

Memoirs of John Geard of Hitchin, in the County of Hertford.

Vol. 2.

Inside front cover

E.J. Geard
80 Park Drive
Port Elizabeth
S. Africa

Letter pasted inside front cover, addressed on the rear to "Rev J. Geard, with B....(?) hand by Mrs Crowley"

Dear Father,

I have only been to say the I am obliged by the grasses (?) - . .

Can you send me by Return of Mrs Crowley's conveyance a copy of the oaths required to be taken by Dissenting Ministers in order to obtain a Certificate for Preaching. If you can possible send either a Book or any Papers to the affect – so soon, as our Mayour is just going out of office – & the next may no be so favorable.

Yours,
Chas Geard

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²⁵ Lord's Day, May the 29th 1785, about a quarter after 4 o'clock in the morning, my wife was safely delivered of another son, and, through the Divine goodness, had a merciful time. He was named Thomas after my grandfather Geard.

June the 16th, I was alarmed with the report of a terrible fire at Biggleswade.

I went upon the Windmill hill near Hitchin and from thence could see columns of smoke ascend up like clouds, though the fire was eleven miles off.

On the 20th, I went to Biggleswade, and saw somewhat of the dreadful effects of this fire. It was an awful sight indeed. There were more than one hundred dwelling houses quite destroyed, and about twenty more that were destroyed, to a greater or less degree.

²⁶ There were seventy-nine poor families who were quite burned out. Several maltings were destroyed, and the Dissenting Meeting house, in which I had repeatedly preached, and in which good old Mr. David Evans had preached for many years, was quite destroyed. There was not anything belonging to the Meeting House that was, but was burned. There were few, if any persons of property, in the town but what were affected by this calamity, more or less, though some were affected much more than others. Mr. Herbert, merchant,

was deeply affected, as to loss of property of different kinds. Mr. Foster suffered considerably, but he suffered but little compared with Mr. Herbert, and compared with what he was in imminent danger of suffering. Yet there was mercy mingled along with affliction, in this case. I do not recollect that there was any life lost, whereas there was one, if no more lost at the Potton ²⁷fire in 1783.

June the 29th, I went to London, and the same day I had an opportunity of seeing Lunardi's Balloon go off! Lunardi did not go up with it himself, this time; but a lady and gentleman did. They were inclosed in something, in which they could either stand or sit down, which was fastened to the bottom of the Balloon, and out of which they were secured from falling by a kind of wooden balcony, which surrounded it. They went off, after they had cleared the houses, which they had been in danger of not completely doing, at the first outset, in a kind of majestic manner. They ascended considerably higher than the top of St. Pauls, and gradually passed quite over London. They by degrees lessened as to the view of them, and by and by became quite ²⁸invisible, the Balloon itself, as well as the gentleman and lady. They however descended safe the same day, at some miles distance from London. They set off on the Southwark side of the river Thames, and went over that river, at a great height above it. I thought it then, and so I do still, to be too nearly bordering upon presumption, nor do I know of any good end that has ever been answered by that invention, nor do I see that any good end is ever likely to be answered by it.

July the 1st, I met the committee for examining and recommending begging cases from the country, relative to meeting houses, in order to have the Cotton End case recommended by them, at the Jamaica Coffee House, Cornhill, London. The poor people at Cotton End, having had some years before a new meeting house ²⁹built, and there being a debt left upon it, the famous John Howard Esq. who had a seat at Cardington, in the neighbourhood of Cotton End, and who had always been a good friend to the Cotton End interest, after having subscribed twenty pounds at first, and given another additional twenty pounds to reduce the debt, offered to advance all the remainder, if he could have authority from London to conclude that he should be reimbursed, what he advanced, in addition to what he absolutely gave, in two or three years. He called upon me and made this proposal. I wrote to London to Mr. Benjamin Wallin upon this subject: and after consulting his brethren, Mr. Wallin gave me to understand that he thought Mr. Howard would, in process of time, be reimbursed. This I communicated to Mr. Howard, ³⁰and, upon the strength of Mr. Wallin's intimation, Mr. Howard advanced the money. Several years had elapsed and no efficient steps had been taken for the reimbursement of Mr. Howard, and in the meanwhile,

Mr. Wallin was removed by death. I found, after a while, that Mr. Howard felt hurt, and thought himself neglected, and he signified as much to me, more than once. I felt hurt as well as Mr. Howard, and the more so as I had had a concern in what induced him to advance the money. At length, I so strongly remonstrated upon this subject that the matter was taken up by some gentlemen in London and its neighbourhood, in real earnest. The Committee before mentioned took up this case, before its regular turn, availing themselves ³¹of an extra rule which they had, which enabled them in extraordinary cases, to do it. But it was suggested that in order to accomplish this purpose, I myself must go to London to beg this money. Though this was an office which abstractedly I was not desirous of, yet as they had no settled pastor at Cotton End, and as I had had some concern in Mr. Howard's advancing the money, I considered it as a kind of duty to undertake this business. Accordingly, having arranged matters with my own people, and contrived about having them supplied, by the minister who then supplied at Cotton End, on those Sabbaths on which I

should be absent on their business, I went to London and met the Committee at the times before mentioned. I found no difficulty as to the Committee recommending the case.

³² Having got the case recommended, I the next day began acting upon the recommendation, and did not quite finish my begging business till the 5th of August. In attending to this business I had many tiresome walks in London and its vicinity, and met with a great many disappointments. I was more successful I understood, than many others were, in the same compass of time, and finished sooner than most did. I met with civil treatment from nearly all that I called upon, whether they gave me anything or not, and from some I met with exceedingly kind and respectful treatment. I obtained in all upwards of ninety pounds, which was not only enough to pay the debt, but reimburse me for the positive expenses that I had been at in the business. ³³I got no more than one guinea as the subscription of any one person. I was not all the time between the 29th of June, and the 5th of August in London, but I came home once in the interval and staid some days before I returned.

On the 17th of August I went to Mr. Howard's seat at Cardington, with his money, which I had collected for him. As I did not meet with him at home, I went to Bedford and left the money with Mrs. Smith, Mr. Smith the minister's wife, he likewise being from home. As I understood, however, from Mr. Howard's servant that it was possible I might find him at home, if I returned that way, I concluded to do so, and was glad to find him at home, on my return to his house. He was well pleased with what I had done, and, though I was heartily glad ³⁴when I had finished this business, yet I not only never repented engaging in it, but have felt a peculiar satisfaction ever since, whenever I have reflected on it, as it always would have been a painful reflection to me, if Mr. Howard had not been again reimbursed that money which he had generously laid down, under the idea of being sometime or other repaid it, especially as I had some concern in procuring that authority on which he relied for being reimbursed. He was after all, considerably out of pocket by this matter, as he lay out of the money for several years, for which he was not paid any interest. This was what
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Pages 35 - 46 are missing.

⁴⁷ ...Tristrams, with the Captain and Mr. Griffiths. It was remarkable that there should be so little time elapse between the deaths of these gentlemen.

Mr. Tristram was not laid by long before he died. I rather think he was once at Back Street meeting, after Captain Sabine's death, and yet, his own funeral was within a fortnight and two days of the Captain's. Thus, not only must human friendships sooner or later come to an end, as to this world, but human friends may be conducted to the house appointed for all living soon after one another. These intimate friends were conveyed to their respective houses of this kind, in the same month. Thus passeth away the friendship, as well as the glory of this world, as far as it relates to this world.

1786

⁴⁸ February the 7th. On this day, I went to Biggleswade, and attended the funeral of good old Mr. David Evans. He was arrested, January the 27th, with a paralytic stroke, and died February the 2nd aged 76 years. He was this day buried in the meeting house, and great respect was shown him at his funeral. By his own desire, Mr. Mayle of Blunham preached his funeral sermon, from 2 Cor. 1:12 "For our rejoicing in this, the testimony of our

conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards". There was a great number of people attended his funeral. It was calculated the number amounted to 800. Mr. Bowers, who then preached at Biggleswade, ⁴⁹prayed before the sermon. He was not put into the grave till after the sermon, and I then spake over the grave. Mr. Evans had not been capable of preaching for some time before his death. He had lived at Biggleswade more than 30 years. He had labored under great discouragements there, as to apparent non-success. He once told Mr. Foster Senr. of Cambridge, when he went to supply Mr. Robinson's congregation there, that he did not know that he had been instrumental for the conversion of one soul by all his preaching at Biggleswade. If he did not know of any such circumstance either at that time, or afterwards, I came to the knowledge of such a circumstance, after he was dead, in conversing with a man, who, I hope was a truly serious character and who attributed his first serious impression to a sermon that he heard at Biggleswade, and, I understood, preached by Mr. Evans, to whom he never made himself known. ⁵⁰His general character and conduct, however, were highly exemplary. The celebrated Mr. George Whitefield, with all his popularity and success, did not leave behind him a more respectable character than good old Mr. Evans did, with all his apparent comparative want of ministerial success. Though he was but little attended on, in the exercise of his ministry, he was highly esteemed by the town and neighbourhood in general. When he walked in the street, the very children were emulous to show, in their way, their respect for his character. Mr. Kirkby, one of his congregation, once related to me a peculiar anecdote, which bespoke the high estimation in which the general character of Mr. Evans was held. Mr. Kirkby, soon after he was settled in the neighbourhood of Biggleswade, as a farmer, to which he had removed ⁵¹out of Leicestershire, was at public dinner at Baldock, I presume, at one of the fairs held there. Somehow or other, the conversation at table took a turn, that led one of the company to speak about Biggleswade, who knew nothing of Mr. Kirkby, nor that he had anything to do with Biggleswade, much less that he had any connection with Mr. Evans, and whom perhaps, somebody or other of Biggleswade, had some way or other lately displeased. He spake about Biggleswade, somewhat to the following purport. "Biggleswade is a comical sort of place. I do not know that there is above one honest man there. I do believe there is one. The old Presbyterian parson is, I believe, an honest man. I do not know that there is any other there." Now, though, I trust the man was far enough from being right in ⁵²his opinion, relative to other people, yet what he said bore an exceedingly honorable testimony to the character of Mr. Evans, whom, it appeared, he meant, by the old Presbyterian parson, and this coming from one who was far enough, I presume, from being a Presbyterian himself, and who, perhaps, knew nothing or next to nothing of Mr. Evans, except what he had derived from general report concerning him, spoke so much the more forcibly in honor of Mr. Evans.

April the 24th, I this day went to the Quarter Sessions at Hertford, and there took the oath and signed the declarations, which were required by the Act of Parliament, passed in 1779, relative to Protestant Dissenting ministers. By doing this, I not only was exempted from all legal pains and penalties, but exempted from all Parish offices, and also from serving in the Militia.

June

Pages 53 – 58 are missing.

⁵⁹ ...Baptist church at Yeovil, and for a considerable part of that time a deacon thereof. He was exceedingly comfortable upon his dying bed. He was nearly or quite delivered from the

anxious desire of life, and the slavish fear of death. God's covenant, Jesus Christ and his salvation, and a good hope through grace, were the grand supports of his mind, and topics of his conversation, in those trying circumstances. He spake exceedingly debasingly of himself, and well of God. Sin appeared to be the object of his peculiar abhorrence, and Christ of his support and delight. As he died of a dropsy, we were afraid to keep him long, and therefore, on Lord's day August the 6th he was buried, at Five Ashes, by the side of my dear mother. A vast number of people attended his funeral. I do not know that I ever saw so many people at any funeral before in ⁶⁰my life. My dear father being a man that was exceedingly respected, and being buried on the Lord's day, were two reasons that operated to produce such a concourse of people at his funeral. It gave me a melancholy kind of pleasure to hear and see so many testimonies of respect as I did, during his last illness, and at, and after his death. My father was carried to his grave by six of his servants, the youngest of whom had worked for him, not much less than twenty years, and another of them had worked for him and his father for more than forty years. One of them was in the seventy seventh year of his age.

