

THE LIFE
OF
MRS. MARY FLETCHER

CONSORT AND RELICT OF

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VICAR OF MADELEY, SALOP.

COMPILED FROM HER JOURNAL AND OTHER AUTHENTIC
DOCUMENTS.

BY HENRY MOORE.

The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good
conscience, and of faith unfeigned.—1 TIM. i, 5.
By faith,—choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to
enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.—HEB. xi, 25.
These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.—REV. xiv, 4

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APPENDIX NO. II.

Acts xxvii, 29, *They cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.*

The situation of the ship wherein Paul and his companions were, seems to me to illustrate the state and situation of many of us here. We are told, *There arose a tempestuous wind, called in that country, Euroclydon*—a kind of hurricane, not carrying the ship any one way, driving her backward and forward with great violence. So it is in general with those who enter on the voyage of life. Satan, who is called *the prince of the power of the air, and who ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience*, keeps the mind in a continual agitation. Sometimes they are sunk, and almost crushed under a weight of care; and again raised high on the waves of some expected pleasure. One while they are filled with resentment, on account of some slight from a neighbour, or an unjust accusation from an enemy; while the mind is harassed with the imagination, how it shall be cleared. Sometimes the most idle and extravagant fancies so deeply involve it, that no message from heaven can find any more entertainment than the Saviour could find in the inn at Bethlehem. By all this, the soul becomes restless, and knows not where it is, nor which way it is going. It does not feel that it is in a state of probation, and that this trial is to fix its eternal lot. Dear souls, is not this the case with some of you? You do not know where you are—you do not consider this may be your last night, perhaps your last hour. Your eternal state will then be fixed for ever. If the Lord should call you this hour, are you ready? O remember, it is the word of Jehovah himself, “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib, but Israel doth not know—my people doth not consider.” Again, do you know where you are going? Why, you are going *the broad road*; you are going to hell as fast as you can. It is a *narrow way* that leads to heaven, and you do not know one step of it. You have

not begun to walk therein, nor perhaps to think about it *O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider you latter end!* It may be you find a great many things to divert and take up your mind; it is employed by Satan from hour to hour. You are like the disobedient prophet, *asleep in the ship when a great storm lay upon them.* You neither see nor know your danger. Are you the safer for this? Would not those who are awake cry out to such, *Awake, thou sleeper, and call upon thy God?* Thou art on the very brink of destruction. Well, then, permit me so to call upon you, lest, when we meet at the great day, you should upbraid me that I had once an opportunity of warning you, and that I did it but by halves; and so the blood of your souls should be found in my skirts. I fear for many in this parish. My soul often weeps in secret for them, lest the word which to others proves *the savour of life*, should to them become *the savour of death*, and rise up in judgment against them.

But I hope you, who are this night within the reach of my voice, are in a degree awakened, and most of you earnestly longing to be brought out of the storm into the quiet harbour of Jesus' breast. To these I chiefly feel my message to be, though I was not willing to leave the sleepers wholly disregarded. Well, let us see what they did in this great danger that we may do likewise. Paul says, "As we were exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day we lightened the ship, and the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. And as neither sun nor stars appeared for many days,* and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of being saved was taken away." Observe, first, they lightened the ship—lighten your hearts! There is too much of the world in them. They cast out their merchandise—cast away your idols! You will say, perhaps, "I cannot." True; I know you cannot yourselves; but if you will *call on the Lord in the time of trouble*, he hath said, *I will hear thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* you will begin to pray in good earnest, and persevere therein, as the Lord is true, you shall know *the liberty of his children*,

* Which was the more terrible, the use of the compass not being then discovered.

and have power to *cast all your idols to the moles and to the bats*. Well, but *on the third day they cast out the tackling of the ship*—the very thing which we might think they would have kept, in order to manage the vessel. No—all must go! Cast away your false confidence in any thing of your own; despair of any help but from the Lord Jesus. Yet obey his word; *Look*, remember he says, *Look unto me, and be ye saved; yea, look unto him as the author and finisher of your faith. Wait upon him;* and remember the mind is the mouth of the soul—therefore, according as you feed your mind with thoughts, so will the state of your soul be discovered. *Look*, I say, *unto him*, and your soul shall ride out the storm.

And now a gleam of hope appears. Paul stood up and said, “Be of good courage; for there shall be no loss of any life among you. The angel of that God whose I am, and whom I serve, stood by me this night, and said, Fear not, Paul; thou must be presented before Cesar, and lo, I have given thee all them that sail with thee.” So may hope spring up to thee this present moment, whether thou art a poor backslider, or one of the ship’s company, who till this very hour hast been fast asleep; but if now awake, if now in earnest, and willing to be saved, come a step farther yet, and observe what they did next. *They cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for day.* There is no day to the soul till Christ manifests his cheering presence. In order to wait for that, follow their example—*they cast out four anchors*. Let us do so this night. Remember it is your part to *believe*, and it is the Lord’s to give the *peace and joy* consequent on believing. Let us, then, make repeated acts of faith, so *casting our anchor* farther and farther within the veil, and we shall draw up our souls nearer and nearer to God.

