way the coach broke down, though providentially no one was injured; but Toplady experienced a little later a still more signal deliverance. Speaking of the proceedings at Trevecca, he says, "The congregation on Anniversary Day was so large that the chapel would not have contained a fourth part of the people; who were supposed to amount to three thousand. . . . A scaffold was erected at one end of the College Court, on which a bookstand was placed, by way of pulpit; and from thence six or seven of us preached, successively, to one of the most attentive, and most lively congregations I ever beheld. When it came to my turn to preach, I advanced to the front; and had not gone more than half through my prayer before sermon, when the scaffold suddenly fell in. As I stood very near the highest step (and the steps did not fall with the rest) Providence enabled me to

38. At
Trevecca.
24 Aug., 1776.

keep on my feet. About forty ministers were on the scaffold when it broke down. Dear Mr. Shirley¹ fell undermost of all. No one, however, was seriously hurt, and the congregation, though greatly alarmed, had the prudence not to throw themselves into outward disorder."

Toplady seems also to have carried out his idea of paying a visit to Broad Hembury. In any case, on 18th September he was at Bath, where he saw Mrs. Macaulay and her Dr. Wilson, whose monomania had become more pronounced than ever. Dr. Wilson showed him "an entire female skull," of which he gave the history. It had been acquired, he said, by a young gentleman "whose sensual propensities were extremely violent." Every morning for a considerable time, the gentleman used to spend some minutes in surveying this skull before he went out; from an expectation that the sight of so unpleasing an object would operate as an antidote against his besetting sin. But all in vain; "and finding that the skull did him no service," added Dr. Wilson, "he presented it to me. Afterwards, however, it pleased God to convert the gentleman; and vital grace did that for him which a dead skull was unable to affect."

One wonders whether Wilson himself sometimes gazed on the skull in the hopes that it would divert *his* mind, not exactly from sin (for he has

¹ The Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley. See *Life of Countess of Huntingdon*, 2, p. 122. Toplady's Works 3, p. 176; 4, p. 446.

never been charged with regarding Mrs. Macaulay from the point of view that the "young gentleman" regarded the sex), but from gross folly. If he did, it failed him just as it had failed "the young gentleman;" but, in any case, he made a present of it to Toplady.

From fighting Sellon the Baker, Toplady turned to engage Sellon the Pluralist. In the autumn of 1776, the attention of Lady Huntingdon was drawn to a large building in Spafields, then known as the Pantheon, a place of amusement; and she straightway consulted Toplady on the advisability of acquiring it. After several letters had passed on the subject, Toplady invited a number of clergymen, and others who were interested in the project, to meet him in his study at Knightsbridge—among them being the Hon. and Rev. Walter Shirley, the Rev. Anthony Crole, minister of Pinner's Hall, and Mr. David Parker. The scheme was fully discussed, but, owing to numerous difficulties in the way, it was finally abandoned. The Pantheon, however, became a place of worship all the same; for it was acquired for that purpose by the united efforts of a number of other Christian gentlemen; and the opening sermon was preached on 5th July, 1777, by the Rev. John Ryland.

There were many shame-faced clergymen in England in those days, but none baser than the

39. Another
Sellon.
30 Oct., 1776.

coarse, wealthy, and avaricious William Sellon, Vicar of St. James's, Clerkenwell, who stretched out his long, greedy tentacles in all directions, with the result that every fat thing within clutch fell to his possession. How he managed it all, nobody knows. You read in the papers that Sellon had got something else, and in the following week that he had once more been successful. Had he stopped short at simony, his narrow, cankered, and dirty soul would have in due course gone to its own place, and his name would have been forgotten by now, or preserved only by some lying epitaph. He was not satisfied, however, with abstaining, himself, from preaching the Gospel, he must needs try to hinder others from preaching it. Owing to his machinations, the clergy were shut out of the Pantheon; and he pursued his advantages so skilfully that at last he succeeded in closing the chapel. While affairs were in this posture Lady Huntingdon conferred with Lord Dartmouth, "John Thornton, the Great," and other Evangelicals; and a little later they acquired the building, and re-opened it. Sellon's persecution of the clergy who took duty there was, however, so bitter that they were at last obliged to secede from the Church.

Thenceforward, Spafields Chapel, as the building was re-named, was one of the most flourishing of Lady Huntingdon's causes—and Sellon, galled to the very quick, had nothing more

to do except impotently to grind his teeth, bite his nails, and gird at the men who were doing the work which he had been paid to do, and which, had he been true to his trust, he would himself have been doing.' As Whitefield used to say, "Satan always overshoots his mark."

In the meantime, disconcerting news reached Toplady from Bath. He learnt that Mrs. Macaulay was passing her life in a vortex of folly. Dress and trivial pleasures all but monopolised her thoughts. With her, to borrow the words of a Bath rhymer, it was

40. *The Painted Lady.*
2 April, 1777.

"Robing and curling and adorning,
From noon to night, from night to morning."

Wilson's infatuation for her had arrived at so great a height that he was led to place at her disposal his house, 2 Alfred Place, and to provide her with a library, servants, and every luxury and splendour that she could desire. He outdid even himself. She was his goddess, he her high priest. His attitude towards her was copied by other flatterers, and what these flatterers chose to say of her, the "parking and masquerading" people of Bath religiously echoed. They had prostrated themselves before a King Richard,² and now they lay prone before a Queen Catherine, only they Latinised her name into Catharina. As such, her portrait, within a wreath of oak leaves, appeared in the print shops, and on medals. She was the female Brutus. She

¹ See *Life of Lady Huntingdon*, 2, p. 312.

² Nash.

was the toast of every essenced "jessamy" and corseted "macaroni," and when she "took the air" hundreds of eyes were directed upon her from window and balcony. She accepted all the adulation as her right. The sphinx was not more solitary, more dignified, or more composed. Or so it seemed to the world of Bath. But Mrs. Macaulay had almost reached the age of forty-four. Her beauty was beginning to wane, and instead of accepting gracefully the changing condition of things, she, following some malignant impulse, took precisely the most foolish course possible—she set out for Paris. She returned—it was the Spring of 1777—but so bedizened that even her most intimate acquaintances hardly knew her. The Muse of History, fresh from the hands of the Parisian friseur, and peering out of a wonderful arrangement of whalebone, rouge, enamel, and pomatum,¹ seemed like anything rather than the Muse of History—while she looked even less like Brutus; and John Wilkes, who regularly drank the waters, and hung persistently about Dr. Wilson in the hope of securing for his daughter an interest in Dr. Wilson's will, ungallantly described "the fair historian" as "painted up to the eyes," and looking as "rotten as an old Catherine pear." Dr. Johnson, however, wittily excused her, observing that it was better that she should redden her

¹ Toplady ridicules "Monsieur le Puff," of Paris, and the ladies who submitted themselves to him, in *A Sketch of Modern Female Education*, Works 4, p. 466.

own cheeks than blacken the characters of other people—an allusion to the sallies in her History against some of Johnson's heroes. In Wilson's eyes, however, she remained still untarnished. She was still perfection—the British Aspasia—and his infatuation carried him almost daily to new absurdities; the people of Bath, however, being no very great distance behind him. On 2nd April, 1777, Mrs. Macaulay arrived at her forty-fourth birthday. “Wednesday,” said the newspapers, “being the birthday of this celebrated lady, was ushered in by ringing of bells and other public demonstrations of the general joy felt for an event so pleasing to the true friends of literature and liberty in these kingdoms. An elegant entertainment was prepared at Alfred House in the evening for a numerous and brilliant company. Mrs. Macaulay, very elegantly dressed, was seated in a conspicuous, elevated situation in front of the company.” After six fulsome odes to her, written in celebration of the event, had been read to her by as many sentimental and brainless gentlemen of Bath, James Graham: (in his white suit and black stockings), who regarded the whole ceremony as a splendid advertisement for himself, delivered a grandiose and characteristic address, in which he did not omit to proclaim, for the nine hundredth and ninety-ninth time, that it was he who had restored the “fair historian” to health. At the close, “that honour to the Church and to human

nature, the pious, learned and patriotic Dr. Wilson," advanced, and presented to Mrs. Macaulay a large and curious antique gold medal, which "he accompanied with a speech strongly expressive of her merit, and of his friendship and veneration." After that, the lady who owned "the fair hand" that guided "the first and most eloquent pen in the universe," and who had "sustained her proper character with that united dignity, ease, and true politeness for which she was so eminently distinguished," went, it is to be supposed, serenely to bed, while those of the company who had any sense of humour must, like the Arabian Nights' people after some unusually facetious story, have laughed till they fell backwards.

Toplady, who still had a sincere regard for his old friend, heard of these proceedings with sorrow and indignation. "The accounts," he writes to Dr. Baker, "of the extravagant and ridiculous manner in which Mrs. Macaulay's birthday was celebrated at Bath gave me extreme disgust, and have contributed to reduce my opinion of her magnanimity and good sense. Such contemptible vanity and such childish affectation of mock majesty would have disgraced a much inferior understanding, and have sunk even the meanest character lower by many degrees. If I live to see her again I will rally her handsomely." Toplady may also have had Mrs. Macaulay in mind when he wrote the severe remarks on Self-Idolatry

which appear in his *Dissertation Concerning the Sensible Qualities of Matter*.¹

Amazing as had been Wilson's infatuation, it did not reach its height till the autumn of 1777, when it went even to the length of causing a statue² of her to be made and placed in one of his London churches. "Yesterday,"³ ran the paragraph in the newspapers, "was completed, finished, and erected in a marble niche or recess properly decorated, in the chancel of St. Stephen, Walbrook, London, a superb white marble statue, in honour of that celebrated lady, Mrs. Macaulay, in the character of History, in a singular easy and pleasing antique style, and judged to be a good likeness, pen in right hand, scroll in left. She leans on five volumes of the History of England." Below the statue was a white marble tablet, with the inscription in capital letters: "You speak of Mrs. Macaulay; she is a kind of prodigy! I revere her abilities; I cannot bear to hear her name sarcastically mentioned; I would have her taste the exalted pleasure of universal applause; I would have statues erected to her memory; and once in every age I could wish such a woman to appear, as a proof that genius is not confined to sex; but at the same time—you will pardon me—we want no more than one Mrs. Macaulay."⁴ Dr. Wilson,

¹ Works 6, p. 132.

² By I. F. Moore.

³ It was erected 8th September, 1777.

⁴ It is quoted as having been taken from "*Late Lord Lyttelton's Letters to Mrs. Peach*," p. 114.

indeed, had ceased to belong to himself; he had become, and he was customarily spoken of as, "Mrs. Macaulay's Dr. Wilson."

The bat-eyed churchwardens of St. Stephen's, not seeing anything to wonder at in Mrs. Macaulay's beauty, either of body or mind, and not being in love with her, were naturally exasperated at their Vicar's action, and at a meeting of the Vestry on 26th November, a letter was written to him, desiring that he would remove the monument. As he made no reply, they threatened to commence a suit against him,¹ but Wilson continued in his stubbornness, and as, apparently, he was within his rights, no further action was for the time being taken.

In December, 1777, we find Toplady delivering himself over to the study of Andrew Baxter's works,² and particularly the *Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*. With a view to increasing his knowledge of that author, he wrote, on December 30th, to John Wilkes, who had been one of Baxter's most devoted friends. "The favour which I presume to solicit," said Toplady, "is that you would be so obliging as to communicate to me such leading particulars as you may recollect concerning a late friend of yours, who was one of the greatest, and yet (by a fate peculiarly strange) one of the

¹ Vestry Minute Book of St. Stephen's, Walbrook. *Notes and Queries*, February 5th and 19th, 1910, articles by Mr. Robert Pierpoint, and *War-rington Guardian*, March 5th and 12th, 1910.

² Andrew Baxter (1687—1750).

obscurest men, whom this island ever produced—I mean Mr. Baxter, the metaphysician.”¹ Another book that deeply interested Toplady at this time was a small volume of sermons entitled *The Great Assize* (1618), by Samuel Smith, of Prittlewell, which he seems to have read in his vestry at Orange Street, for on the fly-leaf he wrote, “Orange Street Chapel. Augustus Toplady. These old sermons are pregnant with eloquent truth.”²

During the early years of Toplady’s ministry, all fashionable London had flocked to hear the modish and papilionaceous Dr. Dodd. Dodd’s predilections had at first been evangelical; but on rising in the world, he cast aside the doctrines of Free Grace, and preached a fancy, vamped-up sort of religion which he thought would be more acceptable to his fashionable hearers. The approaches to his church were blocked with coaches and chariots. The mincing coquette, the languishing court beauty, the civet-scented beau even adored him. The darling of polite society—of the *bon ton*, to use the expression of the day—he no longer recognised his old friends when he met them in the street. Lest he should still be suspected of holding the unfashionable doctrines of Free Grace, he preached

¹ Works 6, p. 289. John Ryland spoke of Baxter with equal enthusiasm. He says, “Of all the philosophical writers I ever read, no man equals the most sagacious and devout Mr. Andrew Baxter. I detest the ingratitude of the present age for paying no attention to his memory.” *Contemplations* 1, p. 392.