Lord's day, August the 13th. Mr. Gillard preached a funeral sermon for my honored father, at Yeovil meeting, from 2 Thess.2:16 "A good hope ⁶¹through grace". This was a passage that he frequently mentioned, in his last illness, and, on this account, I particularly wished it might be improved, as his funeral text. A great number of people went to hear the funeral sermon, and some who were never in that place of worship before.

My father had had a tomb erected for my mother, on one side of which there was an inscription to her memory. I directed the following inscription to be put on the other side in memory of him.

In memory of
Samuel Geard,
Who departed this life,
August 4th, 1786.
Aged 58.
⁶²The Graves of all Christ's Saints He blest,
And softened every Bed;
Where should the dying Members rest,
But with the dying Head?

It is remarkable that, during the little time I was in my native country, there was a marriage, a death, and a birth, in my family. I had a sister who married, a father who died, and a niece who was born, as my sister Pittard was safely delivered of a daughter, August the 18th.

My father's second wife, to whom he had been married some years, did not long survive him, as she died the 26th of the following month, September.

After having made some arrangements, relative to my poor father's affairs, I set out from my native country, with my youngest brother Jesse, who was not then quite eleven years of age, on the 22nd of August, and got ⁶³safe home, on the 26th. I rode a nag of my brother Thomas's, and Jesse rode a little nag, which my poor father had had to ride on some time before his death and which I took, together with a bridle and saddle, at a fair valuation.

I had been absent from home, for upwards of eight weeks, and, during that period, had had a great deal of trouble, care and perplexity, which much interrupted my rest by night, as well

as my ease by day. I do not know that I had eight good nights rest, in all the eight weeks that I was absent. This considerably reduced my flesh though through Divine goodness, it did not materially affect my health.

During my absence, several deaths took place, in my congregation: and among others, Mr. Matthew Foster of Little Wymondley died, on the 13th of July, aged 58 years. He left my wife fifty pounds ⁶⁴and my son Samuel fifty more.

On September the 1st, which was after my return, Mrs. Hollick, wife of Ebenezer Hollick Esqr. Of Whittlesford, died, aged 85 years. She was my wife's great aunt. On this day, my brother Thomas, whose nag I had rode to Hitchin, came hither, and he rode the nag back. He went to London on the 4th, and, during that week, I went to London, and we went together to Doctors Commons, and there proved my poor father's will, he having appointed us executors thereof.

On the 4th of September, I went to Muswell Hill to Dr. Stennett's. There I had the peculiar pleasure to drink tea with Dr. Stennett, and Dr. Addington, and my friend Rippon. It was a peculiar gratification to me to drink tea with the two Doctors, in the house of one of them, and to see the Christian friendship they each of them manifested towards ⁶⁵the other, though some years before they had had a controversy with each other on the subject of Infant and Adult baptism.

September the 5th, I went from Muswell Hill, near Highgate, to London, and on this day, I attended a general meeting of the Dissenting ministers of the three denominations, at Dr. Williams's Library, Redcross Street. The particular design of this meeting, was to address the King, on his providential escape, when his life was attempted by Magaret Nicolson, who it appeared, was insane. The address was drawn up by Dr. Stennett, and after some amendments, was agreed to. It was afterwards presented to his Majesty, by Dr. Stennett, attended by a number of other Dissenting ministers.

November the 30th. On this day, I attended ⁶⁶the ordination of Mr. James Bowers at Biggleswade. Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, addressed Mr. Bowers, from

2 Tim. 4:5 "Do the work of an evangelist". Mr. Mayle of Blunham, addressed the people, from 1 Thess.5:12,13 "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and admonish you. And to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake. And be at peace among yourselves." I introduced the service.

Pages 67 – 118 are missing.

¹¹⁹ ...not long after, met the chaise and stopped the horse. Mr. Smith was taken to Hodsee House, that being the nearest place, and his leg was set, and, through Divine Goodness, he finally did well. I found him, at this time as well, as he could well be expected to be. Thus, there was mercy mixed with affliction. I was not only affected with sympathy, with Mr. Smith, under his accident, but, I trust, with gratitude, on my own account, who, though I had met with two dangerous accidents so lately, and had been considerably hurt by one of them, yet had not had any broken bone, by either of them, and that I was now mercifully recovered from the injury that I had sustained.

September 1st. I this day learned that good Mr. Joseph Saunders, the independent minister of Cambridge, died ¹²⁰on August 25th. I was exceedingly sorry for his death. I had heard

before that he was dead, but I did not know the day on which he died until now. He was a friendly, pious, excellent character. I had had exceedingly agreeable interviews with him, at different times. I remember once particularly, when I called on him at Cambridge, he had Fox's Acts and Monuments before him, and he pointed to me the picture of the burning of the martyr Saunders, at Coventry in bloody Queen Mary's day, who, I understood, was an ancestor of his; and he seemed delighted with the idea of his being a direct descendant of such a man, and of the family and name, of such an excellent character, "of whom the world was not worthy".

¹²¹ September 16th. I attended a meeting of ministers at Biggleswade. Mr West of Carleton preached from Psalm 126:3 "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad". And Mr Dickens of Keysoe preached from Psalm 116:12 "What shall I render unto the Lord, for all His benefits towards me". They were two good discourses, and well connected together, by previous agreement. In the evening, we supped at Mr John Foster's; and by Mr Foster's particular desire, this question was discussed after supper. "Which of the two does most injury to religious, indifference or intemperate zeal?" The question was narrowed on both sides, by being confined to such characters only, as might be considered as the subjects of real religion, at bottom. This ¹²²question, in a most friendly and agreeable manner, was discussed on both sides, and the company were nearly balanced, as to their different opinions. There was no difficulty in settling one point, namely, that both indifference, and intemperate zeal, did great injury to Religion, but the question was which of the two did the most injury to it. Good friend Dickens, who was a very pleasant as well as pious man, much entertained us with his shrewd remarks upon the subject; and his decided opinion was that

Intemperate zeal, did the most injury to Religion. Take everything together, I never spent a more agreeable day at any meeting of ministers than this was in my life, nor a more agreeable evening particularly in conversation.

¹²³ November 5th. This day, being considered at the CENTENARY of the Glorious Revolution in 1688, it was observed, at Hitchin, in an extraordinary kind of way. Mr Griffiths attended upon this occasion as well as myself, at a public meeting that was held at our place. He said something by way of introduction, relative to the Revolution, and then prayed. I then preached a sermon from Psalm 126:3 "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad".

Lord's day the 16th November, that being the fifth Old Stile, and I presumed, the exact centenary of the Revolution, and King William, then Prince of Orange, literally having landed at Torbay in Devonshire, November 5th 1688, I again took occasion to recur to that ¹²⁴important event, and preached, in the afternoon, from Heb. 10:32 "But call to remembrance the former days". On this occasion, I particularly noticed several important events, of a national kind, that had, at different periods, taken place, in favour of this nation, but I principally dwelt and enlarged upon the last and best of them, that I particularly noticed, namely,

THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION, of 1688.

On November the 14th, an extraordinary meeting of prayer, was held at Back Street Meeting House, between our congregation and that at Back Street, on the melancholy circumstances our King was in at the time. I made a proposal to this effect to Mr Griffiths, and he readily fell in with it. Mr Griffiths made a short introduction, I then prayed. Mr Wilshere ...

Pages 125 to 140 are missing.

1789.

¹⁴¹ March the 3rd. I this day learned that Mr Samuel James, eldest son of my worthy predecessor the Rev. Samuel James, died of an apoplexy, on the last day of the preceding month. He died February the 28th 1789 aged 40 years. He was the first person belonging to his father's congregation that I ever saw, at least, to know. I saw him first at an association at Sodbury, in Gloucestershire, and afterwards at Bratton, in Wiltshire, in 1772, and the little acquaintance which took place in that year between him and me, paved the way for my coming to Hitchin, after the death of his father, under the superintending influence of our over-ruling Providence. He lived at Hitchin for some years after I came, in 1774, and afterwards removed to London. He was, I think, a year or two older than myself. In the course of this month also, I received an account, from my cousin ¹⁴²Ann Curtis, of Berwick, in Somersetshire, of the death of my uncle John Taylor, of East Coker, in the same county. He was, I suppose, about 60 years of age. He was my grandfather, John Taylor's only son, though he had several daughters. In consequence of his dying without children, I became entitled, as my mother's heir, to the fourth part of my grandfather's freehold estate at East Coker. I and my aunts Brown and Highmore, afterwards sold our parts to my uncle Curtis, who was husband to my other aunt.

April the 23rd. This day was appointed by the King, as a day of Public Thanksgiving, for his recovery out of that trying affliction, with which he had been lately exercised, and on account of which the extraordinary meeting of prayer had been held, which is noticed, Page the 124th. The service began at our place, about 10 o'clock, by singing. Upon this ¹⁴³occasion four of our aged brethren, namely Michael Mardel, William Law, William Lane, and John Merritt, engaged in prayer and thanksgiving. Their ages together amounted to more than three hundred years. I preached on that occasion, from Rom 11:36 "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen". We made a public collection this day towards the expenses attending the measures that were using to procure the abolition of the abominable African Slave Trade, and which, though it was not effected for several years afterwards, yet by the persevering efforts that were made, was accomplished, in the year 1807. The whole services of this day were not concluded until between one and two o'clock.

April the 28th. In the evening I attended the funeral of Mr Crawley, a good old disciple, who was a member of Back ¹⁴⁴Street Church. He was about 74 years old when he died. He was left a fatherless child, when he was quite young, and his mother used to go a-washing for her living. He used, when he was a boy, to go from Hitchin to Maidencroft to drive plough for Mr Bradley's father. Providence, by decrees, so favoured him, that he took a little farm at or near Langley, where he continued about thirteen years. From thence he removed to Kimpton Park where he continued twenty-four years. He was exceedingly diligent, and by the blessing of Providence upon his diligence, he left behind him at his death about three thousand pounds. His wife died some years before him. In his will he remembered his wife's relations as well as his own, and left several considerable legacies amongst them. Among others, he left £200- 0s-0d. to John Merritt's wife, who was neice to his wife. He also left £200. 0s. 0d. to ...

Pages 145 and 146 are missing.

¹⁴⁷it makes the before mentioned circumstance still more pleasing. This valuable man died suddenly, on the

October the 26th. I attended a meeting at Bishop's Stortford in the County of Hertford. This meeting was constituted of a number of ministers and gentlemen, to endeavour to form a Society for the relief of the widows and children or Protestant dissenting ministers of either of these counties, who should be members of this Society at the time of their death, and also of such ministers, as should, through age and infirmities, be rendered incapable of public service. At this meeting the foundation of this important Society was formed, and the first guinea paid towards constituting ¹⁴⁸its fund. According to its rules, no objects were to be relieved, til it had realized a capital of five hundred pounds, and then one fourth part of it's annual income was to be liable to be appropriated for the relief of such objects as might need its assistance til its capital should amount to one thousand pounds. After this, one half of it's annual income was to be liable to be appropriated to the relief of such objects, til it's capital should amount to three thousand pounds, and after that, the whole income, if necessary was liable to be appropriated for the relief of such objects. I have lived to see not only the realization of the capital of one thousand but of three thousand pounds, years ago, and the hearts of a number of widows and some superannuated ¹⁴⁹ministers to sing for joy that ever such a Society should be instituted. Mr. Field an Independent minister in Essex, subscribed one guinea, or some one did for him by which he became a member of this Society. Before the expiration of a year, when another guinea would have been to be paid, he died. His widow was the first object that was relieved by this Society. And by the time she died, I believe, she had received from this Society, three hundred guineas for her husbands one. My good old friend Baskerville of Hertford, being reduced to such a state of weakness, as to render him incapable of his work, I went to the meeting of the Society on the 26th of May 1807, and there and then got him upon the Society, and obtained thirty pounds for him and paid him that sum, on my return from that ¹⁵⁰meeting. And £30.0s.0d. per annum was voted to him by that Society to the very day on which he died, June 14th 1814. On that day, a meeting of the Society was held at Dunmow, in Essex, and the above named sum was voted him that very day, and it so happened that he died within a few hours of the time that the money was voted him, as he died about 10 o'clock in the evening of that day. All the money, including this last, that was voted to Mr. Baskerville by the Society, amounted to £240.0s.0d.

