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THE *Populace*
REALITY AND POWER
OF THE
RELIGION of JESUS CHRIST,
EXEMPLIFIED
IN THE
DYING EXPERIENCE
OF

Mr. William Browne,
of BRISTOL,

Who departed this Life *October 16, 1791,*
AGED 76.

Jesus, the vision of thy face
Hath overpow'ring charms;
Scarce shall I feel Death's cold embrace,
If Christ be in my arms.

Then, while ye hear my heart-strings break,
How sweet my minutes roll!
A mortal paleness on my cheek,
And glory in my soul.

WATTS.

BRISTOL:

Printed by JOHN ROSE, No. 21, Broadmead;

Sold by Messrs. BROWNE, BULGIN, COTTLE, and FENLEY, 1791.

[PRICE TWO PENCE.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS many friends, who were witnesses of the sweet frame of mind experienced by my lately deceased parent, have expressed a desire of seeing the account published; in compliance with their request, and in hopes that others will be profited and encouraged by the perusal, it is therefore submitted to the public eye.

*Broadmead, Bristol, }
Oct. 24, 1791. }*

JOHN BROWNE.



THE
REALITY AND POWER

OF

The Religion of *Jesus Christ*, &c.

MR. WILLIAM BROWNE was born at *Honiton*, in *Devonshire*, in the year 1721. His father, Mr. JOHN BROWNE, for many years filled an honorable station in the church of CHRIST. He was a child of many prayers; which were answered by his preservation from the snares of youth, and an early impresson of divine things. The labours of the Rev. Mr. JOHN BALL, who publicly defended the doctrine of the Trinity against the errors of that day, were blessed to his conversion; and at the age of sixteen he was admitted a member of the church. In early life he followed the practice of one of his pious relations,* in writing the substance of sermons, as delivered from the pulpit, and publicly repeating them on Sabbath-day and Friday evenings. He was appointed to the office of Deacon, in which he continued till his removal from the country. After the death of Mr. BALL, his successor, tho' an eminently pious Christian, was by no means zealous for the distinguishing doctrines of grace; the effects whereof were seen and felt in the declension of that church: and Mr. BROWNE, tho' essentially grounded in those truths, yet did not altogether see the importance of them; this led him into a degree of *legality*, which ad-

* His father's sister, who, for many years, took down sermons in short hand, and publicly repeated them at evening meetings.

hered to him for many years. During this part of his life, the LORD was pleased to exercise him with heavy trials, in family afflictions, and being twice deprived of his property by the devouring flames.* After his removal from the country, and uniting with the church in *Castle-Green*, which was about seven years ago, his views were much evangelized under the ministrations of its late invaluable pastor,† and his soul was much strengthened and comforted by the sweet enjoyment of gospel truth. For some years past he was afflicted with some internal complaints, which baffled the skill of the faculty to remove. When he sickened for death, he appeared rather anxious for relief and recovery; but as his disorders increased his anxiety decreased, and he grew remarkably composed and resigned to the divine will. The latter end of August he was seized so violently, that, in his own apprehension and the apprehension of his friends, he was very near death: then the LORD was graciously pleased to manifest himself to his soul, and entirely remove the sting and fear of death. So strongly was his mind impressed with divine things, that he could not sleep for near a fortnight, during which period ten thousand precious sentiments dropt from his lips, which escaped the recollection of attending relations and friends. His visitors were numerous, who were all witnesses of the heavenly frame of his soul, to whom he expressed himself in the most spiritual and transporting language. His son happening to be in *London* at that time, on his return found him exceedingly happy; and immediately (so near as can be recollected) addressed him, in the following manner; “ I thought two or three days ago I should
 “ never see you again in this world; I thought I should have been
 “ gone to my Father’s house, to my heavenly home; but the
 “ LORD hath raised me up a little. O what mercies does such
 “ a sinner as I enjoy! O what grace, doth the LORD manifest to

* July 20, 1747; August 21, 1765. † Rev. Joseph Hoskins.

“ such

“ such a one as me ! ’Tis all mercy : all grace. I have nothing
 “ to plead, but Mercy ! the mercy of GOD in CHRIST JESUS.
 “ — The LORD called me betimes to a knowledge of him-
 “ self, and enabled me to seek him in my younger years ; now
 “ he does not fail nor forsake me : he is faithful that hath pro-
 “ mised. The LORD enabled me to chuse him for a portion in
 “ my youth, and *now* I find him just such a portion as I want.
 “ — I am surprized at what GOD is doing for me. Was
 “ ever such a sinner favored as I am ? Did ever GOD display
 “ such love to a wretch like me ? I have done with MERIT *now*.
 “ I acknowledge that no duty I ever performed was worthy the
 “ notice or acceptance of GOD : I see sin mixed with them all.
 “ If I am saved, it must be all mercy ; free mercy !” His
 son observing to him, that the way of salvation did not appear in
 past years so plain as at present, he replied, with peculiar ener-
 gy, “ No, that was my ignorance and my sin : I am ashamed to
 “ think how I have robbed GOD of his glory, in not ascribing
 “ to him the glory due to his holy name. My sin hath been
 “ great in this respect : blessed be GOD I was brought to *Bristol*.
 “ I now see ’tis grace, free grace, *demand*s and *deserves* the
 “ praise. Not unto me, O LORD, not unto me, but unto thy
 “ name be all the praise and all the glory.” He then made
 some enquiries about friends in *London*. Being informed that
 some of them were gone to glory : he replied, “ I shall soon,
 “ very soon, follow them.” He then repeated some verses of
 Doctor WATTS’s hymns :