² The volume is now in the possession of Mr. W. C. Parkinson, of Carleton House, Hornsey, N.

a sermon against them and printed it. Fear of man and hunger for preferment stifled all his better feelings. For a while success rewarded his apostasy. He obtained titles, livings, a prebend; he was appointed tutor to Philip Stanhope,¹ heir of the Earl of Chesterfield; he became King's Chaplain,² and all but obtained a bishopric. His expensive tastes and his extravagance, however, had brought him into debt; and in order to free himself he endeavoured by bribery to obtain the fat living of St. George's, Hanover Square. The attempt gave him a flaming notoriety, and he was disgraced.³ As time went on, he became more and more involved in debt, and one day, unsuspecting of the fearful gulph that yawned for him, he took the mad step of forging the name of Lord Chesterfield, his old pupil, to a bond for £4,200. "How powerful is Satan," commented John Newton, "when the soul is once estranged." The crime was discovered almost as soon as it had been committed. The penalty was death. John Wesley, John Thornton, Dr. Johnson, and other persons of influence tried their utmost for him; and Johnson wrote for the unhappy man a final letter to the king. But it was ineffectual. Dodd, in prison, endeavoured to drive away the sickening thoughts that crowded into his mind by annotating Shake-

¹ Born 1755. Not to be confused with Philip Stanhope, born 1732 (natural son of the third Lord Chesterfield), to whom were written the famous Letters.

² In 1763.

³ 1774.

speare, who had for years been one of his enthusiasms. Romaine and other divines visited the prisoner, and pressed upon him godly counsel. Toplady added weight to their efforts by means of a letter. He urged Dodd "not to depart this world" without repaying as much as possible of a debt that had brought intense suffering upon a lady who had confided in him. "I say," continued Toplady, "before you depart this world. For it is but too indubitable that there is not a single ray of hope, from any one quarter whatsoever, of your avoiding the utmost effect of the terrible sentence which impends. Let me, therefore, importune you, for God's sake, and for your own, to devote the remainder of your time to more important employ than that of writing notes on Shakespeare. Indeed and indeed, your situation is such as should confine your attention to objects of infinitely greater moment. The Searcher of hearts knows that I thus plainly address you from motives of absolute humanity, and from an anxious solicitude for your everlasting welfare." Lady Huntingdon¹ also wrote an appropriate letter to the doomed man. On 27th July, Dodd, who had "entirely and calmly given himself up to the will of God,"² was hanged at Tyburn. All Christendom shuddered. No career in the century was more often drawn upon to point a moral. Often

¹ See *Gospel Magazine*, 1777, p. 298.

² See *Wesley's Journal*, Dent's ed. 4., p. 104.

and often came from the pulpit the admonition, "Remember Dr. Dodd!" just as, in old time, people had been bidden to "Remember Lot's wife!"

CHAPTER XV

THE YEAR 1778

As the new year advanced, Toplady became weaker and weaker. But he managed to find time, amid his own trials, to sympathise with the sufferings of others. On February 1st he received the following letter from William Abington, who had been a friend of Joseph Hart, the hymn-writer¹ :—

42. The last
Journey to
Broad
Hembury.

“ Sunday Even^g.,

“ Beaufort Buildings, Strand.

“ *Feb*. 1st, 1778.

“ Dear Sir,—Being again under the afflicting hand of God, by which I am in great measure deprived of bodily strength by a violent relaxation of nerves, I beg the favour to be privileged with an interest in your private as well as congregational prayers; that out of this eater may come forth meat, and out of this strong trial the sweet consolations of God’s Spirit, and a greater conformity to His image.

“ Your friend and servant under the cross,

“ W. ABINGTON.”

After reading the letter, Toplady, who doubtless complied with Abington’s request, determined to

¹ See references to Abington in the *Life of Joseph Hart* (in this series), pp. 78 and 90.

make it the subject of a sermon ; and turning the letter upside down, he wrote on it his text, 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3, "Ye are our epistle," &c., and used it for his notes. Thus by holding the paper one way you can read Abington's letter, and by turning it about, the notes of Toplady's sermon, which was preached at Orange Street on the following Sunday, February 8th.

Another friend to whom he at this time administered comfort was Mr. Samuel Wallis,¹ who had met with an accident. "Do not suppose," he says, "that God is less your friend than He was because it was His pleasure that you should break your leg. . . . Do not think that His angels were off their watch, or slept upon their posts, because they did not so bear you up in their hands as to prevent the calamity under which you labour. They were all attention at the very time, and your fall, together with its effects, was an event which their God and yours gave them express commission not to hinder. Do not surmise that I am not deeply affected by what has befallen you, because I argue in the above manner. The Lord knows I sympathise with you most tenderly ; and were it possible should have rejoiced to lessen your pains by bearing half of them myself."

The death of his dear friend, Mr. George Flower, on February 20th, led him to write to the widow : "You and yours are deeply on my heart before the

¹ 1st February, 1778. Works, Vol. 1, p. 95.

mercy-seat. . . . That your husband's God is and will be your God even to the end, and without end, I believe with the fullest assurance. May He likewise be the God of your offspring! May they ever tread in the religious footsteps of their deservedly honoured father; and never forget that the same blessed and triumphant consolations which enlivened his last hours, will also felicitate their lives and brighten their deaths, if effectual grace render them partakers of like precious faith with him in the righteousness of our God and Saviour."

As the weeks went on, Toplady could see, owing to the alarming progress of his malady, that his own life was fast drawing to a period. "I am much wasted," he wrote to Lady Huntingdon, "but very cheerful, and very easy, and very happy, because I have the King's presence, and because His sweet Spirit assures me that my anchor is cast within the veil." On the 28th, he made his will. After committing his soul into the hands of Almighty God; declaring that he had not the least doubt of his election, justification, and eternal happiness through the merits of Jesus Christ; and rendering the deepest, the most solemn and most ardent thanks to the most adorable Trinity for Their eternal, unmerited, irreversible and inexhaustible love to him as a sinner; he directed that his funeral should be conducted with as little ceremony as possible, and that his body should be

buried to the depth of nine feet at the very least—twelve feet should the nature of the soil allow. He left all his property to William Hussey,¹ with the exception of a hundred guineas, which he willed to Elizabeth Sterling in consideration of the “long and faithful services” rendered by her to his late “dear and honoured mother of ever loved and revered memory.”

This done, he set out for Broad Hembury, in order to sell all his effects there. He broke his journey at Salisbury, where he stayed with his old friend, Dr. Baker. From Salisbury he wrote to Mr. Hussey: “God’s good providence brought me hither yesterday, early in the afternoon, quite unfatigued by my journey, and rejoicing in spirit before Him. . . . My mind is quite at rest. All my affairs respecting both this world and a better are completely settled. My salvation was provided for, in the covenant of grace, from all eternity, and sealed by the finished redemption of my adorable Saviour. . . . God only can tell how deeply my Christian friends and the dear people at Orange Street dwell upon my heart.” He wrote in similar strain, and on the same day, to a lady friend at Gloucester.² “I trust,” he says to her, “that whene’er the angel of death knocks at my door I shall have no more to do than to sing

¹ Mrs. Hussey divided Toplady’s plate between her god-daughters, Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Savage. Part of it is now in the possession of Mrs. Johnson’s grandson, Mr. C. H. Willis Johnson, of Westminster.

² Mrs. B——, 11th March, 1778.

my *Nunc Dimittis*, step into the chariot, and make directly for the kingdom of God." He arrived at Broad Hembury on March 17th, and after concluding his business there he paid visits to his friends in various parts of the country.

Apparently he stayed a few days with Ryland at Northampton. In any case, one afternoon that spring, he and Ryland were at Newport Pagnell together. On the

43. At
Newport
Pagnell.

same day, as it happened, the Rev. John Newton had ridden over from Olney in order to spend an hour with his friend, the Rev. William Bull. As he and Bull were seated together in Bull's parlour, enjoying an after-dinner pipe, they were startled by a thundering knock at the door, and then in rushed Ryland, shouting as he entered, "If you wish to see Mr. Toplady, you must go immediately with me to the Swan. He is on his way home to London, and cannot live long."

The two friends immediately knocked the ashes out of their pipes, and hurried to the inn, where, in an upper room, they found Toplady emaciated with disease, and with the symptoms of speedy death stamped on every feature. While the four ministers were earnestly talking, a great noise roared up from the street—the scuffling, shouting

¹ Toplady was familiar with Newton's works, and citations from them appear in his common-place book. See Works 4, p. 423, &c. Newton's *Review of Ecclesiastical History* was indebted to Toplady. See Letter of Toplady to Newton, 21st Dec., 1769—Bull's *John Newton*, p. 169. It will be remembered, too, that Toplady used two of Newton's hymns in his *Psalms and Hymns*.

and swearing of men and boys, and the barking of dogs; and on looking out of the window they saw that it was occasioned by a bull-baiting which was proceeding just below them.

Moved by the cruelty of the scene, Toplady exclaimed, "Who could bear to see that sight if there were not to be some compensation for these poor suffering animals in a future state?"

"I certainly hope," said Bull, "that all the Bulls will go to heaven; but do you think this will be the case with all the animal creation?"

"Yes," replied Toplady, with great emphasis, "all, all!"

By April 18th, Toplady was back in Town, and on the 19th, Easter Sunday, he preached again in Orange Street, taking as his text Isaiah xxvi. 19. But he looked ill and worn, and his hoarseness was so great that he was unable to finish his sermon. On each of the four succeeding Sundays he occupied his pulpit; and his devoted and affectionate people, seeing death in his wasted face, listened each time as if it were to be the last.

One Sunday evening, he was so feeble that he would have been unable to ascend the pulpit stairs had not Dr. Gifford and the Rev. John Ryland come forward to assist him. He preached from Genesis vii. 16,¹ "The Lord shut him in," and among his auditory were the Countess of Hunting-

44 John
Barclay.
Toplady's
last Appearance
at
Orange St.
4 June, 1778.

¹ See *Gospel Magazine*, 1823, p. 527.

don, Lady Anne Erskine, the Honourable Thomas Erskine, the Earl of Dartmouth, Sir Joshua Reynolds, David Garrick, Walter Row,¹ Dr. William Kenrick,² the Rev. John Barclay,³ founder of the sect of Bereans or Barclayites, and Mr. Brooksbank, a lay preacher at the Moorfields Tabernacle. After the service, Barclay and his friend Brooksbank begged an interview with Toplady; and Toplady, though in a state of extreme exhaustion, invited them and Walter Row into the vestry. The subject started by Barclay was the Assurance of Faith, and he strenuously asserted that real faith always appeared in meridian brightness, unclouded, disentangled from all doubts and fears. He was warm and impetuous in his manner, and endeavoured to carry all before him by rapidity of utterance.

Toplady, smiling, said, "My dear Sir, there are dwarfs as well as giants in God's family. I was lately told of a person who is now in the 101st year of his age, and yet is a new-born babe, converted six or seven months ago. Surely you would not feed an infant with the same food as one of mature age! Respecting doubts and fears, there

¹ Who became Toplady's literary executor and biographer, and for many years conducted the *Gospel Magazine*.

² William Kenrick, LL.D. (1720—1779). Founder in 1775 of the *London Review*. Miscellaneous writer. After preaching for several years at Edinburgh, he removed to London, where he preached in two chapels—one being Dudley Court, St. Giles', subsequently an episcopalian chapel-at-ease to St. Pancras Church, and the other the chapel in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square. The latter, which resembled a Noah's Ark, was used some years later by William Huntington.

³ John Barclay (1734—1798). Several columns are devoted to him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

are children heirs of a great estate, who have no knowledge thereof, but their ignorance does not disannul their title."

In the middle of May, Toplady's physician prevailed upon him to keep to his room ; but a little later the news reached him that a report was circulating to the effect that he had renounced those principles which it had been his life's work to proclaim. He attributed the origin of the calumny to Wesley, or one of Wesley's followers. The old fire burnt within him, and he straightway resolved, let the consequences be what they might, to deny the report with his own lips, and in public. His physician vainly implored him to abandon the idea, declaring that he would probably die in the execution of it. "I would rather," replied Toplady with firmness, "die in the harness than in the stall."