It adds much to my satisfaction, as it concerns my good friend Baskerville, to reflect that it was through me, as an instrument, that he became a member of this Society. And it still in ...

Pages 151 to 188 missing

1791

¹⁸⁹ Lord's Day, February 13th, I preached a funeral sermon for Mr. William Thomas. He died, on the 8th, aged 22 years. His father, Mr. William Thomas, died in 1781, and left him a handsome fortune, which proved, as to this world, a curse to him, as it enabled him to ruin his constitution by intemperance, to which he was strangely prone from his childhood. It would have been much better for him if his father had died in Hitchin workhouse, and he had been obliged to drive plow for a groat a day or whatever he could have got, in order to procure a bit of bread. I never saw, in any instance a more striking display of the vanity and danger of worldly riches than were exemplified in him. His father's leaving him, perhaps, the value of ten thousand pounds, was eventually like putting a sword into his hand to stab

himself with. His father ¹⁹⁰was a good man himself, but, alas! He turned out the reverse of what he wished him to be. Though he was bred up to attend at Tylehouse Street Meeting, yet when he got up to mans estate, he forsook his old connections, and linked himself in with such companions as were both a disgrace and a great injury to him. At length, his constitution gave way and he became, at an early period, a victim to his intemperance. I had faithfully and affectionately remonstrated with him both by letter and in conversation about his conduct. The last time I had an opportunity of seeing him was on the 8th of January. It was my contrivance, not his, that I did then see him. One thing at that time, somewhat encouraged, as well as pleased me. After I had faithfully and affectionately talked with him, and signified that I must then leave him, of his ¹⁹¹own accord, he desired me to pray with him before I went, which I accordingly did. It was his desire to be buried in the same vault with his father and mother, who died some years before his father, and while he was quite a little one. She was dead before I came to Hitchin. She was a pious woman. He had also a pious grandmother, whose funeral I attended with him in Kings Walden church yard, some years before his own death, and to whom he was kind in her lifetime, and she was buried at his expense. This was a commendable part of his conduct, as was also his leaving about three thousand pounds of his property among the poor relations of his mother. May it appear at the great day, that the prayers of his father and mother and other pious relatives were answered concerning him in his being called at the eleventh hour.

A vast ¹⁹²number of people attended his funeral. His corpse was in the Meeting House during the service. It was crowded with people. Perhaps there were a thousand people within the walls, besides hundreds that were without, and could not get in at all. I presume, there were some who were quite disappointed in their expectations as to one article particularly, and I took care to inform them, if that was their object, that they would be disappointed at the very outset. I therefore prefaced my sermon somewhat thus: I have heard it remarked that funeral sermons were designed not for the dead, but for the living; that this was quite my own opinion, and therefore I should say nothing at all about the dead, except that he was dead, and that he died young, and that therefore here was a lesson for us all that we must die, and for the young as well as others, and a proof that they may die, even while they were young. ¹⁹³My text on this very affecting occasion was Deaut. 32;29 “O that they were wise, that they understood this: that they would consider their latter end!”

Part of pages 193 and 194 missing

¹⁹⁴ ... worse and worse, till, on the following Friday evening April 1st he sweetly, softly and calmly slept in Jesus.....

¹⁹⁵ ... burying ground, belonging to his Meeting House. The Rev. William Clarke M.A. formerly of Unicorn Yard, London, but, at this time, pastor of the Baptist Church, at Exeter, addressed an amazing concourse of people at the grave, and the next day, preached the funeral sermon on Gen. 5.24 “And Enoch walked with God, and he was not for God took him”. The very passage, though at that time unknown to the preacher, on which Mr. Day delivered his first discourse to the people at Wellington, after he became a student at Bristol. Mr. Day was 70 years of age when he died.

I have heard Mr. Day preach repeatedly in my younger time, at Yeovil and elsewhere, with peculiar pleasure. He was not only an excellent man but an excellent preacher.

July 22nd, Mr. Joseph Button, senior, died, aged 74 years and

July 24th my dear daughter Mary ¹⁹⁶died aged 13 months and a few days. I was exceedingly sorry for the death of them both. I boarded with Mr. Button, from my coming to Hitchin, the second time, June 11th 1774, to the time of my marrying on the 13th July 1778. Mr. Button had always been one of my tried steady friends. He was buried, July 25th, which was the very day the from the time of the burial of Mr. Richard Foster of Cambridge. At the time I boarded with Mr. Button, there were four of us that constituted the family, namely, Mr. Button, and his wife, who was great aunt to my dear wife, and Sarah Crawley, and myself. The other three were all now numbered among the dead, and I was the only one that was left among the living.

July 29th. My dear child was buried in the same grave with my dear Betsy, and put upon her coffin. My good brother Mr. Griffiths, was so kind as to attend her to the grave. Neither I ...

Pages 197 to 200 are missing

1792.

²⁰¹ March 4th. Being Lord's Day I publicly read to my congregation a copy of a petition from the town and neighbourhood of Hitchin, to Parliament for the abolition of the abominable Slave Trade, and a number of people signed it. Petitions for the same purpose were presented from many other places.

April 4th, I was exceedingly rejoiced this day to understand, that it was carried by a great majority in the House of Commons, on the 2nd. that the Slave Trade should be gradually abolished.

Lord's Day, May 20th. A very solemn and affecting circumstance took place. Two venerable old brethren, Daniel Mardle and John Merritt, who had walked together in church fellowship more than half a century and who both died on the 15th were buried. Their ²⁰²corpses were both carried into the Meeting House, and were there all the time their sermon was preaching, and then were carried out and buried one after another. I preached on this occasion, from John 3.14/15

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life". The text was chosen by John Merritt. Daniel Mardle was 88 years of age and John Merritt 82. A great many people heard their sermon and came to pay their last respects to these respectable characters, who for so many years had been honourable members of the church.

June 12th. I received the intelligence of the death of Ebenezer Hollick Esq. who died on the 10th at ²⁰³Whittlesford, near Cambridge, aged about 86 years. He was born at or near Cranfield in Bedfordshire, and when he was a young man came to Charlton Mill, near Hitchin, and worked in that mill for seven shillings a week. While he was in this neighbourhood, he joined our church, during the pastorship of Mr. Needham, and, though he communed for many years with the Baptist Church at Cambridge, after he removed into that neighbourhood, yet he never was dismissed from this church to that. While he remained in this neighbourhood, he married Miss Ann Foster, daughter of Mr. Matthew Foster of Little Wymondley, and one of the celebrated six brothers. She also became a member of Tylehouse Street Church, in Mr. Needham's time and never was dismissed, though she also, for many years, communed with the church at Cambridge. She ²⁰⁴died in 1786 aged about 86 years. She was my dear wife's great aunt. Some time after Mr. Hollick's marriage

he removed to Hauxton Mills near Cambridge, to superintend the business of Mrs. Patterson: and, after a while, he succeeded her in the business. His wife had £500.0s.0d. to her fortune and by what she told my wife, in five years after they began business, the five hundred pounds rose to five thousand. Before Mr. Hollick's death he had purchased the manor at Whittlesford and also another manor besides, so that before his death, he was Lord of two manors. When he died he left property behind him, to the value, perhaps, four score, if not one hundred thousand pounds. He was an industrious man, and in particular instances, generous. Both he and his wife were ²⁰⁵kind to me and my wife in different instances and at different times. He was succeeded at Whittlesford by Ebenezer Hollick, Esq, his nephew whom he brought up. He also left considerable property, and among the rest, a manor to William Hollick Esq. of Cambridge thus the seven shilling a week man at Charlton Mill, was not only raised to Esquireship himself, but was the means of raising two of his nephews to Esquireships. He was occasionally kind to his old religious connections at Hitchin, and in Bedfordshire.

Lord's Day June the 24th. I preached a funeral sermon at Hitchin for Mr. Hollick from Prov. 22:2 "The rich and poor meet together." In the month of July, I went, with my son Samuel, into Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, and ²⁰⁶Buckinghamshire. We went to Northampton, and saw Mr. now Dr. Ryland, who had then had an invitation to succeed Dr. Evans at Bristol, and which he eventually accepted, both as to the congregation and the Academy. I spent some time agreeably with good old Mr. John Evans, who formerly had been for about 32 years pastor of the Baptist Church at Foxon, near Arnsbury in Leicestershire, but who had, through age and infirmities, resigned his charge at Foxon, and had now removed his residence to Northampton. He told me, I think, that during the time of his being at Foxon, he had baptized about 70 persons. He was an excellent man, and had formerly been one of good old Mr. Foskett's pupils at Bristol. He lived in a state of weakness and infirmity, several years at Northampton, after his removal from Foxon, and communed with ²⁰⁷the Baptist Church at Northampton.

August the 30th. About a quarter before eight o'clock in the morning, another merciful salvation was wrought out in my family, by my dear wife's being safely delivered of another daughter. Out of respect to the memory of my honoured mother, the name of Naomi was given to her.

On the 4th and 5th of December, I spent some time very agreeably with Mr. John Thomas. I heard him preach, on the 4th at Much Wymondley, from Ezekial 36:27 "And I will put my spirit within you." And on the 5th, at Walkern, from Acts 11:23

"Cleave unto the Lord." He was son to Mr. Thomas, a member if not deacon, of the Baptist Church at Fairford, in Gloucestershire, at whose house I once was. He had been two voyages to the East Indies, in his profession, as a medical man, in one of the East India Company's ships. As he had preached before ²⁰⁸he went to the Indies, he was prevailed upon, by some serious people, after he got there the second time, to stay there, and go among the natives, and endeavour to Christianise them. He staid in the East Indies six years or upwards, and while there got sufficiently acquainted with one or more of the languages of the country, as to be able to preach to them in their own tongue, nor were his labors altogether without some hopeful evidence of success. While he was in that country, he had an opportunity, in one instance, to see the awful as well as superstitious ceremony of a woman's being, with her own consent, burnt upon the funeral pile of her dead husband. I heard him read the relation which he had drawn up of this dreadful scene. He did what he

could with the woman herself as well as others to prevent this from being done, but all his efforts were ²⁰⁹in vain.

When he came from the East Indies, he had it in intention to go back again but he knew not then of any Society formed or likely to be formed, among the Baptists for missionary purposes, but after he came to England, he found to his great joy, that this was the case, and he and Mr. Carey were the two first missionaries who went out under the patronage of this Society, and they left England in a Danish ship, in less than half a year after I saw and heard him at Much Wymondley and Walkern.

1793.

