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THE
HAPPY MAN ;
OR,
THE LIFE OF
WILLIAM KELLY.



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A TRUE HISTORY.



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WILLIAM KELLY lived at Kirk Brad-
don, in the Isle of Man. At the parish-
school he was taught to read. His mo-
ther took some pains with his education,
and her labour was not altogether in
vain. Having finished his apprentice-
ship, he travelled through several parts
of England for improvement in his trade
of a tailor. On his return to his native
place, he kept company with idle young
men, and soon learnt their vices, and
imitated their manners. To supply his

expenses, he turned fisherman, and distinguished himself by his activity in the herring-boat, and still more by his clamour, noise, and drunkenness at the ale-house, till he became an habitual drunkard. He often felt the horrors of an accusing conscience; and of this part of his life he always spoke, after his conversion, with bitter remorse, and the liveliest acknowledgments of the goodness of God in not cutting him off in his sins. Although he often determined to reform, he still continued his habit of drinking, and a dupe to his vile companions, till, at length, his credit was totally gone. One day, being unable to pay what he owed at the public-house, the landlady seized his hat as security for the payment of the debt, and he was obliged to hurry home, bare-headed, grieved, ashamed, and mortified. This had a powerful effect on his mind. He began, in earnest, to consider his ways as a sinner against God; like the Prodigal Son, "he came to himself," repenting of his sins, and earnestly desiring to forsake them; but, having experienced the insufficiency of his former resolutions, he earnestly sought help from above; "with a broken and contrite heart," he applied to Jesus, the Saviour of sinners; and, with an entire trust on the merits and an absolute



dependance on the blood of the crucified Saviour, he solemnly and deliberately determined "to break off his sins," and enter on a new life. This resolution, formed in dependance on Divine strength, he was enabled, by the grace of God, to keep constantly; and from that time to the end of his life, for more than forty years, he never tasted beer, ale, or any spirituous liquors. He also forsook his former dissolute companions. And, though frequently entreated to go to their riotous meetings, he could never once be prevailed on to break the solemn resolution which he had formed. He now applied himself diligently to his trade, and was soon enabled to pay his debts. Through Divine Grace, he became a *new man*; his manners, his habits, his pleasures, and his employments, were changed. The hours, which he formerly spent in the public-house, were now spent at home and alone. He was frequent and earnest in secret prayer. While his hands were engaged in honest labour, his heart was ascending to God in prayer and praise. Many a solitary hour did he pass away with "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." He applied himself with earnestness constantly to reading the Holy Scriptures. This was his favourite employment and

recreation. He committed many parts of Scripture to memory. These formed the continual subject of his thoughts; so that they were present to his view at all times, and in all places, suggesting to him, "this is the way, walk ye in it." Isaiah xxx. 21.

He studied the Manx language so diligently, and his proficiency was so great, that he was employed to teach it. In this capacity the writer of this narrative became acquainted with him; and with gratitude he acknowledges the many Scriptural lessons which he has received from him; the many pleasing and profitable hours which he has spent in his society; and the strong impression which the example of this venerable man has left on his mind, of the power of Divine Grace to make the profligate pious, the unlearned wise, and the poor happy. His manners were so gentle, his conversation so cheerful, and his whole behaviour so mild and courteous, that his company was highly grateful to all pious persons; and even those whose spirit and temper were most contrary to his own, were obliged to acknowledge that his conduct discovered how earnestly he pursued "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report." During the latter years of his life, he was sub-

know what he should do with so much money. The event proved that this was, indeed, too large a sum for him to spend on himself; for, as the friend who procured it afterwards found, he made it serve three families besides himself. In his visits, also, to sick and poor persons, he was in the habit of giving money, although, considering how little he had, it appears hardly to be believed.

His thoughts and affections were fixed "on things above." He had but one great concern and grand end in view—"to glorify God, who had called him to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter, v. 10. To a person who was remarking that coals had become extremely dear, he replied, "Coals, Sir, are as cheap to me *now*, as they were *forty years ago*." This was in reality the case, for no fire had ever warmed his little garret, which indeed had neither grate nor chimney; yet of this garret he often spoke with seeming rapture. He had found many advantages in it, which no eye but his could see. He spoke with pleasure of the little sky-light which admitted the first rays of the rising sun into his room, and the beams of the moon, which he used to describe as gilding the coverlid of his bed, and beautifying every object around him. If *the walls* of this

garret could *speak*, what a report could they give of the piety, the earnest prayers, and devotion of its solitary inhabitant! It was his custom to assemble the people of the house in which he lived every evening before they went to bed. A few neighbours had joined the little assembly. With great spirit and energy, the old man began with repeating several practical passages of Scripture, on which he grounded a short and affectionate exhortation: he then raised a psalm, in which all the little company heartily joined: and he concluded with Bishop Wilson's excellent Form of Family Prayer. The fervent and earnest manner in



which he performed these domestic duties was very impressive, and strongly showed the holiness of his mind. The

same spirit of devotion appeared when he joined in the public service of the Church, on which he was a regular and constant attendant. He was entirely free from all bigotry and party spirit. He was a truly *spiritual* Christian; and one of his favourite sentiments was, that *true* Christians are of the same spirit and temper, wherever they are found.