And so, on Sunday morning, June 14th, he had his poor emaciated body, in which still dwelt an ardent and unconquerable soul, conveyed to Orange Street. The sermon was preached by Dr. Illingworth, and when it was over Toplady, to the utter astonishment of the people, who had never expected to see him or hear his voice again, ascended the pulpit. He gave out the text, 2 Pet. i. 13, 14, "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance ; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus

Christ hath shewed me." Had the people seen an apparition they could scarcely have been more agitated. But if it was a startling sight, it was also a painful sight, for Toplady could scarcely support himself in the pulpit, and his delivery was hindered by a hectic cough and laborious breathing.¹ Death himself seemed to be in the pulpit. When he spoke of his illness, his consolations, and his readiness to depart, the people were moved to tears, and the feeling that they could not possibly hear him again led them to lay up in their hearts every word that he uttered. Then in a stern voice he informed them of the special reason that had led him to leave a sick-bed—a death-bed—in order to appear once more among them. "A wicked and scandalous report," he said, "has been diffused by the followers of Mr. John Wesley, purporting that I have changed some of my religious sentiments, especially such of them as relate more immediately to the doctrines of grace. It has further been circulated that during my present long and severe illness, I expressed a strong desire of seeing Mr. John Wesley before I die, and revoking some particulars relative to him which occur in my writings. Now I do publicly and most solemnly aver that I have not, nor ever had, any such intention or desire; and that I most sincerely hope my last hours will be much better employed than in con-

¹ See *Gospel Advocate*, i., p. 68.

versing with such a man. Indeed, so certain and so satisfied am I of the truth of all that I have ever written, that were I now sitting up in my dying bed, with a pen and ink in my hand, and all the religious and controversial writings I ever published (more especially those relating to Mr. John Wesley and the Arminian controversy), whether respecting facts or doctrines, could at once be displayed to my view, I should not strike out a single line relative to him or them." Then casting his eyes round the building, he noticed among the congregation his friends Ryland and Gifford. "I perceive," he said, "some of my elder brethren in the ministry of another denomination present. The Lord's Supper is to be administered this morning, and I invite them to come and join with us in commemorating the dying love of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we get to heaven, it will not be known which particular fold we belonged to here. There will then be no mark of distinction. We shall mingle our voices together in one united chorus of praise and thanksgiving. Then why not imitate the celestial company here, and have as much as possible of heaven below, before we arrive at that blissful abode?"

The incident was a deeply affecting one. Many hearts were touched, many eyes welled with tears. The invitation, so heartily given, was as willingly accepted. One who was present at this loving sacrament said of Toplady: "His unbounded con-

fidence in the fulness of God, and his joy and rejoicing in Christ Jesus, I have not words to describe. He appeared more like an inhabitant from heaven than a mortal man encumbered with disease and pain."¹ A week later, Toplady's address, in so far as it related to the calumnious report, appeared in the form of a pamphlet, with the title, *The Rev. Mr. Toplady's Dying Avowal of his Religious Sentiments.*²

Probably the last hymn written by Toplady was that beautiful composition commencing :
 45. Toplady's Death Song.

“ When langour and disease invade
 This trembling house of clay,
 'Tis sweet to look beyond the cage,
 And long to fly away.”

As left by Toplady, it consisted of fifteen stanzas of four lines each. The greater portion of it was first published in Lady Huntingdon's collection of Hymns, in 1780,³ that is to say, two years after Toplady's death. In the *Gospel Magazine*, October, 1796 (p. 152), appeared the whole of the fifteen stanzas, along with the note, “ This hymn was written for the late Countess of Huntingdon, at her request, when in illness, by the Rev. Mr. Toplady, and kindly given to the publisher as it originally stood, by the Right Hon. Anne Erskine.”

The date of its composition, then, is unknown,

¹ *Gospel Magazine*, Toplady Number, p. 347.

² Dated 22nd July, 1778.

³ As two hymns. No. 238, stanzas 1 to 7 and stanza 14; and No. 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 15.

but as nearly all Toplady's best hymns—"Deathless Principle" being one of the exceptions—appeared in his lifetime, we may safely accept the suggestion of a recent writer,¹ and regard it as Toplady's "Death Song." It may have been written at the Countess's request all the same; but it must have been written by a man whose own body had been racked with suffering. There is a dying beauty about it—the violets, ambers, carmines, and other gorgeous colourings of autumn with its dying leaves; but just as, under the leaves that tremble to their fall there are buds that will burgeon in the spring, so, in Toplady's death song, all is hope and cheerfulness amid the universal decay. The sentiments of this poem comport perfectly, as we shall see, with those uttered by Toplady to his friends during his last few weeks on earth. "It is sweet," he says in the poem, "to look upward to the place where Jesus pleads above."

"Sweet to reflect how grace divine
My sins on Jesus laid;
Sweet to remember that His blood
My debt of suffering paid.

"Sweet to rejoice in lively hope,
That when my change shall come,
Angels will hover round my bed,
And waft my spirit home.

"Then shall my disimprisoned soul
Behold Him and adore;
Be with His likeness satisfied,
And grieve and sin no more.

¹ In the *Earthen Vessel*, October, 1909.

“ If such the views which grace unfolds,
Weak as it is below,
What raptures must the Church above
In Jesus' presence know ! ”

The whole of this beautiful and touching poem—one of the finest efforts of Toplady's muse—should be religiously read. It endears one, perhaps more than anything else that he wrote, to his sweet personality; and we may certainly say of Toplady what Toplady himself said of Zanchy: “Of his mind, his writings present us with the loveliest image.”¹

Although “When langour and disease invade” may safely be called his last completed hymn, it was not his last attempted hymn, for among the manuscripts in my possession is an unfinished hymn of Toplady's, which seems to bring us nearer to him than anything else he has left. It reveals to us precisely how he used to work. He first wrote the whole in the rough, leaving spaces for the lines which, either owing to the unsuitability of rhymes or for some other cause, he was unable at the moment to fill, and he then drew a horizontal line under every verse. Some of the verses are complete as to form, but all except one would certainly have been revised, if Toplady had lived. This verse, written while his mind was recalling “the blessed year 1758,” is one with which it may be assumed even a Toplady would have been satisfied. It runs :

¹ Works 5, p. 182.

"Can I forget ye voice of Love yt told me I was Thine?

Revolving ☉s mt first stand still, and suns forget to shine."

It may be noticed that Toplady frequently, in his sermons and hymns, used "ye" for "the," "yt" for "that," "mt" for "might," and "☉" for "world," and that he occasionally favoured such abbreviations as "X" for "Christ," and "ym" for "them." Most persons who write verse are in the habit, when thoughts are laggard or rhymes refractory, of scribbling on the paper, drawing little figures, nibbling their finger nails, or performing some other involuntary act. Toplady's habit was to draw monograms, and so we see on this MS. his initials, A. M. T., intertwined in various ways and scattered unmeaningly all over the paper.

There is an element of pathos in the fact that while Toplady lay ill at Knightsbridge, his old antagonist, the Rev. William Fletcher, of Madeley, was prostrated by a painful disease, which seemed likely to end fatally. Henry Venn, who met him at Bath, said to him, "You have said many things in the heat of controversy that shocked me."

"Give my love," said poor Fletcher, "to all my Calvinistic brethren, and tell them that I beg their pardon for the asperity with which I have written."

There is reason, too, to believe that several of the other leaders in the great controversy regretted, in their declining years, the violence that had characterised their earlier writings; and certainly there was in the after days of Fletcher, whom it pleased God to raise from his sick bed,

and to give seven more years,¹ a mellowness and a charity that had been absent before his illness.

Among those who visited Toplady during his last sickness were John Ryland, Dr. Gifford, William Abington, James Matthews the bookseller,² Thomas Burgess, Mr. and Mrs. William Hussey, and Walter Row. He was nursed by his mother's faithful old servant, Elizabeth Sterling. Between Toplady and Rowland Hill there had been, as we have noticed,³ some unpleasantness; and when Hill called, Toplady sent word down, "I am very ill, and I cannot see you; but I have forgiven you, and I send you my love."

Toplady next resolved to destroy all his manuscripts, and he and Hussey spent two whole days committing them to the flames. Only a bundle of sermons, a number of articles of a miscellaneous character, and a few letters, remained when Ryland and Dr. Gifford happened to call. They expressed their sorrow on account of the procedure, and begged that the rest might be preserved. With reluctance, Toplady gave a partial consent, and turning to Hussey he said, "My dear friend, you are at liberty to do whatever you please with them."⁴

Among the MSS. destroyed were, we are told,

¹ He died in 1785.

² Of No. 18 Strand. Matthews the comedian was his son.

³ Chapter 8, p. 117.

⁴ They are now in the possession of the writer.

“many works of taste and genius, including a very voluminous History of England, nearly completed.” Some of the items rescued were incorporated by Mr. Row in his edition of Toplady’s works published in 1795. Some were published by Mr. Row in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, and citations from others will be found in the pages of the present work.

Dr. Gifford having expressed the hope that Toplady would recover, Toplady said, “I believe God never gave such manifestations of His love to any creature, and suffered him to live.” To another friend he said, “To a person interested in the salvation of Christ, sickness is no disease, pain no affliction, death no dissolution.”¹

During the whole of his illness, indeed, Toplady enjoyed “an almost uninterrupted sunshine of God’s countenance.” “I am the happiest man in the world,” he said to Matthews.²

“Do you always enjoy such great manifestations?” enquired another friend.

“I cannot say,” observed Toplady, “that there are no intermissions; if there had not been, my consolations would have been more than I could have supported.”

There are times, indeed, when God all but overpowers us with His bounties. They pour upon us till they well-nigh overwhelm us, and we are con-

¹ Works 1, p. 128.

² Letter of Matthews to Rowland Hill, 17th August, 1778. Sydney’s *Life of Rowland Hill*, p. 134.

strained to cry, "Stay Thy hand, O Lord!" An experience of this kind had Toplady in his closing hours.

Often he observed, "Oh what a day of sunshine has this been!" He said that the 8th chapter of Romans, the 33rd and six following verses, were the joy of his soul. "Who," he asked the friends who stood round, "can fathom the joys of the third heaven?" and then he spoke of the ministrations of angels to God's saints, adding, "What can be the reason that the ministers of the gospel speak so little upon it?"

After praising God in that he continued to have the use of his faculties, he exclaimed, "What is all this to His presence and the shining of His love to my soul?"

The remark of his medical attendant, Mr. Evans, "The Church of Christ would sustain a great loss by your death at this particular juncture," put Toplady almost in an agony, for it always pained him when anyone seemed to confer on him "any part of the honour that is due to Christ alone."

"No," he exclaimed, "by my death? No. Jesus Christ can, and will by proper instruments defend His own truths. And with regard to what little I have been enabled to do in this way: not to me, not to me, but to His own name, and to that only, be the glory."

At another time he was so affected with a sense

¹ *Gospel Magazine*, 1820.

of God's everlasting love to his soul that he could not refrain from bursting into tears ; and he more than once observed that he had not had for near two years past the least shadow of a doubt respecting his eternal salvation. Once when Mr. Evans felt his pulse, he said, "What do you think of it?"

"Your heart and arteries," was the reply, "evidently beat almost every day weaker and weaker."

"Why, that is a good sign," said Toplady, smiling, "that my death is fast approaching ; and blessed be God, I can add that my heart beats every day stronger and stronger for glory !"

A little later Mr. Evans, who found him "sitting up in his armchair," and scarce able to move or speak, addressed him softly, and said, "Do your consolations continue to abound as they have hitherto done ?"

"Oh, my dear Sir," replied Toplady, "it is impossible to describe how good God has been to me since I have been sitting in this chair this afternoon. Glory be to His name ! I have enjoyed such a season, such sweet communion with God, and such delightful manifestations of His presence with love to my soul, that it is impossible for words or any language to express them."

He frequently called himself the happiest man in the world. "Oh," he said, "how this soul of mine longs to be gone."

Then he fell into a slumber, and on awaking

he said, "Oh what delights! Who can fathom the joys of the third heaven. I praise God for continuing to me my understanding in clearness; but (he added in a rapture) for what is most of all, His abiding presence and the shining of His love upon my soul. The sky is clear, there is no cloud. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Having called his friends around him, he said to Elizabeth Sterling, "Can you and my friends give me up?"

"We can, Sir," she replied, with swimming eyes, "as the Lord is so gracious to you."

"Oh, what a blessing it is," said he, "that my dear friends are made willing to give me up into the hands of my dear Redeemer, and to part with me. It will not be long before God takes me—nay, I feel that I am dying: no mortal man could live (and he burst into tears of joy) after experiencing the glories which God has manifested to my soul."

These were the blessed saint's last recorded words—his *Nunc Dimittis*. His life had been a fire, and he ascended to heaven, as it were, in a chariot of flame.

In one of the finest flights of one of his finest sermons, Toplady depicted the joy with which angelic potentates take charge of the departed soul of a ransomed mortal, and convey the precious freight to the regions of bliss. He pictured the disembodied saints who were landed long before thronging the heavenly coast to congratulate the

new-born seraph on his safe arrival—nay, the whole Church triumphant welcoming the newly-admitted peer—and the public entry of the redeemed into the celestial city.¹

In verse—in the closing stanza of “Deathless Principle”—he had expressed himself similarly; and it is impossible not to associate these scenes with the departure of the darling personality of the author of “Rock of Ages.”