²¹⁰ On the 21st of January, in this year, in consequence of a decree of the National Convention of France, Lewis 16th, their King was beheaded at Paris. As he had been declared inviolable, by the Constituent Assembly, in the new constitution which they had framed, this was an unconstitutional act, whatever might be said about the previous conduct of Lewis. This circumstance was soon after followed by a war betwixt this country and France, which lasted, except an interval of about a 12 month to 1814, so that it was of a duration of about 20 years in all. This has cost this nation perhaps, five hundred millions of pounds, besides many thousands of lives, and has cost all the nations that have been involved in it, several millions of lives.

Pp 211 to 214 missing

1794.

²¹⁵ Lord's Day January the 12th, died Ebenezer Griffiths, only son of the Rev. John Griffiths, my much respected brother, the Independent Minister of this town, about half an hour after 12 o'clock. He was fifteen years old on the 9th. He had been a great while in a declining state. He was uncommonly tall for his age, and his corpse, after he was dead, measured 6 feet. He was a youth of an amiable temper, of promising talents, and, I hope, truly serious. His illness and death were heavily felt by his parents, and particularly by his father, whose life, in a great measure, was wrapped up in his child's life.

On the 20th, I attended his funeral. He was carried in a hearse, and I and his mournful father followed in a post chaise. His mother did not attend. He was carried into the meeting, and I spake on the solemn occasion. He ²¹⁶was then conveyed to the grave. His poor father was much affected, particularly when he came away from the grave. It was a peculiarly affecting scene, and a great number of people assembled to witness it. I went, after the funeral, to Mr. Griffith's and spent the evening with the mourning parents, and endeavoured to console them under their loss, and prayed with them before I came away.

Lord's Day January the 26th, I preached at our own place in the morning, and gave notice that there would be no service in the afternoon and evening. In the afternoon, I preached a funeral sermon, at Back Street Meeting, for poor Ebenezer Griffiths, from Psalm 39:9 "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." This text was preached from, at the particular desire of Mrs. Griffiths, Mr. Griffiths acquiescing in it, and it was at the joint desire of both of them, that I preached the funeral sermon there.

Pages 217 to 222 are missing

²²³ In the month of October, I supplied the Baptist congregation, at College Lane, Northampton, two Sabbaths, they being destitute, through Dr. Rylands having removed, with the consent of the Northampton people, to Bristol, to succeed Dr. Evans, as President of the Academy and pastor of the church, at Broadmead.

I supplied the Northampton congregation, Lord's Days the 12th and 19th. In the intervening week, between these two Sabbaths, I went to Coventry and Birmingham. While I was at Birmingham, I spent some time very agreeably with Mr. Samuel Pearce, who, to the great loss of the churches, has been removed by death a number of years, and also with Dr. Williams, who, at that time, was pastor of an Independent church there, and who afterwards removed to Rotherham, in Yorkshire, and there superintended an Academy as well as an Independent church. He also, is since dead. I preached at the Baptist Meeting where Mr. Pearce was settled, on the 14th, and at Dr. William's on the 15th. ²²⁴Mr. Pearce died, October the 10th, 1799, in the 34th year of his age; and Dr. Williams died, March the 9th 1813, in the 62nd year of his age. While I was at Birmingham and it's vicinity, I had an opportunity of seeing some of the horrible effects of the abominable riots, in 1791, which were a disgrace not only to Birmingham, but to the Nation. Dr. Priestley's Meeting House was still in the same state as when the rioters finally left it, after the flames had burnt themselves out. The walls were standing and that was all. There was nothing else but a heap of ruins. Another Meeting House was totally demolished and not one stone left upon another. This was rebuilding again and almost finished. In the burying ground belonging to this congregation, Mr. Robinson of Cambridge, who died at Birmingham, was buried. I saw also where Dr. Priestley's house stood which was situated a little way from ...

Pages 225 to 250 are missing.

²⁵¹ ...meetings were peculiarly interesting, as the object of them was peculiarly important. The Society was formed of Pado-baptists of various denominations, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Independents. Contributions were made very liberally. One mercantile house alone subscribed in £300.0s.0d. Seven hundred pounds were subscribed by ministers only, of which Mr. Hawe's subscribed five hundred. Some thousands of pounds, I presume, were subscribed in the course of the week, though these were no public collections made this time.

While I was in London this time, I learned that Mrs. Gifford, who formerly lived at Lopen, was dead, and whom, as well as her husband, who had been dead several years, I knew. I also learned that old Mrs. Shoel was dead. My father and mother, and she and her husband, who were nearly of an age, and married much about the same time, and all lived at Montacute, were now all gone.

²⁵² September 30th. Mr. Griffiths, having been incapacitated, for some considerably time by indisposition both of body and mind, for his work, Mr. William Williams, was this day solemnly ordained to the pastoral office, over the Independent church, meeting near Back Street, Hitchin. Mr. Williams is a native of Chester, and had been for some years, at the Independent Academy at Homerton. After having supplied the church for some time, he was unanimously invited to the pastoral office among them, which as their invitation was unanimous, he accepted, and was this day ordained accordingly. Mr. Carver of Melbourne read some suitable portions of Scripture and prayed. Mr. Jennings, of Thaxted, introduced the service, and took the confession of faith. Mr. Wickens, of Dunmow, prayed the ordination prayer, and gave the charge from Colossians 4.17 "And say to Archippus, take heed to ...

Pages 253 to 260 are missing

²⁶¹ ...World to him, but that he hoped he should have rest in another world, however restful he had found this to be. His constitution was exceedingly affected by the affliction and death of his beloved son. He never overcame this shock, and it was as though he had buried everything, as to this world, in his son's grave.

December 25th, I attended the funeral of Mr. John Stevens, a member of Back Street church, who died the 19th aged 91 years. He was a good old disciple. Mr. Williams preached his funeral sermon from Gen. 49.10 "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord".

1796.

²⁶² In the month of February, in this year, I went to London. On the 22nd, I went to Hammersmith, and, on my thither, I called at Kensington, and spent some time, very agreeably, with Mr. John Saunders, formerly coach man to his Majesty. I had once before dined with him, at Messrs. Wood's near Blackfriars bridge. He was a fine old man, perhaps, six feet high, and was now about 86 years of age. He drove the state coach till he was 70 years of age, and then, at his own request, he retired, upon a pension. The King did not wish to part with him, but signified that, if it was his desire, he could not deny him. Neat apartments were therefore allotted to him, over the Royal stables at Kensington, and there is was that I visited him. It was a gratifying interview on both sides. Upon my ²⁶³asking the good old man how he was in his mind, he replied, in such a manner, as I do not recollect ever hearing anyone else reply to such a question. It was to the following purport "pretty comfortable, God and I are agreed, he approves of the way of salvation by his son Jesus Christ, and do I". I understood him, that he was awakened about 50 years before. He informed me that his wife was a Pharisee, and that he was a Publican; but she was a mighty church going woman, and that he generally went nowhere, as to any place of worship. His wife in order to induce him to go with her to church, though she at that time, had no taste herself for Evangelical preaching, told him, one day, that there was a

very extraordinary man to preach at church that day. This worked upon his curiosity, and he determined to go. He went, and he found it was an ²⁶⁴extraordinary man indeed, and an extraordinary time to him. It was the celebrated Mr. Romaine, that preached that day, and it was from hearing this sermon, that he dated his conversion, and he had a peculiar respect for Mr. Romaine as long as Mr. Romaine lived, and used to come of a Tuesday from Kensington to London, in his old age, to hear Mr. Romaine at Blackfriars church, and it was upon one such occasion that I met with him, at Messrs. Wood's, he and I having been to hear Mr. Romaine before we met there. I was particularly struck with the venerable old gentleman's appearance, and with his eating his dinner, with his spectacles on. This paved the way to my calling on him at Kensington. In pointing him out to me one of the Messrs. Wood said, Mr. Saunders has had ²⁶⁵his Majesty behind him many a time, referring to his driving him to and from the Parliament house, etc. I understood him, that he was Bodycoachman to the King, before he was State coachman. One reason that he assigned to me for his wishing to resign, when he got to be 70 years of age, was that finding himself not so capable of managing the horses as he used to be, he was afraid of some accident or another. He never had met with any, and he wished to give over before he did. There was great danger of this through the high condition in which the cream coloured horses that drew the State coach, used to be kept, and peoples being so apt to press near the coach when his Majesty went to Parliament. The man who drove the State coach before him, had the misfortune, I understood him, to kill one boy, for which the man was not at all to blame, and

it was not in his power to avoid it. ²⁶⁶The King knew when he was his coachman that he was a Methodist, but respected him nevertheless for that. And he always showed him particular respect whenever he met with him, after he retired, and would sometimes when he saw him stop on purpose kindly to ask him how he did. He was now patiently waiting for his great change, and not at all afraid to die. He had no distressing fears about his state for many years. He was considerably affected as to the article of hearing but his eyesight, with the help of spectacles, was tolerably good. His wife, I apprehend, had been dead a number of years, but he had a good motherly woman to take care of him. I went to prayer with the good old man, before I left him, with which he was much pleased. I never saw him afterwards, nor did he live very long after I saw him, though ...

Pages 267 to 276 are missing

1797

²⁷⁷ In the month of January, I went to London, and while I was there, the finishing stroke was put to the printing of the first volume of *The Beauties of Henry*. While I was in London, I learned also, that my good old friend, Dr. Morgan Jones of Hammersmith, heretofore of Hempstead, was dead. I think, he was 67 years of age, or thereabout, when he died. He was minister at Hempstead, a number of years, and removed to Hammersmith, in or about the year 1780. He kept a large boarding school, at both places.. His father was a minister in Wales, and went over to America, before he died, and died in America. His son Morgan, and his family in general went over with him. Some part of the family came back to England again, but some part of it remained there. Mr. Morgan Jones, after ²⁷⁸having been in America, about five years, returned to England. He had always, however, a very great partiality for America. He was educated, partly, by Mr. Bernard Foskett of Bristol and partly, by Dr. Llewelin, in London. He was an exceedingly good scholar. I have understood, that he was the most learned Baptist minister in England. After his removal from Hempstead to Hammersmith, he received a diploma from Rhode Island College in America, creating him Dr. of Laws. He was particularly intimate with my honoured predecessor, Mr. James, and he had a principle concern, as an instrument, in bringing me to Hitchin, and behaved like a father to me, after I came. I had a great respect for him in life, and highly rever his memory now he is dead. It was he that ...

Pages 279 to 296 are missing

²⁹⁷ ...Consolidated Amenities, and which sum was bought into the said Stock, accordingly.

On Lord's Day January 27th, I preached a funeral sermon for our aged brother, John Goodwin, who died, at his son's at Lairhall, on the 17th, and was buried, in Kings Walden churchyard, on the 21st aged about 78 years. He was joined to the church, in the year 1753, so that he had been a member 45 years. I preached his funeral sermon from 2 Cor.5.8 "Willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord". This was peculiarly applicable to the feelings of his mind for a considerable time, as he had been wishing, with submission to the Divine will for death, whenever God should see fit to call for him.

Lord's Day February 10th, I preached in the afternoon a funeral sermon for sister Montague, from Rev. 21.4 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes".

She was buried ²⁹⁸ January 26th in Kimpton churchyard, aged 75 years. She was added to the church in 1756 so that she had been a member upwards of 40 years.

