

February 1772

Christian Bell was born in London Dec<sup>r</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 1742 and came as a little Boy into the Childrens Oeconomy, he was a very lovely Child, beloved by all about him. When he arrived to his Boys-Age, he was put apprentice to our dear late B<sup>r</sup> Charlesworth in the Merchant Business, during which time he behaved himself as an orderly & faithful Apprentice, and gave full Satisfaction to B<sup>r</sup> Charlesworth & others about him. It was evident that there was a work of Grace in his Heart, & those who were acquainted with him were in Hopes that he would not only prosper & become a happy Brother, but that he would also be useful in our Sav<sup>rs</sup> Kingdom, For these Years he was very open hearted & seemed to have no other concern than to be formed by our Sav<sup>r</sup> quite according to his Mind, & to live for Him alone in the World.

He was received into the Cong<sup>n</sup> April 16<sup>th</sup> 1751 & on August 29<sup>th</sup> 1762 he was rec<sup>d</sup> into the Single B<sup>r</sup>s Choir.

March 27<sup>th</sup> 1766 he was admitted to the holy Communion; but which had not the wished for Effect. Soon after he went to London where the Snare laid for him caught a surprizing Hold of him & a Love to the World.



took place in him, so that his Soul rec'd. a Hurt at this Time which was never rightly cured again till a little while before his Departure.

After he set up Business for himself, it obliged him to make some Journeys to London, where Temptations were renewed, to draw him altogether into the World, and altho' the Staff of Corruption & strong Tendencies thereto lay in him; yet he felt such strong Convictions, that he never could come to a Resolution to go into the World; yet this divided Heart & continual Struggle betwixt our Sav<sup>r</sup> & the World caused him a heavy & truly unhappy Life, that one could not see and speak with him without being moved with Compassion. At Times he was much concerned about his unhappy State of Heart & wish'd our Sav<sup>r</sup> might attain his Aim with him; he also was some times very sensibly struck with the strong Proofs he had of our Sav<sup>r</sup>'s Faithfulness to him & by seeing how He kept his Hand over Him. This had the Effect upon him that he once in a particular Manner pray'd our Sav<sup>r</sup>: if He saw no other way of obtaining his Aim with him, to do it by giving him a sickly Habit of Body, rather than suffer him to go into the World, & he has often considered our Sav<sup>r</sup>'s Dealings with him as an Answer to this Prayer. †

About 2 Months ago it was observed that his tender

and weakly Constitution, turned into a Consumption & he declined very fast. He was frequently visited by many Br<sup>ns</sup>, for he was generally beloved, & when it drew nearer his End, that he himself begun to think, he would soon go home, he spoke with great Concern, to some of the Labourers whom he had most Confidence in & had been best acquainted with, and Lamented that he had spend much of his Time so poorly with Reasoning, Reading unprofitable Books, neglecting the Meetings & other Privileges of the Congregation, he also said: that he never had experienced the true Grace in the Blood & Merits of Christ <sup>as a poor</sup> ~~our~~ Saviour. Sinner.

This brought him into such Distress, that he thought he would be Lost, two Nights before his Departure, <sup>and being</sup> when he was yet pretty strong, he wept & pray'd all the Night thro', <sup>and got</sup> when he also got Comfort from our Sav<sup>r</sup>. From that Time, his Fear was gone & he longed to go to our Sav<sup>r</sup> which was on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Feb<sup>y</sup>, the same Evening he sat up a long while & conversed with 2 Br<sup>ns</sup> in a bandlike way in the heartiest & very agreeable Manner. He also kept a very openhearted Band with a Labourer 2 days before. He himself thought he should continue about 3 Weeks longer; but the

† About half a year ago, as he was going to bed, & had full thoughts of pursuing a Worldly Course, he got a kind of vision of blood, which was the beginning of his last sickness.



Night betwixt the 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> of February, he all at once began to hasten, & when his Choir Labourer came to him at 5 in the Morning he asked him, if he had got full forgiveness from our Sav<sup>r</sup>, & if he now was longing to go to Him, both he answered in the Affirmative. A few Minutes after it was observed that the happy moment approached. He was blessed & turned pale during the Verse: When in the Arms of Jesus &c. accompanied with a sweet feeling of Grace in the 30<sup>th</sup> Year of his Age.