Toplady's remains were brought from Knightsbridge, on Monday, August 17th, to Tottenham Court Chapel, where he had desired to be buried. Among the mourners were Dr. Illingworth, Mr. Walter Row, and a few other of Toplady's friends. Although no public announcement had been made the news spread like wild fire, and several thousand persons assembled. Consonant with Toplady's desire, there were no funeral fopperies—no black silk scarves, no cloaks, no hat-bands, no horses with ridiculous black plumes, no podgy parish beadles with crape-bound wands, no charity children walking demurely at their heels; consequently, to the eighteenth century, which had supposed that no man could be satisfactorily interred without these accessories, the ceremony came as something of a shock.

Before the burial service could commence, an unforeseen incident occurred. Among those present was Rowland Hill, and, in his excitement,

¹ Works 3, p. 120.

unable to restrain himself from complying with Toplady's command, he rose and delivered an oration which produced, we are told, a very powerful impression on all present. The Funeral Service was then read by Dr. Illingworth, and after a suitable hymn, Toplady's remains were lowered into the deep grave which, in accordance with his wishes, had been prepared for them.

Toplady had been dead only a few days when a report was spread about that his end had been as awful a one as that of the notorious Francis Spira. Under the belief that it was inspired by John Wesley, Richard Hill wrote two letters to the *General Advertiser*, calling upon Wesley either to retract the statement or to deny having made it; and with the letters was published a declaration, signed by thirteen persons who had from time to time been with Toplady during his last hours, that the statement was absolutely false. Wesley made no reply.

At Whitefield's Tabernacle, near the spot where Toplady is interred, was erected a memorial tablet bearing the words: "Within these hallowed walls, and near this spot, are interred the mortal remains of the Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady, Vicar of Broad Hembury, Devon. Born 4th November, 1740. Died 11th August, 1778. Aged 38 years. He wrote :

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;"

and there is also preserved in the Tabernacle the metal plate that was formerly attached to the outer casket of Toplady's coffin. There are brass tablets to Toplady's memory in the churches at Farnham¹ and Blagdon, and there is a beautiful marble memorial to him in Broad Hembury Church.²

Of the many portraits of Toplady the best is an engraving (dated 31st March, 1777) preserved in Whitefield's Tabernacle, Tottenham Court Road. This, by the courtesy of the authorities, we have been able to reproduce.

¹ Placed there in 1904.

² Unveiled in 1898. The originator of the idea was Mr. William Prebble, of Balham. The Rev. James Ormiston, Editor of the *Gospel Magazine*, preached on the occasion.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LAST DAYS OF TOPLADY'S FRIENDS AND OPPONENTS

After Toplady's death, all rights relative to his works fell into the hands of his friend, **47. Deaths of Gifford and Ryland.** Mr. Walter Row, a pious but unmethodical man, who was quite incompetent to deal with the treasures under his control. After publishing several of them in cheap form, he in 1794 issued the whole in six volumes. To chronicle all his shortcomings as an editor would fill a chapter. His Memoir of Toplady in the first volume is studded with mistakes; in printing Toplady's works he does not follow chronological order, and he mentions neither whence the miscellaneous papers are taken nor their dates. When, however, he deals with the hymns he literally riots in confusion, for he records neither date nor source, he omits many of Toplady's most characteristic hymns, such as "Awake, sweet gratitude," and "How happy are we;" and he attributes to Toplady, "Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire" (a 9th century Latin hymn, translated by Cosin in 1627), and "Christ whose glory fills the skies" (by Charles Wesley). Nevertheless, to Walter Row all lovers of Toplady are deeply indebted, for, but for his enthusiasm, much that we possess of Top-

lady's would have been hopelessly lost. The edition of 1794 was printed on poor paper. In 1825, however, another edition was issued, also in six volumes, and printed on far better paper and in bold handsome type; but it has all the editorial faults of its predecessor. There have been several editions since. A great service was done to lovers of Toplady in 1860, when Daniel Sedgwick, the hymnologist, issued his well-known edition of Toplady's hymns; but even Sedgwick's collection is far from being complete.

A few words may be acceptable respecting the last days of Toplady's principal friends. Dr. Gifford, who continued to preach at Eagle Street till the beginning of 1784, died on 19th June of that year, at the age of 83, and was interred, consonant with his wish, at Bunhill Fields, "very early in the morning" of the day appointed, July 2nd. "He desired," he said, "to testify his faith in the resurrection of Christ, who rose early on the first day of the week, and likewise his hope of the resurrection morning at the last day." Notwithstanding the unusual hour, an immense concourse of people, including two hundred ministers, assembled to honour his memory, and to hear the Rev. John Ryland deliver the funeral oration. Standing on a tombstone, and facing his immense audience, Ryland outdid himself in eloquence, delivering an oration that has been declared to rank with the best efforts of ancient Greece. For long, men

spoke of, nay even now they speak of, the great central outburst, in which the impassioned speaker called to his presence Caiaphas, Pilate, Herod, Barabbas, and lastly Judas, bidding them approach the Lord of Glory, seated in glory :

“ Judas ! Judas ! sell His blood once more ; sell Him for thirty pieces of silver, at the price of a slave. Give Him another traitorous kiss. Go up to Him, not in the garden, but on His great white throne ; say, ‘ Hail, Master ! hail, Master ! ’ and kiss Him !—Why, man, do you boggle ? why do you shiver ? What, not able to reach Him ! not dare to kiss Him once more ! Why, what is the matter, Judas ? Ah, thou perfidious traitor ! thou wretch ! thou most abandoned, cursed, ungrateful monster ! it is all over with thee for ever and ever.” A hush that was even terrible fell upon the listening multitude at the conclusion of this terrific passage. After it, the touching farewell to the veteran whose remains they were committing to the dust must have fallen like sweet rain on scorched and gaping pastures.¹ Ryland’s son, the hymn-writer, had in 1781 been appointed co-pastor at Northampton with his father. In 1782, Ryland, who three years before had lost his first wife, married a Mrs. Stott, and in 1785, at the age of 62, he left Northampton for London, his removal being attended with circumstances of a painful nature. Notwithstanding his numerous activities as preacher, author, and

¹ For *An Elegy on the Death of Gifford*, by Richard Burnham, the hymn-writer, see *New Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. 4, p. 966.

tutor, he was to realise, as so many others have realised, that "The groves of taste produce no golden fruit." This law of nature, as one may term it, combined with his generosity and his immoderate use of the printing press, had brought him into difficulties. The kindness of friends, however, ultimately rescued him from them, and a little later he settled at Enfield, where he built up another large school, and enjoyed a new era of prosperity. If the weight of years had taken nothing from the exuberance of his disposition, on the other hand he had learnt nothing from adversity. He continued to fling book after book, all containing glintings of genius, but all of them amorphous in character, upon a listless and careless world; and even when his health failed, and his mind darkened, he could not desist from writing. There was something particularly pathetic in the publication of his last work—a thin little leather-bound volume of eighty-nine pages, with the attractive title of *Select Essays on the Moral Virtues, and on Genius, Science and Taste*, though its contents answer hardly at all to the title. Indeed, owing to the failure of his mental powers, he had quite forgotten his original scheme; but in accordance with his wont, he had hurried the earlier part of the manuscript to the press before the remainder was ready, with the result that the little work could not be published till after his death. It consists merely of a few anecdotes, some citations from

Rollin and other of his favourite authors, a few rules of health, and a list of the passions; but it is, nevertheless, a pleasing memento of a noble and forceful soul. In his last illness he tried to impress on all about him the enormous importance of the education of the young; and he expressed with emphasis the hope that his house would be used as a school till the day of judgment. Owing to his great natural gifts, he had astonished people all his life; but in the article of death he was himself to experience astonishment. He had accustomed himself to think of death as a stalking horror. He anticipated that it would come with the rage of a tempest, and he nerved himself for the terrible wrench—the tearing of tendons and sinews—a frightful cataclysm. But, by the mercy of God, it came with the soft footsteps of a gentle and affectionate woman. In his amazement he exclaimed, “What ease of body, and what peace of mind!” This was on 24th July, 1792, and these were his last words. Thus passed away one who, to use the phrase of a contemporary, was “all soul, unencumbered with a single particle of flesh and blood”¹—a great, a Promethean personality. His life had been a storm, but the night he died, all creation was hushed. “Never,” says Robert Hall, “can I forget the awful silence of that night. It seemed to me that all the wheels of nature had been suddenly stopped by his death.

¹ *Gospel Magazine*, 1777, p. 182.

All the universe stood still." His remains were conveyed to Northampton, and interred in the chapel that had so often rung with his eloquence. Over them was placed a slab with the single word, RYLAND.¹

The Rev. Martin Madan, who had for so many years been one of the leaders of Evangelicalism, published in 1780 a work by which he ostracised himself—the extraordinary *Thelyphthora*, in which he advocated polygamy, mainly as a preventive for frightful cases of the kind that had come under his knowledge during his chaplaincy of the Lock. His motive was unexceptionable, but he had failed to see that the cure would have been worse than the disease. Headlong he fell! His contemporaries attacked him like hornets, and eventually he saw the advisability of retiring from the ministry. He devoted the rest of his life almost exclusively to literature, among the products of his pen being translations of Juvenal and Persius,² and he died in 1790.

48. Last Days of Madan and Romaine.

Ambrose Serle, who returned from America in 1780, and settled at Heckfield, near Basingstoke, Hants, became widely known in 1786 by the publication of *Horæ Solitariae*, a prose work interspersed with hymns, among them being, "Jesus, commissioned from above,"³ and "Thy ways, O Lord,

¹ A modern memorial to him is affixed to the wall near his grave.

² 2nd edit, 1829.

³ Denham's Col., No. 29.

with wise design ;”¹ *The Christian Remembrancer*.² (1798); *The Christian Parent* (1793); *Charis* (1803); and *The Secret Thoughts of a Departed Friend* (1813). “Nowhere,” observes an old writer,³ “does the conviction of the vital importance of Calvinism as of the essence of the gospel appear more strongly than in Serle’s books.” Romaine, who was an ardent admirer of them, and particularly of the *Remembrancer*, his *Vade Mecum* as he called it, scattered them broadcast,⁴ and they went through numerous editions. Serle, who in 1795 attained to the rank of captain in the navy, died 1st August, 1812, leaving the most fragrant of memories, and was interred in the churchyard at Broadwater, Worthing.⁵

The Rev. William Romaine, who continued year after year his invaluable work at St. Ann’s,⁶ Blackfriars, received in his declining years a terrible blow in the loss of a son, who died in India; and again and again in troublous times he was impelled, like Habakkuk, to mount “into his watch-tower.” Like Habakkuk, too, he was in the habit of praying and waiting patiently, but in absolute

¹ Denham’s, No. 364.

² Dedicated “To the Christian Remembrance of John Thornton,” the philanthropist.

³ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 1812, 2, p. 193.

⁴ See Romaine’s Works, 1837 ed., pp. 561, 581.

⁵ For further particulars of him see Romaine’s Works, which contain forty-seven letters written by Romaine to him; the Life of his friend; Legh Richmond; Letters of John Newton, edited by Bull, p. 400; Bull’s Life of Newton, and *Gospel Standard*, Dec., 1855 (article by Rev. J. C. Philpot). A Volume of Selections from Serle’s Works, edited by Rev. E. Bickersteth, appeared in 1833.

⁶ The present Queen Victoria Street passes by it.

confidence, for God's gracious answer. To the end he was beloved by all who knew him, but this is not surprising, seeing that he was careful always to carry about with him as a charm the beautiful aphorism, "If you would be beloved, love!" He died on 24th July, 1795, and was buried in his own church.

Thomas Olivers and his tun of wife continued for several years at the Foundery, and for a time he was co-editor with Wesley of the *Arminian Magazine*, in connection with which he made so many mistakes, and proved so untractable, that Wesley was at last glad to remove him from the position and to give him more suitable work. Wesley died at the advanced age of eighty-seven, and was buried in the graveyard of the chapel that took the place of the old Foundery. Olivers died in 1799, and they laid him—obstinate and ingenuous soul—in Wesley's own tomb. He had characteristics that compelled admiration, even from his adversaries, that induced, as we have seen, even from Toplady himself, an occasional, if measured, tribute. One by one Wesley's other henchmen "crept silently to rest"—men who did their own work in the world in their own way. Whatever their faults, we may safely concede that they were scarcely the hideous monsters, scaled and finned with iron and brass, which Toplady's over-vivid imagination had pictured them.