On the 18th April Lady Burford called at my house, and we had some serious conversation together. She was the wife of a Lord Burford, son to the Duke of St. Albans, and who, by the death of his father, has since become Duke of St. Albans himself. They, at this time, resided at the house at Pauls Walden, which was formerly occupied by the benevolent Lady Bowes, whose daughter married the Earl of Strathmore. Lady Burford was one of the few among the noble, that was called. She once, if no more, heard me at our meeting house, and in more instances than one, manifested a respect for me. She usually attended on the ministry of my good neighbour, the Reverend Mr. Waltham, at that time, curate of Ickleford and Pirton. She died at Pauls Walden, July 18th, 1800, and made a happy finish. She was interred in the family vault of the Duke of St. Albans, at Hanworth, in ²⁹⁹ Middlesex, on the 26th July, and her funeral service was read, at her particular desire, by Mr. Waltham, who preached two funeral sermons for her, on Lord's Day 3rd August, one at Ickleford, and the other at Pirton, to crowded congregations.

On the 10th May, I attended at Mr. Booth's meeting house, in London, on a very interesting occasion, the designation of four missionaries, of the Baptist persuasion, who were going out to the East Indies, namely Messrs. Ward, Marshman, Brunsdon, and Grant. I had an opportunity of seeing them all. Three of them, namely, Messrs. Marshman, Brunsdon and Grant, were members of Dr. Ryland's church at Broadmead, Bristol. All these three were married and I had an opportunity of seeing all their wives. Messrs. Ripon, Button, and Timothy and Thomas Thomas engaged in prayer, on this interesting occasion, and Mr. Booth, in a very solemn and impressive manner, addressed the missionaries.

On the 31st May, I went to brother ³⁰⁰ John Merritt's in Wainwood, to see him and his wife, who were both of them exceedingly ill, one on one bed, and the other on another. I conversed with them both, and as there was some distance between the rooms in which they were, and a passage between them, I prayed in that passage that they might both hear. This was a peculiarly affecting scene. This was Friday. He had been poorly for some time, but he was at Hitchin the preceding Monday. She had been ill some weeks. They were both godly people, and had both encouragement in their own minds at this time, and he in particular, who in the contemplation of approaching death, said that he was not daunted at it.

Lord's Day June 2nd, I had the afflicting intelligence in the morning, that sister Merritt was dead that morning, and in the evening that brother Merritt her husband was dead also. Thus, they both died, in one day. It was a peculiar consolation, however, to reflect that they both went to ³⁰¹ heaven in one day, and thus begun their eternal Sabbath together. As she died first and her death could not be long concealed from him, when he was informed of her removal, instead of lamenting it, he appeared to rejoice in the idea that she was gone to a better world, and that he was likely soon to follow her thither, which he did before night. She died about 1 o'clock in the morning, and he about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. They were a loving couple in life and they were not long divided in death.

June the 3rd, I went again to Brother Merritt's and was witness to such a scene, as I never saw before. He had been removed into her room, and I saw them both lying side by side dead, on the same bed. This was peculiarly trying to me, as they were both characters that I highly respected.

June the 5th, I attended the funeral of this much respected couple, John and Lettice Merritt. They were brought ³⁰²in a cart as far as Gosmore, and carried all the way from thence to the burying ground, on men's shoulders. He first and she next. He was 60 years of age and she 57. There were a great many people attended them to the house appointed for all living. They were both buried in the same grave. I spake over the grave. It was to me and others a peculiarly affecting scene. All their children followed them, I think of which there were a considerable number, and two of his sisters and his only surviving brother. This was the second time that I had been called, since I came to Hitchin, to attend husband and wife to the grave, at the same time. I had some years before attended John Barnes and his wife, Mary Barnes to the grave, who were likewise, both buried at the same time, and in the same grave.

As both Brother and Sister Merritt, had chosen a text on Lord's Day June the 9th, I preached ...

Pages 303 to 306 are missing.

³⁰⁷ Lord's Day January the 5th, I preached a funeral sermon for Mrs. Foster, from Psalm 9: 7 "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am."

January the 18th, our aged brother, Michael Mardle died. He was at the time he died, the father of our church, being the oldest member in it. He was added to the church, August the 31st 1746, so that he had been a member upwards of 53 years. His head was whitened through age, but his hoary hairs were found in the way of righteousness. As it was desirable that his funeral sermon should be preached at Colman's Green, where and at Bendish, he had attended for many years, being situated in that neighbourhood, and having no convenient opportunity of doing it before, I preached his funeral sermon at Colman's Green, on the 9th of March, from Rom. 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God." etc. He must, I suppose, be upwards of 80 years of age.

³⁰⁸ January the 24th, I received the melancholy information of the death of my honored aunt Ann Curtis, which much affected me. She was an exceedingly respectable woman, and was of my honored grandfather's children, the next to my dear mother, and she acted like a mother to our family, after the lamented death of our own mother. She died, Friday January the 17th, about half an hour after 7 o'clock at night, aged 63 years. She was a worthy pious woman.

Mr Price, pursuant to her own desire, preached her funeral sermon from Psalm 4:1 "Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress, have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer."

On February the 12th, I was informed of the death of Mr. John Cass, of Woodhouse, near Montacute. He died February the 1st. I knew him ever since I was a boy. He was some years, however, older than myself. He had been deaf and dumb from

Pages 309 to 314 are missing. 315 & 316 only part present, 317 & 318 missing

³¹⁵ uncle Henry Brown laws, Mr Purchase, at Lufton, near Montacute, in the 80th year of his age.

March the 3rd, wheat was sold in Hitchin market , as high as £5-15-0 per load, and barley as high as £5-5-0 per quarter, and at St Albans, on the 7th, and at Luton on the 9th, wheat sold as high as £6-0-0 per load.

³¹⁶ This letter he had..... his funeral sermon, in the event of his removal. I found him then, as well as I expected, upon the whole, but considerably shook.

On the 1st of April, I went over to see Mr Pilley again. I then found him exceedingly ill. He had preached twice the preceding sabbath, but this was what he ought not to have attempted. He had been

³¹⁹ ... and was exceedingly useful at Luton, and he died comfortably. It appeared that his sensible supports and comforts increased, as he advanced nearer and nearer to his desired home. On the 23rd of April the remains of this venerable man, were respectfully conveyed to the house appointed for all living in the burying ground, near the Meeting House, in which he had so long labored. The funeral was attended by a great number of his church and congregation, who were deeply affected with the loss they had sustained. Mr. Hunt of Ridgemount, after speaking a few words at the grave, delivered, in the Meeting House, as solemn, respectful and pertinent oration, on the occasion. And the following Lord's Day, April the 26th, in the afternoon, pursuant to his own request, I preached his funeral sermon, from Phil. 1:23 " Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better", to a numerous assembly consisting ³²⁰not only of his own people, but of many other, who united with them on this occasion, in paying their respects to the memory of a truly valuable and esteemed minister of Jesus Christ. It was to his honor that he lived respected and died lamented; and it was to the honor of his people, that they knew how to value him in life, and that they showed to him every mark of respect in his last illness, and to his memory, after his removal. Mr. Pilley's funeral text was chosen by himself. The preaching this sermon was a trying task to my feelings. Such had been our long acquaintance particular intimacy, and cordial friendship, and such were my own particular feelings at that time, that there have been but few public services, in my life, if any, that I have found it more difficult to get through than I did the services upon this solemn ³²¹occasion. Perhaps, there were no less, if there were not more, than a thousand people within doors and without that assembled, upon this occasion. Poor Mr. Mead, who had a high esteem for his venerable pastor, and who was in the habit of reading the hymns at meeting, was too much affected to attempt it on this occasion.

In the evening of this day, I endeavoured to direct the people's thoughts, from dying servants, to their unchangeable master, who is the same yesterday, today and forever, from Heb. 13:8.

October the 3rd, I was exceedingly rejoiced, at authentic intelligence being received at Hitchin, that preliminaries of peace had been signed, betwixt this country and France: and on the 12th intelligence having been received on the preceding day, that a messenger had arrived from France, on the 10th, with the ratification of the treaty of peace between the two countries, there was an illumination at Hitchin, on the occasion.

³²² December the 10th, I attended the funeral of Mr. Michael Foster of Little Wymondley, who died on the 3rd, aged 61 years. He was the last of his own generation, but last of all, he died also. I preached his funeral sermon, from

Gen. 18:25 "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" He was very respectfully attended to his long home.

December the 29th, I attended the ordination of Mr. Broady at Potter's Bar.

Mr. Newman of Old Ford, read a Psalm and prayed. Mr. Thomas of Devonshire Square, introduced the service. As Mr. Broady had been ordained before, there was no formal ordination prayer. Mr. Gill of St. Albans addressed Mr. Broady, from Eph. 7:12 "The work of the ministry". I addressed the church from

1Thess. 5:12,13 "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and nourish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at ³²³peace among yourselves." It was, upon the whole an interesting day.

I should have remarked that on the 18th of October, our brother Thomas Hardwick was unanimously chosen to the office of deacon amongst us, and that after taking time to consider and seek divine direction relative to it, on the 29th, he modestly and respectfully, and with becoming diffidence, accepted of it, and was declared to be invested with the office accordingly.

1802.

³²⁴ January the 15th. I was exceedingly sorry to learn this day that Mr. Booth of London, had lost his wife. It was remarkable that Mrs. Burford the widow of Mr. Burford, Mr Booth's predecessor, died the same day that Mrs Booth did. Mrs. Burford died about 4 o'clock in the morning, and Mr. Booth about 6.

On the 27th of February, I attended the funeral of Mr. John Hewes of Much Wymondley, a venerable old man, who died, on the 22nd, at the age of 83 or 84. He was respectfully attended to his grave by his children and grand-children. After he was buried, I delivered an oration in the Meeting House, on the solemn occasion.

On the 2nd of March, Francis, Duke of Bedford, died at Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire. On the 11th he was buried in the family vault at Chenies in Buckinghamshire. On his coffin, plainly ornamented, is this inscription, ³²⁵The most noble Francis, Duke of Bedford, born July 23rd 1765, died March 2nd 1802. His coffin made the whole number in the vault 51. It has been the burying place of the family for upwards of 300 years.

"Princes, this clay must be your bed, in spite of all your towers". I was once in my life in this vault. As he died unmarried, his brother John, the present Duke succeeded him in his titles and estates.

March the 30th, I was rejoiced to understand that the definitive treaty of peace between this country and France was signed.

April the 23rd, I bound my son Ebenezer apprentice to Mr. John Crisp of Hertford, Draper.

May the 7th, the peace having been definitively signed and ratified, on both sides, between this country and France, was proclaimed at Hitchin, with the customary formalities, of woolcombers on horseback. etc.

June the 1st was appointed by the King, as a day of public thanksgiving ³²⁶for the peace between this country and France. I preached a sermon on this joyful occasion, from Lev. 26:6 “And I will give peace in the land.”

June the 7th, I was particularly struck with the intelligence which I received from Mr. Suttcliffe of the death of his and my good old friend, and fellow pupil,

Mr. Purdy of Chipping Norton. He died, May the 30th. He had been laboring under a paralytic complain for some years, and he was visited on that day with another attack which soon carried him off. I had not seen him, for, perhaps,

20 years or more. He was a worthy man, and his people behaved exceedingly respectful and kind to him, as long as he lived. Though he was not able to labor among them for years before he died, I have understood that they kept up his salary, without any diminution, as long as he lived.

On September 7th, I attended the funeral of good Mr. Gamley of Southill, and ...

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1803

³³¹ January the 26th, I attended the funeral of my good old friend Mary Impey, who, for many years, lived with Mrs. Hathorn of Gosmore, and died at her house. She was a member of the church 42 years, and died at the age of 58. She was a sensible judicious woman, and one of the most steady uniform friends, to me and my family, and to our interest, at Tylehouse Street. I preached pursuant to her desire, her funeral sermon, from Jer.29.11 “For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end”. She was of weakly ailing constitution, in general, all the time that I knew her, but her latter days were rendered more easy and comfortable than they otherwise would have been, by her ³³²having ten shillings a week left her by her nephew Mr. William Thomas, as long as she lived, she being his mothers sister.