No wonder that the end of such a life of solid piety, arising from faith in Christ Jesus, should be peace, and a firm reliance on him for salvation. A short time before his death, the writer of these lines visited him for the last time, and found him patiently waiting for his change. When going away, a hope being expressed, that, if they met no more in this world, they should meet in a better; "Oh! yes," said he, with the confidence of one who knew in whom he believed, "we shall meet in heaven." In this composed and happy frame of mind he continued till the hour of his death arrived. On Friday, May 27th, 1808, he entered into rest, in the 78th year of his age. His funeral was attended by a great number of people of all ranks. At the grave, a poor woman was observed to weep bitterly; being asked the reason of her grief, she said she had, for some time past, received a weekly pension

from the deceased, and that, by his death, she had lost one of the best and kindest of friends. The gentleman and the beggar, the stranger and the native, seemed to join with each other in paying the last tribute of respect to the memory of this real Christian.

REFLECTIONS.

FROM the foregoing narrative the reader may learn many useful and important lessons.

1. How unsearchable are the riches of Divine Grace! and how unbounded the goodness of God! Who, that had seen William Kelly in his unconverted state, wallowing in the mire of sin, and "committing iniquity with greediness," could ever have supposed that he was to become an eminent example of piety, and deserve and obtain the title of "The Happy Christian?" If the reader is one of those careless and thoughtless sinners who are hurrying on the brink of ruin, destroying their health, their property, their families, and their peace, and exposing themselves to eternal misery, by indulging in the brutal sin of drunkenness,—let him stop for a moment, and attentively consider the state of a man who, like himself, was once "seeking

death in the error of his ways," and yet afterwards, by Divine Grace, was awakened and converted, "renewed in the spirit of his mind," and filled with all "joy and peace in believing." Let him learn, from this example, not to despair of obtaining an entire conquest over his prevailing sin, and of becoming "temperate in all things." Let him not, however, delay one hour to employ the same means. Let him have recourse to secret and earnest prayer to Almighty God for the pardon of his sins, through the blood and intercession of Jesus Christ. Let him also attend to holy meditation, to the devout reading of the Scriptures, and the diligent use of all the appointed means of grace.

But if, reader, you have been kept from going to such lengths in outward sin as the subject of the foregoing narrative, be thankful to God, who has restrained your corrupt passions, and pray to Him, that, by the power of his grace, he would renew your heart; for unless you are thus renewed, however decent your outward deportment may have been, your heart contains the same corrupt propensities as did that of William Kelly before his conversion; for, "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts,

false-witness, blasphemies." Matt. xv. 19. And the renewal of the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, which enables the returning sinner, through faith in Jesus Christ, to forsake these evil ways, and to turn unto the Lord, is what is called in Scripture being "born again," without which "we cannot see the kingdom of God." John iii. 3.

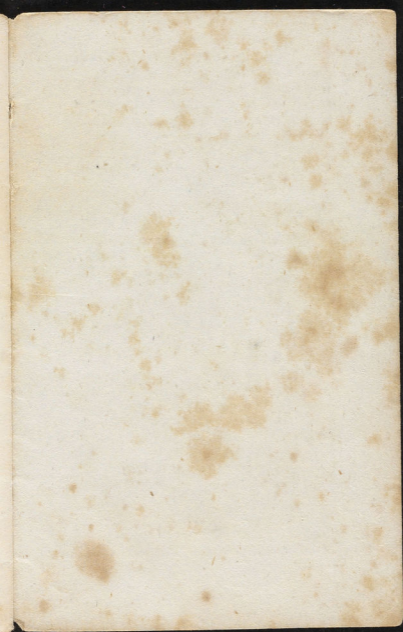
2. The life of this happy Christian discovers, in the clearest manner, the power of real religion to give solid rest and peace to the soul in all circumstances. Who would have expected to find one of the happiest of human beings in a cold and cheerless garret, with scarcely any of the outward comforts of life, without any family or relations, or any of the amusements or pleasures which the world affords! On viewing his little garret, there was nothing to be seen but the bed on which he lay, the chair on which he sat, and the chest which contained his Sunday garment, and all of "this world's goods" which he possessed. Yet in this garret, which to thousands of men would have been as comfortless as a prison, lived one of the most cheerful and most contented of human creatures. Here he enjoyed sweet communion with his God, and often "rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of

glory." The Bible was the source from which he derived perpetual consolation. In this sacred volume his treasure lay, as he frequently declared, in the words of his favourite psalm,

"Close in my heart, and deeply hid,
"Thy Word, my treasure, lies."

He had often "little to eat;" but his Bible was meat, drink, and company to him. If the reader would partake of his happiness, let him seek it in the same manner. If he be in possession of a Bible, let him read it with prayer, as this happy Christian did. Thus shall he become "wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," and "be thoroughly furnished unto every good work."

Let the Reader, from this hour, resolve, by the grace of God, to imitate the bright example which has now been set before him, and following him as he followed Christ, he will, in God's due time, join him among the ransomed throng, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises in the eternal Kingdom of Glory.



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