Although Mrs. Macaulay's weak and absurd

49. Of the
Rupture be-
tween Dr.
Wilson and
Mrs.
Macaulay.

conduct at Bath had disillusioned Toplady, he and she continued to be excellent friends as long as he lived. But if Toplady was disillusioned, Dr. Wilson eventually became disillusioned too. To the vexation of his churchwardens on account of the erection of the statue, I have already alluded. On 12th August, 1778, they made another attempt to get rid of the offending monument, though with no better success, but Time was on the point of working a miracle in their behalf. The connection of James Graham, the gorgeous empiric, with Mrs. Macaulay will be called to mind. On 17th December, 1778, Mrs. Macaulay, at the age of forty-seven, married Graham's brother William, a boy of twenty-one. The news threw Wilson into a stupor; he could scarcely believe it. His goddess had been ravished from his own temple; he, the wealthy, the cultured, the distinguished Dr. Wilson, had been supplanted by a penniless, raw, obscure boy. It was gall and wormwood and a dagger all combined. He had never been a man to mask his feelings. He was torn of vultures, and he let everyone know it. He posted to London (no need now for the spur of his churchwardens), and down came the white marble statue of "that celebrated lady, Mrs. Macaulay, in the character of History, in a singularly easy and pleasing antique style, and judged to be a good

likeness, pen in right hand, scroll in left." He cast the unhallowed thing out. The only marvel is that he did not shatter it into a thousand pieces. Destroy it, however, he did not; he sent it to his house, Bank Hall,¹ Wirrall, Cheshire, now Warrington Town Hall,² and there to this day it may be seen by the curious. Disillusioned, unparadised, cankered, poor Wilson, at the age of seventy-five—at a time when many men enter into their dotage—had reached the age of reason. The British Brutus, the Muse of History, the Modern Minerva, had proved to be nothing more than a fickle and feather-headed woman. Venus had suddenly become a Sycorax. The Sphinx had yielded her secret. But Wilson was not the only one who turned against her at this juncture. Dark rumours passed from mouth to mouth. Letters written by her own hand, which were said to contain statements damaging to her reputation for virtue, somehow got abroad, and even Wilkes, rake and debauchee as he had been, ardently hoped to hear that they had been, or would be, destroyed. No odes in honour of Mrs. Macaulay's accomplishments now! Instead of them, lampoons, of so coarse a character that no present day printer would disgrace himself by putting them into type, flew from the press and held her up to public

¹ Dr. Wilson's father, the Bishop, obtained the estate by marriage with Mary Patten, daughter of Thomas Patten, of Warrington.

² Part of the parish is in Lancashire. The statue was presented, in 1872, to the Corporation of Warrington, by Col. the Right Hon. John Wilson Patten, afterwards Lord Winmarleigh.

obloquy and scorn. Let us hope that these rumours were without real foundation, and that she lived not unhappily with her boy husband. In the spring of 1784, Catharina Macaulay Graham, as subsequent to her marriage she styled herself, visited America, and was entertained by George Washington, at Mount Vernon,¹ and on her return she settled at Benfield, in Berks, where she died, 22nd June, 1791. There is a handsome memorial to her in Benfield church.

Dr. Wilson died 15th April, 1784, and it was found that he had revoked by will all gifts, &c., "to Catherine Graham, formerly Macaulay," though he left "£500 and accruing interest" to Mrs. Macaulay's daughter. His body was brought to London, and carried through the streets to St. Stephen's, Walbrook, in grand funeral procession at midnight, near two hundred flambeaux accompanying it; and so, appropriately, in foolish style, they buried the poor old man whose life had been a continuous folly.

After Mrs. Macaulay's marriage, James Graham removed to London where, in a lavishly-decorated Thames-side house, he dazzled the town, and cured, chiefly by means of a wonderful celestial bed, every imaginable and unimaginable complaint. Colman caricatured him at the Haymarket, but Graham was impervious to ridicule. The town

¹ Four letters of Washington to Mrs. Macaulay are preserved in the Museum at Leicester. The dates are 10th Jan., 1786; 16th Nov., 1787; 9th Jan., 1790; and 10th Feb., 1791.

was amused, he was amused ; and people paid their vows all the same in his gorgeous temple. Finally, after selling to those who cared to pay the price for it, the secret of living 150 years, he took to his bed—whether the famous celestial bed or not we are uninformed—and died on 23rd June, 1794, at the age of forty-nine.

After Toplady's decease, the pulpit at Orange Street was occupied at various times by the Rev. Richard Cecil, the Rev. Henry Foster, and the Rev. Thomas Scott, the commentator. In 1787 the chapel was secured by the Congregationalists, who now purpose pulling it down, with a view to erecting on its site a new church suited to modern requirements.

Such are the salient events in the life of that fiery and whole-hearted apostle and genius, Augustus M. Toplady, who, whether we consider him as hymnist, prose writer, or preacher, is one of the most distinguished ornaments of the Church of Christ. Four or five of his hymns are among the best in the language ; and Christians will never allow them to fall into oblivion, neither will they ever lose sight of the golden passages of his valuable sermons and essays. No man contended more energetically for, or wrote more luminously on, the doctrines of Free Grace. His influence on Christendom has been enormous, and his career is a striking confutation of the idea sometimes put forward that Calvinism and gloom are synonymous terms. If

anyone had cause to be gloomy it was Toplady, for disease and suffering constantly dogged his footsteps, and at the moment when he became the most brilliant ecclesiastical figure in his day—at the moment when he was first, and there was no second and even no third, he was called upon to leave all his honours and—die. But that message, instead of crushing him, only cheered him. As earthly hopes and ambitions faded away, the glory of the world to which he was hastening—the world where all is glory—illuminated his countenance, filled his soul with joy, and gave to him, while still in the entanglements of his poor diseased body, the appearance, not of a sin-weighted mortal, but of an ethereal and radiant seraph.

In an unpublished sermon on Heb. viii. 12, he asks: “How is it possible for any reasonable being to suppose that the doctrines of grace have a tendency to make people melancholy? Is it distressing to be told that God has made provision for the absolute salvation of all who believe in Christ? Is it discouraging to be assured, on infallible authority, that the gate of heaven is thrown wide open for the admission of all comers? ’Tis true that none come except they are *drawn* by God’s Spirit. But ’tis also no less true that those are drawn who come, and that all who come shall be graciously received (John vi. 37, 44). It is the doctrine of salvation by works that tends to dishearten such as seek the kingdom of God, the doctrine which says

God will not receive you unless you make yourself holy first ; when every truly converted man knows that he can no more make himself holy than he can raise the dead.”

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF TOPLADY.

1. 1759. Poems on Sacred Subjects.
2. 1769, Feb. The Church of England vindicated from the charge of Arminianism; and the case of Arminian subscription particularly considered; in a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Nowell. Occasioned by some Passages in that Gentleman's answer to Pietas Oxoniensis. By a Presbyter of the Church of England. 8vo. 1s. 6d. Gurney.
3. 1769, Nov. The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination stated and asserted; with a preliminary Discourse on the Divine Attributes; translated in great measure from the Latin of Jerom Zanchius. [This work was republished at Perth, in 1793, with Memoir of Toplady by the Rev. Dr. Pringle. "A new edition, being the fourth" was advertised in 1822.]
4. 1770, April. A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley relative to his pretended Abridgment of Zanchius on Predestination. [Price Sixpence.] 2nd Ed., Feb., 1771.
5. 1770, Sept. A Caveat against Unsound Doctrines: Being the Substance of a Sermon Preached in the Parish Church of St. Ann, Blackfryars; on Sunday, April 29, 1770. . . . [Price Nine Pence.]
6. 1771, Nov. Jesus seen of Angels and God's Mindfulness of Man considered. In Three Discourses: The Substance of which was preach'd in the Parish Church of Broad Hembury, Devon, on Tuesday, December 25, 1770. . . . [Price Eighteen Pence.] Fourth edition advertised in 1822.
7. 1771, Nov. Free Thoughts on the Projected Application to Parliament for the Abolition of Ecclesiastical Subscriptions. . . . [Price Six-pence.]

8. 1771. Various contributions both in verse and prose to the *Gospel Magazine* for 1771 and the following years.
9. 1772, Sept. Clerical Subscription no Grievance, Or, The Doctrines of the Church of England proved to be the Doctrines of Christ. In a Sermon preached at an Annual Visitation of the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Exeter held at Columpton, Tuesday, May 12, 1772. . . . [Price Six-Pence.] Third edition advertised in 1822.
10. 1772. More Work for Mr. John Wesley: or A Vindication of the Decrees and Providences of God from the Defamations of a late printed Paper, entitled, 'The Consequence Proved.' . . . [Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]
11. 1772, Winter. A character of Dr. Gill and his Writings, beginning with *Such were the Indefatigable Labours*, and ending with *so able a Defender*. Inserted in the Posthumous Quarto Edition of Dr. Gill's Tracts and Sermons immediately after the "Life."
12. 1774, June. Historical Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England. 2 vols. 8vo.
13. 1775. Sermon. Freewill and Merit fairly Examined. Preached 15th May, 1774, at St. Ann's, Blackfriars. Fourth edition advertised in 1822.
14. 1775. Sermon. Good News from Heaven. Preached 19th June, 1774, at the Lock.
15. 1775, July. The Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity asserted, in answer to Mr. John Wesley's tract on that subject.
16. 1775, Nov. An Old Fox tarr'd and feathered.
17. 1776. Joy in Heaven. Preached 29th Oct., 1775, at St. Luke's, Old Street; and The Existence and the Creed of Devils considered; with a word concerning Apparitions. Preached 29th Oct., 1775, at St. Olave's, Jewry. 3rd edition advertised in 1822.
18. 1776, August. Psalms and Hymns for Public and Private Worship.
19. 1776, Dec. Moral and Political Moderation recommended. Preached 13th Dec., 1776, at St. Mildred's, Poultry.

20. "The Liturgy of the Church of England Explained and Vindicated so as to appear in perfect harmony with the Scriptures. Price 1/-." Advertised in 1822.
21. Equality of Happiness in Heaven asserted, found among the Author's Manuscripts. Price 6d. Advertised in 1822.
22. A Course of Prayer for each day in the week, with Meditations and Remarks, suitable to every Christian Family. By Augustus Toplady, A.B. Eleventh edition, 1820.
23. "Devotional Retirement, recommended and enforced, with Meditations and Remarks. This excellent little Book was found among the manuscripts of Mr. Toplady. . . . In this new edition is inserted the Character of Job, with several Hymns. Price 2s. 6d. 6th Edition." Advertised in 1822.
24. "Contemplations on the Sufferings, Death and Resurrection of Christ, by Augustus Toplady, A.B. Published from the Author's MSS. London. Printed for and sold by W. Row, Great Marlborough Street, 1822. Price 2s. 6d., Boards."
25. In 1794 appeared Toplady's Works in six volumes, edited by Mr. Walter Row. A far superior edition, which is beautifully printed, appeared in 1825. Both editions are very badly edited. Chronological order is not followed, and they contain many mistakes. There have been a number of other editions of the whole or portions of Toplady's works.

The Rev. James Ormiston, Editor of the *Gospel Magazine*, possesses Toplady's own copy of "The Church of England Vindicated from the Charge of Arminianism," and the translation of Zanchy. On one of the fly-leaf pages is written, "Augustus Toplady, the present of Mr. J. G., 1769" (J. G. being doubtless Mr. J. Gurney, publisher). On two other pages are lists of his works, and of the works of others which he published. These lists must have been written shortly before his death (in 1778), as the last record runs, "Many things in ye *Gosp. Magaz.* for ye years 1775, 1776 and 1777."

For a description of the unpublished manuscripts left by Toplady, see the Preface of this Work.

APPENDIX II

WORKS, ETC., PUBLISHED AT THE INSTANCE OF TOPLADY

1. Two Sermons by Rev. James Hervey on Rom. v. 19, with a Preface.¹ July, 1769.
2. Sermon by Rev. James Hervey on Phil. iv. 4. The three sermons were communicated to Toplady by "Mr. Holmes," "a most valued friend of Exeter."² May, 1770.
3. Two Sermons on Luke x. 20 and Psalm cxxx. 1. By the late Rev. Matthew Mead. Published by Toplady at the desire of his friend, Captain Clunie. June, 1770.
4. Two letters of Rev. James Hervey and one of Rev. Dr. Doddridge in *Gospel Magazine* for 1771. Toplady had them from the "Rev. Dr. C., to whom they were written."
5. Sermon by Rev. James Hervey, published in the *Gospel Magazine*, Feb. and March, 1776. From Hervey's own manuscript. Communicated to Toplady by "Mr. H. G."