March 10th, I was exceeding sorry, this day, to see in the public papers, a message which had been sent to both Houses of Parliament by the King, respecting preparations making in France and Holland, that this country may be prepared likewise for whatever might happen. This was the prelude to a most dreadful war that lasted till March, 1814. The public thanksgiving for the peace was only the first of the preceding June, after the ratification of the definitive treaty, and the Preliminary articles were signed, only the October 12 month before this message was sent to Parliament.

April 1st, I and friend Allen, in the name and on the behalf of our congregation, bargained with Mr. William Lucas Snr. for a

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³³⁹ ...our Burying Ground, he was brought from Clapham to Hitchin, in a hearse, and buried in the evening of this day in a grave near to that of Miss Lydia Bradly, and Mr. Williams preached a suitable discourse on this solemn occasion, from Psalm 39.4 “Lord make me to know mind end and the measure of my days what it is: that I may know how frail I am”. As there was not only something peculiarly affecting in the manner and circumstances of his

death, but as he was a man exceedingly well respected, a great number attended his funeral, and heard his sermon. Perhaps there were, at least, 800 people within the walls of the meeting house, and some were ready to suppose, as many without. The corpse was carried into the meeting house, and was there during the whole of the service.

Upon the whole, it was one of the most affecting scenes I ever beheld, and one of the most solemn funerals I ever attended.

³⁴⁰ On the same day, that Mr. Palmer died at Clapham, Mr. Thomas Evans, who had been, for many years, a respectable schoolmaster at Hitchin, died at Hitchin, aged 68 years. He superintended the education of all my sons, except Charles.

July 5th, I and other trustees of the meeting house, etc. went to Williams Wilshere's Esq. to execute the deed containing the agreement between us and Mr. William Lucas, respecting the exchange that had been made relative to his garden, and our right of way through his brickyard. There were at this time eleven trustees living, ten of whom were present and signed the deed. It was remarkable that there should be so many ³⁴¹trustees, relative to one object, living at such a distance from the time of their first appointment which was in the year 1774, especially considering the time of life to which some of them had arrived. There were in all 22 trustees appointed in 1774, half of whom, 11, were now living. Their respective ages at the time of the execution of this deed were as follows:

Thomas Jude	_____	79	years
Samuel Bradly	_____	77	
Thomas Caporn	_____	75	
James Smith	_____	75	
James Allen	_____	74	
Thomas Crawley	_____	67	
Daniel Field	_____	67	
Joseph Button	_____	61	
Daniel Lane	_____	58	
John Geard	_____	53	
		686	

to which if Robert Thomas be added, who was not there, and whose age was 57 the whole number of years taken together amounted to 743.

³⁴² I was the youngest of the ten that were present on this occasion. It is remarkable that there were just half of the number that were appointed in 1774, eleven being dead, and eleven alive. Of these last, however, there are now, March 29th 1815, but three left in the land of the living, myself, Daniel Lane, and Daniel Field. I carried the writings afterwards into Bedfordshire where Robert Thomas then resided, who also signed them. The instrument was then ratified by all the trustees who were alive.

The whole of what was subscribed and obtained by public collections, amounted to £186.16s.8¼d. I was particularly struck with the largest and the smallest contributions to that sum. Our good friend Caporn subscribed £30.0s.0d., which was the largest sum: and the smallest was one farthing. We had not ...

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³⁴⁹ ... intimate that at his first entering into business, in London, the loss of one hundred pounds would have ruined him: and yet, by the blessing of Providence, he left behind him, at this death, I have understood, sixty thousand pounds. He had, I believe, something considerable with his wife, a valuable woman, whom I knew, and whom he lost by death, in July 1802, so that he did not long survive his wife. He died, December 20th, aged 75 years. He was a man of great benevolence, as he made it a point, I have understood, towards his latter end, to subscribe to Religious purposes, and given away, in one form or another in charity, four hundred pounds per annum. And as he had given over business some years before his death, and was connected with a number of charitable institutions, he devoted great part of his time in attending to their concerns. ³⁵⁰One of the last acts of kindness that I had any concern with him about, was respecting Mr. Richard Groom, who then preached and still does preach at Whitwell. As I thought it was desirable that he should become a member of the Hertfordshire and Essex Benevolent Society, for the relief of the widows and children of poor deceased Protestant Dissenting ministers, who should die members of the said Society, and as I thought it would be the best way for him to become a member for life, if that could be managed, by paying ten guineas at once, I endeavoured to devise a scheme to manage this matter, which upon suggesting it to my friend Groom he fell in with. This was to sequester his Fund money for two years upon the supposition any person would advance this money, upon the faith of the ³⁵¹sequestration of the Fund money. I took the first opportunity, when I went to London, to consult Mr. Smith, who readily agreed to the plan, and to send the money, as it should be voted, to me. I then applied to Mrs. Heath, a worthy woman, who was a member of Back Street church, and who was a woman of some property to advance the money which she readily and cheerfully did, and which was transmitted to the secretary of the Society by me. I soon received five guineas Fund money from Mr. Smith all of which she laid out for clothes for my friend Groom: and before the payment of the remainder Mrs. Heath died, and she had taken effectual care that her executors, should not have any claim upon him for that remainder. Thus he became a member for life, of the Benevolent Society, without its costing him a single farthing: and Mrs. Heath, besides this, left friend Groom's wife, her niece, a legacy of one hundred and fifty pounds.

One circumstance relative to ³⁵²this business has struck me exceedingly. There were three persons disinterestedly concerned about it, namely, myself, Mr Smith and Mrs. Heath. Of the three I am the only one that has been living, for a number of years and it is remarkable that the other two died, not only in the same year, but in the same month, and in the same week, and within three days of one another, and Mrs. Heath died, December 18th, and Mr. Smith died, December 20th.

1804

³⁵³ Lord's Day April 22nd, I attended the funeral of my good old friend Thomas Jude, who died the 15th, aged 80 years. I preached his funeral sermon, from 1 Pet.4:18 "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?". He had been a member of the church, many years, having been one before my time. He was a worthy man, and remarkable for his peaceable disposition and conduct. A great many people attended his funeral and heard his funeral sermon. As he was the oldest of the trustees, who signed the instrument, referred to in page 341, so he was the first of that number, that died.

Lord's Day June 17th, I preached a funeral sermon for Mr. William Hewes of Great Wymondley, who died the 11th, aged 57 years. I went over to see him twice the day on which he died, and was in the house, when he died, and saw him, as far as I know, draw his

last breath. It was a peculiarly³⁵⁴ affecting scene. He was one of my steady, tried friends. I attended his funeral on the 16th. I preached his funeral sermon, from Job 14:5 "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass". This was a peculiarly affecting day to me on more accounts than one, as I not only had to preach a funeral sermon for one tried friend, but to be informed of the death of another, as my good old friend James Allen died this morning, about 9 o'clock, aged 75 years. He was born, December 21, 1728, was received into the church in January 1758, and was called to the office of deacon, January 25th 1776, so that he had been a member of the church, upwards of 46 years, and a deacon upwards of 28. In him the church lost a good friend, the poor lost a good friend, and I lost a good friend. He was a friend in all weathers³⁵⁵ and under all changes, and in all circumstances. He manifested his friendship, by his activity, while he could act, and by his contrivances, when and where he could not, and he manifested it in life and in death.

On Lord's Day the 24th I preached a funeral sermon, for good friend Allen from Zech. 14:7 "But it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." This, I trust, was exemplified in his experience, and that, whatever darkness or doubts he had had to struggle with in any former periods, it was light with him at last. A great number of people were present to hear Mr. Hewes's funeral sermon, but I rather thought more still to hear Mr. Allen's. I sorrowed much for the loss of both these friends, but I did not sorrow for either of them as one without hope.

On the 13th July, I attended a philosophical lecture at the Sun Inn. The Philosopher was a Mr. Jackson, who appeared to understand his business. The lecture³⁵⁶ was upon Optics, and the Sun being favourable for the purpose, we had displayed an amazing proof of the magnifying power of certain microscopic glasses. A louse was so magnified, as that it's image was seven foot high, and the blood was plainly seen circulating on it's back. A flea was made to appear five or six foot high, and enormous as to it's size otherwise. The powers of magnifying were shown in a great many other instances. In one instance particularly, an article was magnified to such a degree, as to appear twelve hundred times bigger than it was in reality. "O Lord how wonderful are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all!"

On the 23rd July, I was at Stoke Newington, at the house of Jonathan Eade, Esq. This was the house formerly occupied, by Sir Thomas Abney, and after his death, by Lady Abney, his widow, and her daughter, and where the celebra ...

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³⁶³ ...been also instituted by members of the Established Church, entitled The Society for Missions to Africa, and the East, the first anniversary of which Society was held on Tuesday in Whitsun Week, May the 26th 1801, wishing well to their general object, however I might differ from them in minor points, as an individual, I sent them one guinea, by my good old acquaintance and friend, Dr. Peers, and which is noticed in their accounts of Subscribers and Benefactors for 1808 Page 386.

October the 1st. My generous friend, Mr. Thomas Caporn, having previously accommodated me, for a temporary purpose, relative to the experiences I had been at, about The Beauties of Henry, with £150. 0s. 0d., for which I had given a note of hand, without my having any expectation of the kind, made me a present of the note of hand, informing me that he designed³⁶⁴ £100 0s. 0d., of the said sum for the church, and the other £50 0s. 0d. for

myself. On this unexpected act of benevolence, I did not forget to make my grateful acknowledgements to him, on the church's account as well as my own. He had made the church a present of £50 0s. 0d., or thereabouts some years before. These sums are vested in the 4 per cent Consolidated Annuities, for the benefit of the church, to assist them in reference to the salary of the minister for the time being.

Lord's Day October 7th, after the administration of the Lord's Supper, the sisters as well as brethren having been desired to stop, a deacon being wanted in the room of our brother Allen, our brother James Smith, being the oldest brother present, nominated our brother John Foster, to that office. Our brother Thomas Caporn who was

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³⁷¹ member of the church at Yeovil, when I became one, was removed in the course of it. He and I had a number of walks together formerly, to and from Yeovil but his feet were this year stopped, as well as his eyes closed by death.

1805.

³⁷² May the 23rd, being in London, I attended the monthly meeting of the London Baptist Ministers' and churches, at Dr. Rippon's. Particular regard was paid at this meeting to a New Academical Institution intitled, The Particular Baptist Education Society in London. The design of this Society was to afford some assistance to persons who may appear to have gifts for the ministry, as well as shall give satisfactory evidence of being the subjects of a work of grace in the heart, for a year or two, as to getting, at least, a better acquaintance with their own language, and so render their public addresses more acceptable than they otherwise would be to ³⁷³ such, at least, as may have a grammatical acquaintance with that language. The Society had been but recently formed, but they had raised a fund of £800 0s. 0d., and subscriptions to the amount of £140. 0s. 0d. per annum. Mr. Booth preached at this time, upon this occasion, and it was the first sermon preached before this newly formed Society, and an admirable sermon it was. It was grounded upon Luke 10:2 "Therefore said he unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." Mr. Booth was exceedingly indisposed when he preached this sermon, and fears were entertained least he should not be able to go through with the service: but, though it was with considerable difficulty he proceeded, he was carried through much better than his own or the fears of others suggested.