“ Firm as the earth thy gospel stands,
 “ My LORD, my life, my trust ;
 “ If I am found in JESU’s hands,
 “ My soul can ne’er be lost.”

“ No

“ No, that it cannot ; for he will keep that which I have committed to him against that day.”

“ His honour is engag'd to save
 “ The meanest of his sheep ;
 “ All that his heavenly Father gave
 “ His hands securely keep.

“ Nor death, nor hell shall e'er remove
 “ His favourites from his breast ;
 In the dear bosom of his love
 “ They must for ever rest.”

“ Beneath his smiles my heart hath liv'd,
 “ And part of heav'n possess'd ;
 “ I'll praise his name for grace receiv'd,
 “ And trust him for the rest.”

“ And I never can trust him in vain.”

He was faithful and pointed in his advice and admonitions to his friends and relatives ; most earnestly praying with and for them, that they might be all partakers of divine grace ; “ For,” said he, “ I cannot bear the thought that *one* BROWNE should “ be shut out from Heaven.”

To a lady, who expressed her joy on seeing him so cheerful, he said, “ I would *sing*, but cannot till I get the other side “ *Jordan* : then I will sing so loud as to make all Heaven ring “ again with the delightful song.”

To his daughter he said, "What am I? a poor sinful worm, not deserving the least crumb of mercy; yet the LORD hath kept me by his mighty power, through faith, unto salvation. — He hath clothed me with his righteousness." — O that mine eyes might be ever towards the LORD. — C how sweet are thy thoughts unto me! — I long to be gone; to be, for ever, with the LORD; I shall behold his face in righteousness, and shall be satisfied, when I awake up in his likeness."

On his son's enquiring one morning how he was, "A wonder," said he, to myself, that the LORD should be so good and gracious to me; not one cloud; not one fear; he is fulfilling all his promises: The LORD shall wipe away all tears from mine eyes: no more sorrow; no more sighing; no more crying; for the former things are passed away. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive blessing, and honour, and glory, and power; for he hath washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us kings and priests unto GOD, for ever." — At another time his son asking him a similar question, he replied, "Waiting for the salvation of the LORD. I fear I am too impatient, yet I long to be gone. Come, LORD JESUS! Come quickly! Why are thy chariot wheels so long in coming! *Haste, my Beloved, and remove these interposing days!* I am going to see my father, mother, brother and his wife, and aunt MARY: there I shall see as I am seen, and know as I am known." — Groaning a little, he checked himself. "I groan; but I would not murmur, or be impatient. Wherefore should a living man complain; a man for the punishment of his sin. Pray for me, that I may, calmly, wait GOD's will. His time is the best time: his ways are in the deep: his paths are in the mighty waters; and his footsteps
" are

“ are not known. When I reflect on the various methods of
 “ Providence, I cannot help admiring the wonders of divine
 “ mercy in his dealings toward me, a poor worm. Few have
 “ experienced more losses by fire and afflictions than I have; yet
 “ the LORD hath always appeared for me. In the mount of
 “ the LORD it hath been seen; and he hath made my latter
 “ days, like JOB’S, more comfortable and easy than the begin-
 “ ning. — To see friends and acquaintance from all quarters,
 “ I cannot be sufficiently thankful: But, O! what is this, when
 “ compared with a sight of JESUS! He is the chief among ten
 “ thousand, and altogether lovely!”

To one he said, “ You came to see a dying man: this is a
 “ fight not worth seeing. How different the fight when I shall
 “ appear before GOD, in glory! I shall have no occasion for
 “ gay cloathing, or earthly splendor: for *there* I shall have a
 “ crown of glory on my head; and shine; like a star, for ever
 “ and ever!”

To a gentleman. “ I have chosen my funeral text* and
 “ hymn, *Remember Me*. He hath remembered me, with that
 “ favor which he beareth to his own people. The LORD will
 “ perfect that which concerneth me. Thy mercy, O GOD,
 “ endureth for ever: fulfil the work of thine own hands.”

* On the Sabbath following, the 23d of October, the Rev. Mr. HAY preached his funeral sermon, according to the desire of the deceased, from Nehemiah, chap. xiii, ver. 22: “ Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy. After sermon the desired hymn was sung. See the last page.