APPENDIX III

ARTICLES, ETC., BY TOPLADY WHICH APPEARED IN THE "GOSPEL MAGAZINE" SUBSEQUENT TO HIS DEATH

| <i>Year.</i> | <i>Pages.</i> | <i>Subject.</i> |
|--------------|---------------|--|
| 1796. | 473—489. | On the Equality of Happiness in Heaven. |
| 1797. | 22—26. | Questions answered by Mr. Toplady. |
| 1798. | 5—15. | On the Covenant of God with the Elect. |
| | 365—373. | The Covenant of Grace in every Age the same as to the Substance of it. |
| | 406—408. | The Absurdity of Universal Redemption. |
| 1799. | 121—133. | Of the Several Dispensations of the Covenant of Grace. |
| | 323—329. | Dialogue between Toplady and a Perfectionist. |
| 1800. | 172. | Questions answered by Toplady. |
| | 291. | Religious Ideas from Printing. |
| 1802. | 1. | The Righteousness of the Saints considered. |
| 1805. | 485. | The Church a Garden. |

¹ See Hervey's Works, ed. 1834, p. 624.² See Works, vol. 1, pp. 53, 54.

APPENDIX IV

LIST OF TOPLADY'S LETTERS

Those hitherto Unpublished are in Italics.

Wks. = Toplady's Works, edition of 1825.

| <i>To</i> | | <i>Where Printed or Kept.</i> |
|--|----------------------|---|
| John Wesley | 13 Sept., 1758 | Hole's MS. Life of Toplady (copy only) |
| <i>William Lunell, Dublin</i> | <i>May, 1764</i> | <i>Unpublished, see p. 46¹</i> |
| William Lunell, Dublin | June, 1765 | Gos. Mag., May, 1899, p. 342 |
| <i>William Lunell, Dublin</i> | <i>25 Jan., 1767</i> | <i>Unpublished, see p. 51¹</i> |
| Mr. E. | 6 Mar., " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 156 |
| Rev. Mr. Huddleston | 14 June, " | Gos. Mag., 1797, p. 45 |
| Mr. Busby | 21 Sept., " | British Museum |
| His Mother | 10 Dec., " | Wks., vl. 1, pp. 15, 16 |
| Dr. Gill | 2 Mar., 1768 | " " 45 |
| <i>Mr. Grey (re. the fire at Harpford)</i> | <i>15 June, 1768</i> | <i>Unpublished, see p. 63²</i> |
| Mrs. Browne, of Bath | 31 Aug., " | Wks., vl. 1, p. 81 |
| James Morris | 2 Sept., " | " vl. 6, p. 139 |
| Rev. Mr. Philips | 6 Sept., " | " " 141 |
| Rev. Mr. Rutter, of Honiton | 3 Oct., " | " " 143 |
| Mr. Bottomly | 3 Dec., " | " " 144 |
| Rev. Dr. John Baker, of Salisbury | 7 July, 1770 | Winter's Life of Toplady, p. 26 |
| Rev. Walter Sellon | 9 Feb., 1771 | Wks., vl. 5, p. 345 |
| Mr. N. | 5 Oct., 1772 | " vl. 6, 146 |
| B. S. | 9 Nov., " | " " 149 |
| Ambrose Serle | 20 Nov., " | " " 149 |
| Mrs. G. | " " | " " 151 |
| Samuel Naylor | 27 Nov., " | " " 152 |
| B. E. | 4 Dec., " | " " 153 |
| Richard Hill | 11 Dec., " | " " 155 |
| Mrs. Bacon | " " | " " 157 |
| Ambrose Serle | 18 Dec., " | " " 158 |
| Dr. John Baker | 4 Feb., 1773 | " " 161 |

¹ In possession of Mr. W. Lowe Fleeming, Wolverhampton.

² In possession of Mr. Thomas Wright, Olney.

| <i>To</i> | | <i>Where Printed or Kept</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------|--|
| Mrs. S. H. | 5 Feb., " | " " 163 |
| Rev. Martin Madan | 26 Feb., " | Gos. Mag., 1815, p. 37 |
| Ambrose Serle | 5 Mar., " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 164 |
| Richard Hill | 12 Mar., " | " " 166 |
| Rev. John Ryland, jun. | 30 April, " | " " 167 |
| Rev. Mr. P. | 3 May, " | " " 169 |
| Mrs. Macaulay | 11 June, " | " " 180 |
| " | 13 July, " | " " 183 |
| Rev. Dr. Gifford | 14 July, " | " " 186 |
| Rev. B. P., of New York | 6 Sept., " | " " 187 |
| Rev. Wm. Romaine | 11 Sept., " | " " 191 |
| <i>George Flower</i> | 1 Oct., " | <i>Unpublished, see p. 147¹</i> |
| Ambrose Serle | " " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 192 |
| Mr. M. Pollard | " " | " " 195 |
| Thomas Burgess | 22 Oct., " | " " 197 |
| Ambrose Serle | " " | " " 198 |
| Mrs. Macaulay | " " | " " 200 |
| Ambrose Serle | 23 Oct., " | " " 202 |
| " | 8 Dec., " | " " 204 |
| Mrs. L. | 9 Jan., 1774 | Gos. Mag., 1797, p. 170 |
| Mrs. Macaulay | 11 Jan., " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 205 |
| Ambrose Serle | " " | " " 208 |
| Rev. Wm. Romaine | " " | " " 210 |
| Mr. — | 9 Feb., " | " " 211 |
| Mrs. Macaulay | 18 Feb., " | " " 213 |
| George Flower | 8 April, " | " " 216 |
| Mr. H. | 23 May, " | " " 218 |
| Mrs. Macaulay | 8 July, " | " " 220 |
| Rev. Martin Madan | " " | " " 222 |
| Rev. Wm. Romaine | " " | " " 223 |
| Ambrose Serle | " " | " " 225 |
| Mr. O. | 29 July, " | " " 227 |
| Mr. — | 30 Sept., " | " " 229 |
| Mrs. B. | 11 Nov., " | " " 231 |
| Rev. Dr. John Baker | 18 Nov., " | " " 233 |
| Countess of Huntingdon | 9 Dec., " | " " 235 |

¹ Copy in possession of Mr. Thos. Wright.

| To | | Where Printed or Kept. |
|---|---------------|---|
| Rev. Dr. Priestley | 23 Dec., " | " " 238 |
| Mr. — | 29 Dec., " | " " 245 |
| Rev. John Ryland, sen. | " " | " " 247 |
| Ambrose Serle | 25 Jan., 1775 | " " 249 |
| Rev. Erasmus Middleton | 5 Feb., " | Unpublished, see p. 161 ¹ |
| Mrs. Macaulay | 10 Feb., " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 250 |
| Mr. L. C. | 15 Feb., " | " " 252 |
| Francis Toplady | 19 Mar., " | " " 257 |
| Rev. Martin Madan | 5 April, " | " " 258 |
| Rev. C. De Coetlogon | " " | " " 215 |
| Rev. Dr. Andrew Gifford | 6 April, " | " " 261 |
| William Hussey | 7 April, " | Gos. Mag., 1797, p. 157 |
| Valance & Co. | 7 July, " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 265 |
| John Evans | 25 July, " | Unpublished, see p. 167 ² |
| Lady Huntingdon | 22 Sept., " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 266 |
| " | ? | Life of Lady Huntingdon 1, p. 391 |
| Mr. L. | 25 Sept., " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 268 |
| Rev. John Wm. Fletcher | | Unpublished ¹ |
| Mr. N. | 26 Sept., " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 269 |
| Rev. John Berridge | 19 Mar., 1776 | " " 272 |
| "A Friend" | 31 Mar., " | Wks., vl. 3, p. 452 Gos. Mag., April, 1776, p. 175 |
| Mr. I. | 4 April, " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 273 |
| William Tucker, of Chard | 20 Aug., " | Unpublished, see p. 191 ³ |
| William Hussey | 9 Sept., " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 275 |
| Mr. Davies | 31 Oct., " | " " 277 |
| Letter, <i>re</i> . "Quarles's Emblems" | 3 Jan., 1777 | Winter's Life of Toplady, p. 63 |
| Rev. Dr. Dodd | 17 Mar., " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 271 |
| Rev. Dr. John Baker | 12 Aug., " | " " 281 |
| Mrs. A. G. | 2 Nov., " | " " 282 |
| Mr. E. K. | 22 Nov., " | " " 284 |

¹ In possession of Mr. Thos. Wright.

² Copy in possession of Mr. Thos. Wright.

³ In possession of Miss Florence Bagster, of Kendal.

| <i>To</i> | <i>Where Printed or Kept.</i> | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|-----|
| Mr. F. | 27 Nov., " | " " | 285 |
| Mr. Valance | 1 Dec., " | " " | 288 |
| John Wilkes | 30 Dec., " | " " | 289 |
| Rev. Dr. Priestley | 20 Jan., 1778 | " " | 290 |
| Samuel Wallis | 2 Feb., " | Wks., vl. 1, p. 95 Gos. Mag., 1802, p. 29 | |
| Mrs. George Flower | 20 Feb., " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 293 | |
| William Hussey | 11 Mar., " | " " | 296 |
| Mrs. B. (at Gloucester) | " " | Gos. Mag., 1779, p. 461 | |
| William Hussey | 19 Mar., " | Wks., vl. 6, p. 295 | |
| <i>A Gentleman</i> | ? | <i>Unpublished</i> ¹ | |

APPENDIX V.

CHAMBER STUDIES.

LATE in life Toplady seems to have written a work entitled *Chamber Studies for every Sunday in the Year, Morning and Evening*,² which was probably published about 1790, that is to say, twelve years after his death, but I have been unable to meet with a copy. In the Cowper and Newton Museum at Olney is preserved the manuscript for an edition intended to be published in 1830. It is apparently in the handwriting of Mr. Walter Row, editor of the *Gospel Magazine*, and literary executor of Toplady. The Preface to this MS. runs, "This work being a great favourite with the religious public for near forty years, has been the occasion of further considerable enlarged extracts, now added from the Author's manuscripts, so as to make it a complete epitome of divinity, and of devotional exercises. In this new impression are interspersed at the end of each prayer reflections on subjects of everlasting importance, with other pieces never before published, couched in nervous and pointed language, conducive to instruct and enlighten the mind, so that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they cannot fail of reaching the heart."

¹ In possession of Mr. Thos. Wright.

² The book is also referred to as *Sunday Meditations*.

After referring to the writer as "an exemplary minister of the Church of England," it proceeds, "And here it is indispensably necessary to vindicate him from the censures passed upon him by his enemies for his attachments to some of the peculiar doctrines of revelation. It has most unjustly been alleged that he was possessed with an ardent intemperate disposition; the writer of these lines, who knew him well, can testify the reverse. He might have justly replied, with one of the ancients who had been charged with being in a passion, 'Let my pulse be felt, and see if it does not beat temperately.'"

Although the name of the writer is not given, the work is apparently by Toplady, for a number of the poetical pieces scattered about it are certainly his. It is curious that a work which "was a great favourite with the religious public for near forty years," should be unknown to every bookseller to whom I have applied—even to those who have made 18th and early 19th century books a speciality. I searched in vain in the British Museum. From the prose passages of *Chamber Studies* we may select the following:—

1. "The antiquary who is born of God can without presumption look into the archives of eternity. He can see the Author of all grace planning and settling the scheme of His people's happiness."

In respect to the Scriptures the author writes: "No wonder that we sometimes meet with incidents which nonplus and astonish human reason. Excess of light is sometimes known to dazzle the eye, so far as even to render it incapable, almost incapable of seeing; yet the fault is not in the light which shines in darkness, but in the darkness which comprehends it not."

5. "The first step of a sinner who is turned from the error of his ways so as to walk in the paths of righteousness and truth, must be to him as a miracle."

33. "God's elect do not work that they *may* be saved, but work in consequence of being in a saved state *already*. Gratitude and a sense of benefits received is the most powerful motive to real holiness, and of all motives most acceptable to God."

First Lines of Hymns in "Chamber Studies."

6. Jesus, my strength, my way.
 7. Father, to Thee my soul I lift.
 8. Thus hath the Lord engaged.

Last Verse : The hills shall shift their place,
 The mountains shall remove ;
 But firm the weakest follower stands
 In His electing love.

13. Here I have found the ground wherein,
 14. From whence our fears and unbelief.¹
 15. O grace, thou fathomless abyss.

O Grace, thou fathomless abyss,
 My sins are swallowed up in thee ;
 Covered is my unrighteousness ;
 From condemnation I am free ;
 For Jesus' blood thro' earth and skies,
 Mercy, eternal mercy, cries.

17. O let us now His praise shew forth.
 21. For Thy free electing favour.
 22. Great God, whose sovereignty of power,
 34. Why this profusion of Thy grace ?
 35. How shall I fit my thankful tongue ?
 37. O Thou that hear'st the prayer of faith.²
 42. Lord, what is feeble, dying man ?
 49. Great God, if Thine I also am.
 50. Deep in the everlasting mind.