³⁷⁴ October the 27th, my son Samuel's wife was safely delivered of a son. Thus I became for the first time, a grandfather, a character which, however honourable, should remind me that the shades of the evening are coming upon me. This child began a new generation, and it is remarkable, that this has been the case now, for three generations, as to me and my descendants, in succession. I was the first grandchild in my grandfather Geard's and my grandfather Taylor's families. My son Samuel was the first grandchild, in my family and my dear wife's. And this child was the first grandchild in my family, and Samuel's wife's. The birth of this child also constituted Mr. Bradly great-grandfather. To unite the names of father and mother, this child had the name given him of Samuel Bowyer Geard.

On November the 30th, I received a letter from my cousin Ann Smith, informing me that her father, my ³⁷⁵ uncle Edward Curtis, died, on the 27th. He was 70 years of age. He was the

husband of my honored Aunt Ann Curtis, of whom there is some account, under the date of January the 24th 1800.

On the 8th of December I received another letter from my cousin Mary Plowman, another daughter of my Uncle Curtis, informing me that my uncle was buried on the 30th of November, the very day on which I received her sister's letter, that he did not choose any funeral text himself, but that Mr. Price preached his funeral sermon, the next day being Lord's Day, from Matt.25:13 "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." Thus one generation passeth away, and another cometh. I had a grandson born, and an uncle removed by death, in the course of this year. I had now a grandson, but no uncle, in the world.

1806.

³⁷⁶ February the 5th, being in London, I breakfasted with good old Mr. Newton, Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street. I had breakfasted with him a number of times, in the course of my life, and for a number of years, generally made a point of doing it, once during my stay in London, when I was there. He always behaved exceedingly friendly to me from the first of my acquaintance with him at Olney in 1774. His usual method, when he could see, had been after breakfast, to read a few verses, and then in a familiar manner make some remarks on them for perhaps ten minutes, and then read a hymn, without singing, and then pray. But now, his eyesight was so impaired that he could not see to read himself. His housekeeper, Mrs. Smith, therefore read a short passage, which he could remember, which was ³⁷⁷1Cor.15:10 "But by the grace of God I am what I am". The good man after pausing a little while, spake to the following purport. First, I am not what I ought to be. I feel and do many things that I ought not. Secondly, I am not what I wish to be. I feel many things that I wish I did not feel, and do not feel as I could wish, many things, that I could desire to feel. Thirdly, I am not what I hope to be. I hope to be widely different in another world to what I find I am in this. But, fourthly, though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be, yet I trust, I am widely different to what I once was, and it was the grace of God that produced this difference. I desire to be thankful, therefore, that "By the grace of God, I am what I am". This was the substance of what he ³⁷⁸said, and this made such an impression upon my mind, that I never forgotten the substance of what he did say, to this day: and from what took place this morning, as well as the various interviews and improving conversations I had had with him before, I shall never forget this good man nor his communications.

This day also, I attended the funeral of that venerable character, Mr. Abraham Booth. He died January the 27th, aged 71 years. He was buried in the burying ground at Maze Pond, belonging to the congregation where Mr. Wallin preached formerly, and Mr. Dare at the time of Mr. Booth's decease. He was carried into the meeting house at Maze Pond. Dr. Ribbon delivered an oration from the pulpit on this solemn occasion. The corpse was placed before the pulpit. After his oration, etc. the corpse ³⁷⁹was carried though the vestry into the buying ground and interred. He was buried upon his wife, who died about four years before him. Dr. Rippon's was a very respectful ovation. It bore an exceedingly honourable testimony to his character. He began preaching young, and preached in all, half a century at least. He made a good finish and died comfortably. He was pastor of the Baptist Church in Goodman's Fields where he was preceded by Mr. Samuel Wilson and Mr. Burford 36 years. He was very respectfully attended to his long home, as hundreds of people attended his funeral. When Mr. Booth died, a great man fell in Israel. I used to make it a point, when in London, when I well could, for some years, to ³⁸⁰breakfast once with him, as well as once

with Mr. Newton. They were both fathers in Israel compared with myself, and I found the conversation of each of them inspiring, and, I hope, to me, not altogether unprofitable. I had an opportunity of dining twice with Mr. Booth, in 1805, the year before he died, at Mr. Fairy's, on May the 23rd, when he preached the sermon before the new Academy, and again on the 22nd of August, after having attended a monthly meeting at Unicorn Yard. I found both times entertaining and improving. But, now, all prospects of any further improvements from the conversation of Mr. Booth were at an end. I am glad, however, I had opportunities of conversing with him so long as I had, and that, I hope, these opportunities were not altogether lost upon me. ³⁸⁰Mr. Booth first preached to the church in Goodman's fields in June 1768, and was ordained, as their pastor, February the 16th 1769, so that he would have been pastor 37 years, if he had lived a month longer. He was eminent in the gift of prayer and was an excellent preacher. There was something peculiarly solemn and energetic both in his praying and preaching: and his labors were in general much approved of by his own people and others, and he was esteemed very highly in love for his work's sake, by the one and the other. His congregation was one of the most respectable among the Baptists in the Metropolis, and considerable additions were made to his church during his pastorship; and he left them in a state of distinguished respectability, for wealth and numbers. He had however, his trials whilst he was their pastor: and though he had a good congregation all his time, of a Lord's Day, yet he was so ³⁸²discouraged, as to attendance on a weekly lecture, which he preached, at his own place, on a Tuesday evening, for some years, after his settlement, that he dropped it, years before his death. The last time he preached at this lecture, he had not above seven persons to hear him. The small attendance on Mr. Booth's preaching, at this lecture, brought forth a noble testimony to his character, from Mr. Henry Foster, an eminent clergyman, at that time, in London, and who was much followed, as well as a distinguished mark of Mr. Foster's humility. Mr. Foster, at that time, preached at different churches, on Lord's Day's, and on weekdays, and was much followed wherever he went. He had many hundreds, and, perhaps, some thousands of people to hear him, putting his different auditories together in the course of a week. Mr. ³⁸³Newton, who was very intimate with Mr. Foster, and whom I was once with at Mr. Newton's house, in company with some other clergymen, once told me that he thought Mr. Foster had more people to hear him, taking into consideration the different places in which he preached, than any other, one man in London.

This excellent man, being in company one day at dinner, with Mr. Timothy Priestly, a dissenting minister in London, who at that time was also much followed, addressed Mr. Priestly to the following effect: "Friend Priestly, you and I, when we preach, have hundreds of people to come to hear us, whereas, good Mr. Booth who far exceeds us in gifts, talents and grace, has scarcely anybody to hear him when he preaches at his Tuesday's lecture. What do such multitudes follow you and me for?"

I had this anecdote from my good brother Mr. Williams of Hitchin, who was present at the time, and heard Mr. Foster address Mr. Priestly to the above purport.

³⁸⁴ On Lord's Day February 9th, as I understood that many others in and about London meant to do the same, as a mark of distinguished respect to so venerable a character, I gave public notice that I intended to preach a funeral sermon for Mr. Booth the following Sabbath. This I accordingly did on Lord's Day, February 16th, in the afternoon, from Psalm 116.15 "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints". When I gave notice of preaching a funeral sermon on this day for Mr. Booth, I little thought that I should be called upon in the same sermon, to have a respect to one of my own much respected members, Ann Lee of Little Wymondley. Yet this proved to be the case. She was taken ill on the 10th

and died on the 13th, aged 62 years. She was added to the church, November 24th 1776, upwards of 29 years before her death, and maintained an honourable character ...

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1807

⁴⁰⁸ May 26th I attended a meeting of the Essex and Hertfordshire Benevolent Society at Brentwood in Essex, and had the pleasure then of learning that the capital of that Society had now risen to £3000.0s.0d., and that therefore it was now lawful according to the Rules of the Society for the whole income, unless what may be deemed necessary, by it being given specially for that purpose to be still added to the capital, I obtained £30.0s.0d. for good old friend Baskerville of Hertford, who had become through age and infirmity incapacitated for his public work. This was such a sum as had never been voted to any one person before at any one time. I was at the meeting of this Society at Bishops Stortford, in 1729, when the first guinea ⁴⁰⁹ was paid, and after having known of many hundreds of guineas distributed to different objects before, I had now the pleasure of knowing that in the course of about 18 years £3000.0s.0d capital had been realized.

At this meeting at Brentwood, I had the pleasure of meeting with Mr. John James Smith of Hamper Miles, near Watford, son of my old friend and acquaintance,

James Smith Esqr. of Islington. He gave me the following gratifying intelligence, that Mrs. Cox sister of leader Cox Esqr. of Clapham, at whose house I once was and saw him who died before his sister and his sister also who had lately died had left ten thousand pounds, three per cent Stock, which would bring in three hundred pounds, per annum and that one hundred pounds of this sum was to be appropriated, should there be so many of that description that should need it, at the rate of ⁴¹⁰ ten pounds per annum each, and that old friend Baskerville was to be one of these ten. She left also three hundred pounds to the Widows Fund, and Three hundred pounds to some other Institution, the description of which I do not correctly remember.

On the 10th of December, I went to Dunstable, and on the 11th, set out with the Dart coach about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and travelled all night till 4 o'clock the next morning, and then arrived at Leicester. I went to bed at the Inn where the coach stopped, and lay till about half an hour after eight o'clock. I breakfasted at the Inn, and went afterwards to Mr. Iliffe's, hosier. I dined at Mr. Iliffe's and went in the afternoon with a friend to Thorp, who had a nag for himself and another for me, and got thither about six o'clock in ...

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⁴²⁹ The 8th, I breakfasted this day with my wife and sons with Mr. Page, at that time, assistant to Dr. Ryland, and son of John Page Esqr. whom I knew when I was a student and dined with Dr. Ryland, and drank tea with Mrs. Cottle, wife of Mr. Robert Cottle deceased, with whom my good old tutor Mr. Newton boarded, and to whom he left the greatest part of his property, and after tea, called on old Mrs. Thompson, whose husband, a seafaring man, was drowned, while I was a student at Bristol.

The 9th I and my wife and sons went to Chelwood, and we dined and drank tea and supped and slept at Mr. Dear's, who kept a boarding school there, and preached in the evening at

the meeting there, and my old fellow student Mr. Sottridge of Paulton came and heard me. He then appeared to be quite old and inform.

The 10th we went to Cannard's grave and there my brother Samuel met ⁴³⁰us with a gig, and he and I went in that to Montecute, and my wife and sons went in our own gig, and we all, through Divine goodness, arrived thither safe.

The 11th we this day dined at my brother Samuel's, and there a messenger came with a horse, with a request that I would immediately go to Hardington to see my cousin Plowman, formerly Mary Curtis. I accordingly went and found her exceeding ill, and as it proved in the event, dying. I endeavoured to say something suitable to her and prayed with her. She appeared to be sensible. I hope there was some good thing in her towards the Lord God of Israel. She did not live six hours after I was with her, so that I happened to be just in time to find her in the land of the living. It was remarkable that I should travel 200 miles, and get in to my native country, just time enough to see her alive.

⁴³¹ The 12th I went to Yeovil and there learned that my poor cousin was dead. I dined with my wife and sons at my cousin William Curtis's who then resided in the same house where my grandfather Taylor lived and died, and I there showed my wife and sons the place on the premises where I was baptized 40 years before, on the 8th of the preceding December.

The 13th we went to Penn, where my cousin Purchase lived, and where her husband was born. They lived at Lufton, when I was in that country in 1806, but were now settled at Penn. There I saw and my wife and sons also saw my poor aunt Brown, my dear mother's eldest sister, who was now confined to her bed. Her eyesight was but poorly, but her faculties, in general, held mercifully, considering her age. She was now 83 years of age. We returned to Montecute in the evening Lord's Day the 14th, I preached three times at Yeovil, twice at Mr. Tracy's meeting, who was from home, and once at ⁴³²Mr. Price's. Went to Montecute after the evening service.