To another gentleman. "O how often have I looked round on your daughters and niece, and earnestly prayed that they might be *eminent* for piety in their day and generation. I was enabled to chuse GOD in my youth, and I never repented the choice. — The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. I am rich, infinitely rich, in having such a portion as GOD is; *he cannot fail me.*"

About the middle of September he appeared somewhat better. The Doctor told him he might revive a little: he replied, with considerable emotion, "Doctor, if I thought you spoke in earnest, I should be almost angry. If I could have my choice, I would not return to the world for a waggon load of gold and silver."

The next day he said to his son, "I am rather low, my spirits are sunk; I must not expect it to be all sunshine. What a mercy he hath bestowed so many of the consolations of grace. When I recollect how many eminent saints have gone to bed in the dark; that the candle of the LORD should shine about me, who am I that I should be so highly favored? — I want faith, hope, love, and all the graces of the Holy Spirit, to be in lively exercise." — The same evening he said to him, "You are now called to see a parent die: blessed be GOD, the great work of life is done; not done by me, but the LORD hath done great things for me. If the LORD was pleased to say, *come up hither*, I would not *gainsay* it if I could; no, not for a moment. — How will the inhabitants of Heaven wonder, when they hear my tale of misery and mercy! If ever any one had reason to sing of grace, I have: I will sing, as loud as any, Grace! Grace!"

On

On the night of the 16th of September, his son watched with him, and, supposing it might be his last night, was particularly careful to write down every sentence of importance that dropped from his lips. — In the course of the night he said, “ Give me one promise that is founded, and grounded, and established ; *this* is worth ten thousands of gold and silver.” — His son wishing him to be composed, he said, “ I would be silent, but I cannot help admiring and adoring the riches of grace : — whilst I have my tongue I must speak for GOD. — The LORD will give Grace and Glory ; no good thing will he withhold from those that walk uprightly. O LORD of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee. If it is the will of the LORD, I wish for a speedy dismissal ; but the will of the LORD be done. The world, and the things of the world, are all nothing to me : My GOD will hear me : that is all my salvation, all my strength, and all my song. How will they all sing and rejoice when I pitch the tune : I shall never close it. To celebrate redeeming grace and dying love, I know not where to begin, or how to proceed. When the LORD shall turn again my captivity, I shall be like them that dream. I shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. All that the LORD doth is right. — It is the LORD, let him do with me what seemeth good in his sight. O what hands am I in ! the best of hands. The best of masters do I serve : the best of wages shall I receive. The blood of JESUS CHRIST, his son, cleanseth from all sin : there stands that everlasting promise, and I do not know what *faith* would desire more. The foundation of GOD standeth sure, having this seal ; the LORD knoweth them that are his ; and let every one that nameth the name of CHRIST depart from iniquity. To be
“ where

‘ where JESUS is! that will be the best company ; the best of
 ‘ employments, the best of enjoyments. To you that believe
 ‘ he is precious : I found him so many years ago ; I find him
 ‘ so now. The LORD is not slack concerning his promises, as
 ‘ some men count slackness ; but is long suffering to us ward,
 ‘ not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to
 ‘ repentance.”

The next day he laid in a drowsy state, so that scarce a word
 dropped from his lips, and the Sabbath following his son parting
 with him to go a journey, he took the most affectionate leave,
 recommending him to the GOD of Grace and Salvation. On
 that day he was judged to be in dying circumstances ; but, to the
 astonishment of all his friends, he revived, and lived to that day
 month ; during which time he was remarkably calm, composed,
 and patient. Being much afflicted in his mouth and throat, he
 seldom spake ; sometimes not a sentence in a day. His son fe-
 veral times enquired how he found his mind, his reply generally
 was “ *Waiting. — When shall the time come ? When will the*
 ‘ LORD work deliverance ?” On observing, that his *faith* had
 been tried and found sterling, he was now called to the exercise
 of *patience*, he replied, “ Let patience have its perfect work.”

About two days prior to his death, his son asked him, for the
 last time, how it was within : he replied, “ *All quiet.*” On
 Sabbath-day, the 16th of October, about noon, he changed for
 death. About two he said, “ *I long to be there,*” which were
 his last intelligible words : and about seven in the evening breathed
 his last.

HYMN

H Y M N,

Composed by the Rev. Mr. HAWKES,

Sung after his FUNERAL SERMON.

O THOU, from whom all goodness flows
I lift my heart to Thee :

In all my sorrows, conflicts, woes,
Dear LORD, "Remember me!"

While on my poor distressed heart
My sins lie heavily,
My pardon speak, new peace impart,
In love "Remember me!"

Temptations sore obstruct my way,
To shake my faith in Thee :
O give me strength, LORD, as my day ;
For good "Remember me!"

When, in desertion's dismal night,
Thy face I cannot see ;
Then, LORD, arise, with glorious light,
And still "Remember me!"

If on my face, for Thy dear name,
Shame and reproaches be,
All hail reproach, and welcome shame,
If Thou "Remember me!"

The hour is near consign'd to death,
I own the just decree ;
SAVIOUR, with my last parting breath,
I'll cry "Remember me!"