Deep in the everlasting mind
 The great mysterious purpose lay,
 Of choosing some from lost mankind,
 Whose sins the Lamb should bear away.

Them, lov'd with an eternal love,
 To grace and glory He ordained,
 Gave them a throne which cannot move,
 And chose them both to means and end.

In these He was resolved to make
 The riches of His goodness known ;
 These He accepts for Jesus' sake,
 And sees them righteous in His Son.

60. When God confers His peace.
 63. We are His ransomed people.

¹ See p. 99.

² Toplady's Works 6, p. 329.

93. God might, for He was bound to none.

96. Our seeking Thy face.¹

100. Complete in Christ, tho' in myself.²

"Complete in Christ" contains the following splendid verse:

He loved me not for my desert :
I merited His hate.
Nor shall His love a period know,
Which never knew a date.

101. Hail, chosen race, redeemed from sin.

At the end is an appendix, consisting of the three following hymns:

Jesus, Thy pow'r we fain would feel.³
Jesus acquits, and who condemns.
The righteous shall hold on their way.

APPENDIX VI

LIST OF TOPLADY'S SERMONS

THE following are the dates of the sermons respecting which I have memoranda. Notes or skeletons of all of them, except those between 6 Dec., 1767, and 2 Oct., 1768, have been preserved.

M = *Morning*. *A* = *Afternoon*.

| <i>Date.</i> | <i>Place.</i> | <i>Text, if known.</i> |
|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1762, June 13. | Blagdon. ⁴ | |
| July 4. | " ⁵ | |
| Oct. 31. | " ⁶ | |
| N. D. | | Gen. i. 27. |
| " | | 1 Sm. vi. 20. |
| " | | Lk. viii. 33. |
| " | | Heb. ii. 15. |
| " | | John xiv. 6. |

¹ From "How happy are we," see p. 99.

² *Gospel Magazine*, 1796; *Gospel Advocate*, vol. 5, p. 266.

³ Which appears in *Toplady's Works* 6, p. 340.

⁴ "Annexed to the first sermon I preached at Blagdon."

⁵ "Inserted in a sermon preached at Blagdon, July 4th, 1762."

⁶ "Annexed to a sermon preached at Blagdon, 31st October, 1762."

| <i>Date.</i> | <i>Place.</i> | <i>Text, if known.</i> |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1764, Jan. 15. | Blagdon. ¹ | |
| April 22. | " ² | |
| 29. | " ³ | |
| May 13. | St. John's Chapel, Bath. ⁴ | |
| 1767, July 16. | Hampstead. | Job. xxii. 21. |
| Dec. 6. | Fen Ottery (M). Harpford (A). | |
| 13. | " " | |
| 20. | " (A). | |
| 27. | Harpford (M). Fen Ottery (A). | |
| 1768, Jan. 3. | Fen Ottery (M). Harpford (A). | 1 Cor. xv. 10 |
| 10. | " " | |
| 17. | " (M). " (A). | |
| 31. | " (M). " (A). | |
| Feb. 7. | Harpford (M). Fen Ottery (A). | |
| 14. | Fen Ottery (M). Harpford (A). | |
| 21. | Harpford (M). Fen Ottery (A). | |
| Mar. 6. | " (M). " (A). | |
| 13. | Fen Ottery (M). Harpford (A). | |
| 20. | Harpford (M). Fen Ottery (A). | |
| 27. | Fen Ottery (M). Harpford (A). | John i. 29. |
| April 1. | Harpford (M). Fen Ottery (A). | |
| 3. | No sermon (M). Harpford (A). | |
| 10. | Fen Ottery (M). Harpford (A). | |
| 17. | Broad Hembury (M). | 2 Cor. iv. 5, Jude 3. |
| 24. | " (M and A). | Ps. xxxii. 1, Ps. xxxii. 1. ⁵ |
| May 1. | " (M and A). | |
| 8. | " (A). | |
| 15. | Sheldon (M). Bd. Hembury (A). | |
| 22. | Broad Hembury (M and A). | |
| 29. | " " | |
| June 5. | " " | |
| 12. | " " | |

¹ "Prefixed to a sermon preached at Blagdon, 15th Jan., 1764."

² "Prefixed to a Farewell Sermon preached at Blagdon, 22nd April, 1764."

³ "Prefixed to my last sermon preached at Blagdon, 29th April, 1764."

⁴ "Added to a sermon preached for the benefit of the Charity Schools."

⁵ See Works 1, p. 71.

| <i>Date.</i> | <i>Place.</i> | <i>Text, if known.</i> |
|-----------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1768, June 19. | Broad Hembury (M. and A.) | |
| 26. | " " | |
| July 3. | Fen Ottery (M). Harpford (A). | |
| 10. | Broad Hembury (M and A). | |
| 24. | Sheldon (M). Bd. Hembury (A). | |
| Aug. 7. | Plymtree (M). Bd. Hembury (A). | |
| 14. | Broad Hembury (M and A). | |
| 21. | Sheldon (M). Bd. Hembury (A). | |
| 28. | Broad Hembury (M and A). | |
| Sept. 4. | Sheldon (M). Bd. Hembury (A). | |
| 11. | Broad Hembury (M and A). | |
| 18. | " " | |
| 25. | " " | |
| Oct. 2. | " " | |
| 1769, July 23. | Hampstead (and Jan. 6, 1771, at Broad Hembury). | 2 Cor. v. 1. |
| 26. | St. Ann's, Blackfriars. | |
| April 22. | St. Matthew, Bethnal Green. | 1 Tim. i. 10. |
| 1770, April 29. | St. Ann's, Blackfriars (printed). | " |
| Dec. 25. | Broad Hembury (printed). | |
| 1771, Jan. 6. | " (see July 23, 1769). | 2 Cor. v. 1. |
| 27. | " (two). | Is. lv. 4, Lk. xix. 10. |
| Feb. 3. | " | Ps. xvii. 16. |
| Mar. 17. | " | Ex. iii. 6. |
| April 7. | " | Rev. xiv. 5. |
| 14. | " | Pet. ii. 24. |
| 28. | " | Is. xxxv. 10. |
| May 12. | " (two). | Matt. x. 32, 33, Rom. viii. 16. |
| June 9. | " | Lk. xviii. 10. |
| Oct. 6. | Fen Ottery. | 2 Cor. v. 21. |
| 21. | Broad Hembury. | Ps. cv. 11. |
| 1772, Feb. 2. | " | |
| May 12. | Columpton (printed). | Matt. iv. 23. |
| 16. | Broad Hembury. | Rom. xv. 12. |
| Nov. 22. | " | 1 Cor. vi. 9. |
| 1773, Feb. 14. | " | Is. xliiii. 25. |
| 21. | " | Ps. cvi. 45. |

| <i>Date.</i> | <i>Place.</i> | <i>Text, if known:</i> |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1773, Mar. 21. | Broad Hembury. | Jude 21. |
| 28. | " | Ps. cxxxiv. 4 |
| May 30. | " | Rm. xv. 30. |
| July 3. | " | Mat. xviii. 3 ¹ |
| 4. | " | 1 Sm. xii. 22. |
| Aug. 1. | " | Heb. iv. 9. |
| 15. | " | 1 Kgs. xxii. 23. |
| 29. | " | Is. xxxvii. |
| Sept. 5. | " | Ps. l. 8, Hb. x. 5-7. |
| Oct. 10. | " | Ezek. xx. 40 |
| 24. | " | Is. xlv. 22. |
| Nov. 14. | " | Prov. xii. 21 |
| Dec. 5. | " | Ps. xxiv. 2, Rm. xv. 13. |
| 1774, Jan. 16. | " | Is. liii. 11. |
| 23. | " (printed in <i>Gos. Mag.</i> , 1769, pp. 29, 58, 97.) ² | Is. liii. 12. |
| Mar. 5. | " | Hb. viii. 12. |
| 20. | " | Jno. vii. 37. |
| May 25. | St. Ann's, Blackfriars (printed). | Ps. cxv. 1. |
| June 19. | The Lock (printed). | Ps. lxxxix. 15, 16. |
| 1775, April 9. | Broad Hembury. | Heb. iii. 1. |
| Oct. 29. | St. Luke's, Old Street (printed). | Lk. xv. 7. |
| | St. Olave's, Jewry (printed). | Jas. ii. 19. |
| Dec. 17. | St. Botolph's, Aldersgate. | Acts xvii. 6. |
| 1776, Feb. 10. | Orange Street. | Song iii. 6. |
| 17. | " (notes in <i>Gos. Mag.</i> , 1809, p. 449). | Song iii. 11. |
| June 26. | | 2 Tim. ii. 15. |
| Dec. 15. | St. Mildred's, Poultry (printed). | Phil. iv. 5. |
| 15. | Orange Street. | Is. xxi. 11, 12 |
| 1778, Feb. 8. | " | 2 Cr. iii. 2, 3. |
| April 19. | " | ? |
| 26. | " | ? |

¹ At the interment of Mrs. Eliz. Simmons.

² " Taken in shorthand by a proficient writer."

| <i>Date.</i> | <i>Place.</i> | <i>Text, if known.</i> |
|--------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 1778, May 3. | Orange Street. | ? |
| 10. | " | ? |
| 17. | " | ? |
| June 4. | " | 2 Pt. i. 13, 14 |

UNDATED SERMONS OF WHICH THE NOTES HAVE
BEEN PRESERVED.

| | | |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Gen. xxii. | Isa. lii. | Acts xiii. |
| 1 Sam. vi. | lvii. | Rom. iii. |
| 2 Kings xviii. | Mal. iii. | viii. |
| Job xiv. | Matt. vii. | x. |
| Psalms xl. | xvii. | x. |
| xliv. | xviii. | 1 Cor. i. |
| lxviii. | xxii. | ix. |
| lxxiii. | Mark x. | 2 Cor. viii. |
| xcì. | Luke xiv. | Phil. ii. |
| cvii. | John i. | Tim. i. |
| cxvi. | i. | 1 John ii. |
| cxlv. | ii. | 3 John i. |
| Cant. iii. | xvi. | Rev. i. |
| Isa. xxi. | xvii. | xiv. |
| xlii. | Acts iv. | |

APPENDIX VII

ADDITIONAL NOTES RESPECTING JOSEPH HART.

Those readers who have obtained *The Life of Joseph Hart* in this series may like to have the following additional notes:—

Page 13.—The anonymous author of *Christianity not founded on Argument (Life of Hart, p. 13)* afterwards proved to be Henry Dodwell. It was answered by Doddridge as well as by Benson.

Page 65.—The portrait of Rev. John Towers is from *New Spiritual Magazine*, vol. 3, p. 650. It also appeared in the *Gospel Magazine*, September, 1776.

Page 108.—On the 18th Oct., 1785, Benjamin Hart, of Homerton (? College), son of the Rev. Joseph Hart, was

ordained at Norwich as pastor of a congregation (Independent) in Bridge Street. The cause did not flourish long. Benjamin Hart afterwards became a Chancery pleader. Condensed from Browne's *History of Congregationalism in Norfolk and Suffolk*. (See *Life of Joseph Hart*, p. 108.)