The 16th I attended the funeral of my poor cousin Plowman, at Five Ashes. This was an affecting scene. She left a husband and four small children. Mr. Price spake over her grave. She was buried near her mother, my honored aunt Curtis. On this melancholy occasion, I saw her sister Smith of Broad Hembury in Devonshire. There were a great many people who attended my cousin to her long home.

The 22nd we breakfasted at my cousin William Curtis's at Coker, and I and my brother Samuel, and my niece Ruth Groves went together to Cerne, and my wife and my sons went in our gig. I preached in the evening at the meeting there, where I heard Mr. Smart, more than 40 years before. We dined and drank tea and supped at my sister Shepherd's.

The 23rd I got up in the morning and wrote a long letter to Mrs. Devenish ⁴³³of Sydling to whom I had mentioned the circumstance of the burying ground at Five Ashes, enforcing by particular arguments the request I had previously made, and mentioned in particular the difficulty we found in looking for a grave near her mother for my poor cousin Plowman. The arguments made use of in this letter had the desired effect, and all the ground that was requested was eventually granted. I left this letter with my sister Shepherd to be communicated to Mr. Devenish which was accordingly done.

We went after breakfast to Dorchester and Weymouth, and returned to Dorchester the same day, where we slept.

The 24th we parted with my son Thomas who in consequence of an agreement with Dr Ryland, was to go to Plymouth Dock where a son of Dr Ryland's was settled to assist him in his business. He did go after we parted with [unclear] to Plymouth, but this scheme did not answer any good purpose eventually respecting Thomas nor Dr Ryland's son.

⁴³⁴ After parting with my son Thomas, I and my wife and my son John went to Blandford, and there drank tea with Mr Henry Field, who had been at Blandford 57 years. We slept at an inn at Blandford

The 25th we went to Salisbury to dinner and dined with Mr and Mrs Marsh and drank tea with Mr. and Mrs. Saffery and I preached at Mr Wilks' meeting whom I saw at Bristol in the evening.

The 26th, we went to Southampton and from thence to Tichfield ten miles from Southampton where we slept.

The 27th we went to Portsmouth to dinner, Lord's day the 28th I preached 3 times at Mr [unclear]'s at Portsea. After having spent some time at Portsea, seen the dockyard ... we set out on the 30th, after dinner and went as far as Petersfield where we slept.

The 31st we went as far as Cobham about 34 miles for Petersfield and there we slept.

⁴³⁵ Sept: the 1st we breakfasted at Kingston and got to Mr Button's at London that night.

Sept. 2nd I and my wife left London, and went as far as Mrs Whitbread's at Bentleyheath and there slept. We left John in London, to meet whom Mrs Palmer had left Hitchin, on business.

The 3rd I and my wife returned home to dinner. thus we had been carried about in one way and another for about 500 miles and brought back without any real hurt by the way. on the 5th John came home by the Kettering coach hopefully considerably the better for his journey. As far as it concerned myself personally, it was a pleasant journey to my feeling, as I had in general pretty good opportunities in preaching, and met with great respect in general all the way round. But the clouds soon came after the rain. On the 7th we received a letter from ⁴³⁶Thomas informing us that he got safe to Plymouth Dock. this was good news: but on the contrary, my wife was indisposed that he was not out this day. I however, preached twice and administered the Lords supper, but she was not among my hearers, nor communicants. I preached in the morning from Genesis 15.8 and in the afternoon fro Ephe. 2.8, the same text as I preached from on the 21st of August on occasion fo the death pf my cousin Plowman. On this day, the 5th, I heard of the death of Mrs Pilley of Luton.

The 6th. this day my wife was worse, and though she got down stairs, could stay but a little while. The 7th, She was worse still than the preceding day.

the 8th. She was as bad as, if not worse than, she was the day before. The 9th. Hoping that my wife was somewhat better, having been requested to go to Biggleswade to baptize a person. I ventured to do so, but I did not set out till after dinner. I baptized the person who was a woman between 6 and 7 o'clock in the evening. Drank tea afterwards at Mr Foster's. As I left my wife so ill, i concluded to come home again the same evening. I went in my gig and my son Sam'l came back with me. We got to Hitchin soon after nine o'clock. I found my wife exceedingly ill indeed, when I came back from Biggleswade. I was now much alarmed

as to what were the eventual consequences of her illness. Dr Foster came after my return from Biggleswade, and he was so alarmed at the state my wife appeared to be in, that, upon consulting together, it was concluded that my son Samuel should set out early the next morning to St Neots for Dr Allvey.

Lords day the 11th Dr Allvey came ⁴³⁸while he gave us some room to hope, he plainly enough intimated, that there was room to fear with respect to my dear wife's eventual recovery. I went to meeting this day and preached in the morning and afternoon from Galations the 6th, 7th & 8th.

As Mrs Pilley had desired that I should preach her funeral sermon, whenever she died, I went in the evening to Luton and attended her funeral and preached her funeral sermon from Psalm 32.5. "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." She was 80 years of age. A vast number of people attended her feuneral. She was buried in the same grave with her husband, my good ⁴³⁹old friend Mr Pilley, whose funeral sermon I preached there some years before. This was a trying journey indeed to me, as my wife was exceedingly ill when I left home.

The 12th. I came home from Luton. I found her alive when I got home but exceedingly ill. My daughter Martha came home this day from Luton, and this day my daughter Naomi began to fail, and the next day was worse, and never came down stairs after the following day for 3 weeks. It appeared that she had got some disorder as her honored mother had. my trials now began to thicken upon apace. We found it necessary to have Jane Cooper to attend particularly Naomi and Sister Atkins besides Martha to attend my wife, and Sister Raven to attend the business of the family. My nights and ⁴⁴⁰my days were anxious and trying ones this week, and yet I had still greater ones to encounter.

Lord's day the 18th. Being buoyed up with some sort of flattering hopes, I went this day to meeting and prayed and preached with great difficulty. I preached morning and afternoon from Ephesians the 2nd, and 10th.

In the course of this week Mrs A. Bradley my wife's youngest sister, who had kindly attended her by day from an early period of her illness was taken ill herself and obliged to go home. My circumstances now were distressing indeed.

The 19th. I and my brethren D. Lome and T. Hardwick met in the vestry, to spend some time in united prayer, with a ⁴⁴¹particular view to my family circumstances. It was a peculiarly affecting meeting to us all. During the course of this week, my trials were great indeed. As both my wife's and Naomi's affliction were dreadfully painful and as it had been contrived for me and my son Charles to sleep or at least got o bed, in a Beureau bed in my study. I cold hear the doleful cries of Naomi, who was in my bedchamber, and , the difficulties my wife felt, in the best room. Many an aching heart was I called to have on that Beareau bed, and many a briny tear was I called to shed.

Lords day the 25th. The circumstances of my dear wife and my dear naomi also were such this day that I gave up all thoughts of going to meeting this day. My people spent the time on prayer and signing in the morning, and went to Back Street meeting in the afternoon. In the course of my ⁴⁴²dear wife's and daughter's illness Dr Allvey was sent for a second time. He gave them some faint hope, that she possibly may recover, but he appeared to have very little idea that she would. When her illness had assumed an alarming appearance, I wrote to my son Thomas, at Plymouth Dock, and wished him to come as soon as possible, and I had

the satisfaction that he got hither before she died and while she was capable of speaking to him. She was, however, too ill to say much to him. He never returned to Plymouth Dock again as his being with Dr Ryalnd's son was not likely to answer either of their purposes.

On the 28th about half an hour after twelve 'clock in the morning, to my inexpressible sorrow she breathed her last. i was not called however to sorrow for her as for one without hope. Thus after having ⁴⁵⁵led to reflect from this consideration that if I for a moment, was left to conclude that no minster had been ever exercised as I was, I had five contradictions to such a conclusion in my own parlour. What made the matter the more remarkable there was not one picture of a minister who had been married, that had not lost a wife, and some of them has lost more than one. This circumstance, however, comparatively trivial had a considerable influence to reconcile me to my loss. As soon as I well could get it accomplished, I had a grave stone erected over my dear wife's grave with the following inscription.

Elizabeth Geard
wife of John Geard,
Pastor of this congregation
Departed this life
Septr. 28th, 1808, aged 54 years.
Her children arise up and call her blessed
Her husband also and he provideth her.
Prov, 31.28

December the 15th. I learned this day in a letter which I received ⁴⁵⁶from my brother Charles that my aunt Kezia Brown died the 5th at five o'clock in the afternoon, at Penn, and was buried at Five Ashes on the 12th. She did not long therefore survive my dear wife. We both saw her at Penn, when we were in the West of England lately. She was 83 years of age last January, being born on the 3rd of it 1725, and would have been 84 if she has lived a month longer.

For an account of the illness and death, and other circumstances, relative to my son John, see my Diary marked 1810.

March 18th, 1834. Having now completed the 84th year of my age , and entered into the 85th thereof, I think it proper to close this second volume of my memoirs by some appropriate reflections.

I was born, March the 5th, A.D. 1750. In looking back upon my past life I ⁴⁵⁷find abundant cause for humiliation and sorrow. Much of my time has run to waste. I find, however, abundant cause for thankfulness to my kind Almighty Benefactor, the ever blessed God. I have been provided with food and raiment all my long life. I have had many deliverances and preservations, to some of which I became exposed, by my own folly and inconsideration, some, when i was a schoolboy, as well as some in more advanced periods of life. I have particular reason to be thankful that in the general part of my life, i was indulged with an uncommon share of bodily health, and above all, though I have had at times, many fears lest the hopeful change should not have been a real one, yet I am not more than 16 or 17 years of age, without pretending to ascertain, the time when, or the means by which, through sovereign grace this important change took place concerning me. Under the influence of the hope that I has been made the subject of the change I was baptized ⁴⁵⁸on the 8th day of Decr. 1766, and was received into full communion, with the

Baptist church at Yeovil, in the County of Somerset on the following Lord's day, then made the pastoral care of the Rev Peter Evans, and was afterwards called to the work of the ministry, by the unanimous vote of the said church. In the month of September 1779 I was received as a student into the Baptist Academy at Bristol, then under the tutorage of those venerable men, Mr Hugh Evans, his son, Mr, and afterwards Dr, Caleb Evans, and Mr James Newton. On the 16th January 1774 in consequence of a previous invitation, I preached my first sermon to the Baptist congregation at Hitchin, from acts 19th, ver 2nd, "Have ye received the holy Ghost" and on the 13th of April 1775 I was settled by their unanimous desire, as pastor over them, and in the same month of January 1831 preached my last sermon to them from Mark 1st, ver 45th, "And they came to him from every quarter," being 57 years, from the time of my preaching my first sermon to them. Though I have not been so useful in my ministry as I wished to be, nor as some other ministers have⁴⁵⁹ hopefully been, during their ministry, yet I have not been without hopeful evidences of usefulness, both as to conversion and edification, at Hitchin and elsewhere.

As to my frames they have been very different at different times, at sometimes without any doubts, and at other times without any hopes, and that for a long time together. My general feelings have been neither all hopes nor all fears. I have had my heavy trials, particularly in the removal by death of my dear wife, in 1808, and my dear son John in 1810. I did not sorrow however for either of them as one without hope.

I have now through age and infirmity been a prisoner for a considerable time, having not been at meeting for some years, nor even in street, for some weeks. I, however, have still many mercies to be thankful for, can still read for hours to either without spectacles, have a merciful degree of hearing as well as sight, and though my memory is much impaired I desire to be thankful that it is not wholly gone. .O, that through the riches of grace I may be enabled to make a good finish at last.