INDEX

- Abington (William) Writes to Toplady, 208
 Adams (John) 245
A Debtor to Mercy alone, 100
 Aldridge (Rev. William) 247
A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, 88
 Alotli, 247
 Apparitions, Toplady on, 169
 Assurance of Faith, 176
- Bacon (Mrs.) of Islington, 92
 Baker (Rev. Dr. John, of Salisbury) 95; Toplady's letter to him (18 Nov. 1774) 157; Toplady writes to him *re* Mrs. Macaulay, 201; Toplady visits him (in 1778) 211
 Baker (Mrs.) 139
 Barclay (Rev. John) 214
 Bate (Rev. Julius) 5
 Battey (Rev. Wm.) 26
 Baxter (Andrew), the philosopher, 203
 Beddome (Rev. Benjamin) 248, 264
 Berridge (Rev. John) 75, 92, 252
 Betsy (Aunt) 10, 12, 13
 Blackburne (Archdeacon) 109
 Blagdon 38 to 45, 299, 300
 Blake (William) 108
 Brewer (Rev. Jehoida) 260
 Brine (Rev. John) 83
 Broad Hembury, 64; *The Broad Hembury Hymns*, 92 to 108; Toplady entertains Serle and Romaine there, 143; He leaves Broad Hembury, 166; His last visit to, 211; Sermons preached there, 300—302
 Browne (Rev. Moses) 79
 Bull (Rev. William) 212
 Burgh (Mr. James) 157
 Burnham (Rev. Richard) 232
 Burrington Gorge, 42
- Calvin Snuff Box, *The*, 164
Chamber Studies 296
 Cecil (Rev. Richard) 241
 Chesterfield, Fourth Earl of, 13; *Letters to his son*, 149
- Church of England Vindicated, The*, 69, 158
 Clarke (Rev. W. Augustus) 261
Clerical Subscription no Grievance, 111
 Common-place Books, Toplady's, 25, 41
Compared with Christ, 60
 Conyers (Rev. Dr. Richard) 162
 Cowper (William) 7; hymns by, 187
- Dartmouth, 2nd Earl of, 141, 197, 214
 De Courcy (Rev. Richard) 262
 Dodd (Rev. Dr. William) 204
 Doddridge (Rev. Dr. Philip) Hymns by, 190
 Duke Street Chapel, St. James's Square, 46
 Dyer (George) 80
- Emptied of Earth I fain would be*, 104
 Essayist, Toplady as an, 185
 Evans (Thomas) Apothecary, 225
 Evans (John) 167
- Farley Hungerford, 46 to 48
 Farnham (Surrey) 4, 11, 229
 Fanch (Rev. James) 262
 Fawcett (Rev. John) 263
 Fear, Toplady on, 187
 Feathers Tavern Association, 109
 Fellows (John) 265
Female Pilgrim, The, by John Mitchell, 93
 Fen Ottery 49
 Fletcher (Rev. J. W., of Madeley) 116; ill at Bath, 221
 Flower (George) 126, 147; dies, 209
 Foster (Rev. Henry) 162, 241
 Foundery, Toplady at the, 119
 Frampton, Toplady at, 51
Free Will and Merit fairly examined (Sermon) 156
- Gaius, Toplady on, 94
 Garrick (David) 14, 184

- Gifford (Rev. Dr. Andrew) 74, 217 ;
by Toplady's death-bed, 223
- Gill (Rev. Dr.) 31, 33, 34, 35, 69 ;
dies, 113
- God's Mindfulness of Man* (Sermon)
97
- Goldsmith (Oliver) 128
- Good News from Heaven* (Sermon)
156
- Gospel Magazine*, 98, 193 ; Toplady
editor of, 185
- Graham (James) the empiric, 152,
200, 238
- Graham (William) 238
- Happiness in three Worlds 169
- Happiness, thou lovely name*, 102
- Harpford, 49, 300, 301
- Harrison (Susanna) 266
- Hart (Rev. Joseph) hymns by, 190 ;
reference to his son Benjamin, 303
- Hervey (Rev. James) of Weston
Favell, 78, 79
- Hole, Rev. Charles, 62, 293
- Hill (Rev. Rowland) 117 ; his oration
at Toplady's grave, 227
- Hill (Sir Richard) 117
- Historic Proof, The*, 158
- Hitchin, Rev. Edward, 74, 119, 125 ;
dies, 148
- Hollis, (Thomas, the philanthropist)
132, 137 ; dies, 149
- Huntingdon, Countess of, 167, 168,
177, 194
- Hurrion (Rev. John) 83
- Hussey (William) 162
- Hymns, List of Toplady's, 99
- Hymn-Writers*
- Adams (John) of Northampton, 245
- Aldridge (Rev. William) of Jewry
Street, 247
- Alotli, 247
- Beddome (Rev. Benjamin) of Bour-
ton on the Water, 248
- Berridge (Rev. John) of Everton,
92, 252
- Brewer (Rev. Jehoida) of Birming-
ham, 260
- Burnham (Rev. Richard) of Grafton
Street, 74
- Clarke (Rev. W. Augustus) of Red
Cross Street, 261
- Cowper (William) 7, 189
- De Courcy (Rev. Richard) of
Shrewsbury, 262
- Doddridge (Rev. Philip) 190
- Fanch (Rev. James) of Romsey, 262
- Fawcett (Rev. John) of Wainsgate,
263
- Fellows (John) of Birmingham, 265
- Harrison (Susanna) of Ipswich, 266
- Hart (Rev. Joseph) 190, 208, 303
- Hervey (Rev. James) of Weston
Favell, 78
- Huntingdon (Selina, Countess of)
267
- J. S., 268
- Knight (Rev. Joel Abraham) of
Tottenham Court Chapel, 269
- Langford (Rev. John) of Gainsford
Street, 270
- Langley (Rev. John Henry) of
Rotherhithe, 270
- Madan (Rev. Martin) of the Lock,
160, 163, 235, 270
- Matlock (Rev. John) of Rose Lane,
272
- Needham (Rev. John) of Bristol,
272
- Newton (Rev. John) 189
- Ryland (Rev. John Collett) of
Northampton, 75, 76, 81, 83, 94,
148, 192, 212, 217, 231, 234, 273
- Ryland (Rev. Dr. John) of North-
ampton, 75
- Scott (Elizabeth) of Norwich, 274
- Scott (Thomas) of Ipswich, 274
- Serle (Ambrose) of Heckfield, 58,
74, 141, 142, 235, 236
- Shirley (the Hon. and Rev. Walter)
of Loughrea, 162, 195, 275
- S. P., 276
- S. P. R., 276
- Steele (Anne) of Broughton, 190,
276
- Stennett (Rev. Dr. Samuel) of
Little Wild Street, 279
- Stocker (John) of Honiton, 282
- Tucker (William) of Chard, 283
- Turner (Rev. Daniel) of Abingdon
285
- Wallin (Rev. Benjamin) of Maze
Pond, 114, 286
- Watts (Isaac) 189
- Wingrove (John) of Steyning, 287
- W-gt-n (J) of Liverpool, 287
- Illingworth (Rev. Dr.) 178, 227
- Jack, Uncle, 11
- Jesus immutably the same*, 101
- Jesus seen of Angels* (Sermon) 96
- Johnson (Dr. Samuel) 127 ; collision
with Mrs. Macaulay, 135
- Joy in Heaven* (Sermon) 174

- J. S., 268
- Kenrick (Dr. William) 214
- Langford (Rev. John) 270
- Langley (Rev. John Henry) 270
- Leland (Dr. Thomas) 77
- Lindsay (Rev. Theophilus) 109, 112
- Luce (Rev. Francis) 56, 57, 60, 63
- Lunell (William) 22; Toplady's letters to, 46, 47, 51, 293
- Macaulay (Catharine) 131; Toplady in love with her, 138; a patient of James Graham, 152; the Painted Lady, 198; her forty-fourth birthday, 200; marries William Graham, 238; dies, 240
- Madan (Rev. Martin) 160, 163; writes *Thelyphthora*, dies, 235; as a hymn-writer, 270
- Mason (William) Editor of *The Gospel Magazine*, 98, 185
- Matthews (James) bookseller, 222
- Mayo (Rev. Dr. Henry) 127
- Middleton (Rev. Erasmus) 161, 193
- Morris (James) 17, 27, 28: "Waxes cold in the work of the Lord," 68
- Newport Pagnell, Toplady at, 212
- Newton (John) hymns by, 189; Meets Toplady, 212
- Nicoll (Dr. John) 6
- Norreys (Lord) 13, 30
- Northcote (Mr., of Honiton) 67, 133
- Nowell (Rev. Dr.) 69
- Olivers (Thomas) 89; attacks Toplady 113; replies to Rowland Hill's pamphlet, 117; meeting between him and Toplady, 119; argues with Romaine, 146; dies, 237
- Orange Street Chapel, 117 to 218
- Original sin, Toplady on, 186
- Osborne (Thomas) the bookseller, 32
- Pearce (Dr. Zachariah) 15
- Poems on Sacred Subjects*, 23
- Psalms and Hymns* (Toplady's Hymn-book) 188
- Quarles's *Emblems*, 83
- "Rock of Ages, The," at Burrington, 42
- Rock of Ages*, Toplady's Hymn, 24, 42, 44, 104, 108
- Romaine (Rev. Wm.) 35; presented to the living of St. Ann's, Blackfriars, 45; at Broad Hembury, 145; dies, 236
- Row (Walter) editor of *The Gospel Magazine*, 193, 214, 222, 291, 296
- Rowe (Mrs. Elizabeth) 27
- Rutherford (Rev. James) 22, 24, 55
- Ryland (Rev. John Collett) 75, 76, 81, 83, 94; preaches at White Row, 148; edits *Gospel Magazine*, 192; with Toplady at Newport Pagnell, 212; worships at Orange Street 217; preaches funeral sermon for Rev. Dr. Gifford, 231; dies, 234; his hymn, "Ah! I shall soon be dying," 273
- Sandiman (Rev. Robert) 48
- St. Botolph's, Aldersgate, Toplady at, 175
- St. Clement's, Strand, Toplady at, 183
- St. Sepulchre's, Holborn, Toplady at, 175
- Scheme of Christian and Philosophical Necessity asserted*, The, 160, 167
- Scott (Elizabeth) 274
- Scott (Rev. Thomas, of Lowestoft) 274
- Scott (Rev. Thomas) the Commentator, 241
- Sedgwick (Daniel) 231
- Sellon, (Rev. Walter) 87, 158, 181
- Sellon (Rev. William) 197
- Serle, Ambrose, 58, 74; at Broad Hembury, 141; his motto, 142; settles at Heckfield, 235; dies, 236
- Sermons, List of Toplady's, 184, 299
- Sheldon, 65, 300, 301
- Shiles, Miss, and her sampler, 67
- Shirley (Hon. and Rev. Walter) 162; and the scaffold accident, 195; his hymns, 275
- Six Students of St. Edmund Hall, The, 69
- Skull, The "young gentleman" and the, 195
- Smith (Rev. Haddon) 94
- S. P., 276
- Spafields Chapel, 197
- S. P. R., 276
- Steele (Miss Anne) Hymns by, 190, 276
- Stennett (Rev. Dr. Samuel) 114, 279
- Sterling (Elizabeth) 222, 226
- Stocker (John) 282
- Sun Insurance Company, 63, 67

- Toplady (Rev. Augustus Montague)
 Birth, 4; Enters Westminster School, 6; Enters Trinity College, Dublin, 17; "Brought nigh" by Morris, 18; reads Manton, 21; his first volume, 23; his common-place books, 25; forms friendships with Gill and Romaine, 30; at Blagdon, 38; at Duke Street Chapel, 46; at Farley Hungerford, 46; at Harpford, 49; his vicarage burnt down, 61; removes to Broad Hembury, 64; writes *The Church of England Vindicated*, &c., 69; his friendships with Ryland and Hitchin, 74; issues his translation of Zanchy, 84; the struggle with Wesley, 87; loses his mother, 92; his Broad Hembury Hymns, 99; attacks the Feathery Divines, 109; his meeting with *l*ivers, 119; his meeting with Dr. Johnson, 127; his friendship with Mrs. Macaulay, 133; entertains Serle and Romaine at Broad Hembury, 141; criticises Lord Chesterfield's *Letters*, 149; his *Historic Proof*, 158; settles in London, 174; hires Orange Street Chapel, 177; Toplady as preacher, 179; as essayist, 185; editor of the *Gospel Magazine*, 185; his *Psalms and Hymns*, 188; relinquishes editorship of the *Gospel Magazine*, 193; his friendship with Lady Huntingdon, 194; writes to Dr. Dodd, 206; his last journey to Broad Hembury, 208; dies, 226; Bibliography, 289; list of his letters, 293; *Chamber Studies*, 296; list of his sermons, 299
- Toplady (Catharine), Toplady's mother, 4, 8, 28; dies, 95
- Toplady (Francis) 95
- Toplady (Richard) Toplady's father, 4
- Townsend (Rev. Joseph) of Pewsey, 162
- Trevecca, Toplady at, 195
- Tucker (William) of Chard, 191, 283
- Turner (Rev. Daniel) 285
- Venn (Rev. Henry) 79, 162; interview with Rev. J. W. Fletcher, 221
- Wallin (Rev. Benjamin) 114, 286
- Wallis (Mr. Samuel) 209
- Washington (George) 240
- Watts (Rev. Dr. Isaac) hymns by, 189
- Wesley (Rev. Charles) Hymns by, 190, 230
- Wesley (Rev. John) Toplady writes to him, 20; his reference to Dr. Gill, 34; attacks Toplady, 87, 115; *Dialogue between Wesley and Sellon*, 118; as pictured by Toplady, 161; his serious illness, 166; report concerning Toplady circulated by Wesley's followers, 216; dies, 237
- Westminster School, 6
- W-gt-n (J) 287
- What though my frail eyelids refuse*, 59
- When langour and disease invade*, 218
- Whitefield (Rev. George) 29, 164
- Wilkes (John) 203
- Wilson (Rev. Dr. Thomas) 35; his passion for Mrs. Macaulay, 155; and the skull, 195; presents a gold medal to Mrs. Macaulay, erects a statue to Mrs. Macaulay, 202; disillusioned, 238; dies, 240
- Wingrove (John) 287
- Woburn, Beds, Toplady at, 174
- Your harps, ye trembling saints*, 101
- Zanchius on *Absolute Predestination*, 25; Translation by Toplady, 84