Well, let us try to cast out one anchor now. I am sensible your cable is short, therefore we must seek for some ground as *near* you as we can. We will try, if we can, to find it in the *creating love of God*, surrounding us on every side. Look through the creation—observe the tender love of the birds toward their young, yea, even the most savage beasts! From whence does this spring? It is from God. It is a shadow of that infinite compassion which reigns in his heart. Rise a little higher. Fix

your eye on man. How does he love a stubborn son who will neither serve God nor him? True, he frowns on him, and corrects him, lest it should be said to him as to Eli, *Thou preferrest thy son before me*; but if that son shed but a tear of sorrow—raise but a sigh of repentance—if he but come a few steps, how do the father's bowels yearn toward him! How doth he run to meet him! Now carry the idea a little higher—Are ye not the offspring of God? Has he not said, "I have created thee for my glory? I have formed thee for my praise." Is not "his mercy over all his works?" Believe, then, that this "Author of all love is more ready to give the Holy Spirit to you, than you are to give good gifts to your children." Will not this anchor take? Does it still come home? Well, the ground is good, but your cable is too short. Let us try another anchor; and we will drop it on *Redeeming love*.

Lift up your eyes of faith—behold your bleeding Saviour! See all your sins laid on his sacred head! Behold him as your Surety before the throne, and hear him plead, "I have tasted death for every man. Thou, Father, wast in me reconciling the world to thyself, not imputing their trespasses to them." I stood before thee, charged with them all. If this poor soul, who cries for mercy, is deeply in debt to thee, *place it to my account: I will repay*. Now venture on him, venture freely. He hath drunk all the bitter cup for *you*, and he offers this night to take you into fellowship and communion with himself. "He was delivered for your offences! He hath cancelled all the charge against you;" yea, "He was raised again for your justification." Your Surety is exalted in proof that your debt is paid. Come, let me hear some voice among you giving praise, and saying with the Christian poet,—

"Now I have found the ground wherein
 Sure my soul's anchor may remain;
 The wounds of Jesus for my sin,
 Before the world's foundation slain."

Methinks this anchor will hold. Is there not an increase of hope? Harken! You shall hear his voice. Himself hath said, "Hear, O, my people, and I will speak!" Heaven is never dumb, but when man hardens his heart.

But perhaps there are some poor trembling souls still left behind. For the sake of such, we will try to find firm ground a little nearer yet. We will drop our third anchor on the *Promises*. Here are some quite within your reach, "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Yes, *He came to seek and to save that which is lost*. Are *you* lost? Lost in your own estimation? Then he came to *save you*. Yes, and to *seek* you too, and he seeks you this night as diligently as ever shepherd sought his lost sheep. Will you be found of him? Yes, if you will believe in his love. Remember, "He willeth not the death of a sinner; but had rather he would turn from his wickedness and live." And though it should appear to thee as if a mountain stood in the way, yet this is the word of truth. *If thou canst believe; all things are possible to him that believeth. Thou shalt say to this mountain, Depart, and it shall be done.* There is no getting one step forward in the heavenly road without courage, or, in other words, faith; and I trust there are here many whose anchor has held in the first ground, *Creating love*, more in the second, *Redeeming love*, and surely trembling sinners have found some hold in the *Promises*. The *word of God* is full of them, and they are all for *you*. All belong to a wounded conscience—to sinners seeking the power of faith to conquer their sins, and bring them to God. But yet I fear there may be a feeble-minded one who is still left behind, and I am unwilling any should remain in darkness, when Christ offers them light. But perhaps such will say, "O, I am an ungrateful sinner. I have turned away my eyes from Jesus. The world, and the wild imaginations of my polluted affections, have stolen between me and the Saviour. Once "the candle of the Lord did shine upon my head!" But now he is gone; *my beloved hath withdrawn himself*, and I am again *shorn of my strength*, and feeble as another man. Well, do not despair. Thy soul shall not ride the storm. There is yet one anchor more, but it is possible you will not all admire it. Some will cry, Is that all? O, it is too low. But let me tell you, low as you esteem it, because it seems within your reach, it will rise to the

highest mansion in heaven. It is, I own, a little dark at the first view, but the more you look upon it, the brighter it will grow. Remember it was the *sound of a ram's horn*, and the *shout of human voices*, that shook the *mighty walls of Jericho*. God delights to do great things by little means.

The name then of my fourth anchor is, *Resignation*; and there is a motto engraved thereon, "In quietness and confidence shall thy strength be." You that are asleep have nothing to do with this: but you who are awake, and groaning for the salvation you have forfeited—you are invited, nay *commanded*, to cast it out. You have fallen by a worldly spirit, and by indulging a busy and idolatrous imagination. Come, then, let this be the moment! Now cast your whole soul—your everlasting concerns, on the free, unmerited love of the Saviour, and live upon, *Thy will be done!* Let your soul cry out, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." Abandon yourself as a victim, into his hand, and there lie as *clay before the potter*. If you are tempted because you cannot pray, let this be your prayer—let the constant cry of your heart be, *Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven*. And take knowledge, while you are so doing, your prayer is echoed by the highest archangel in heaven, for the glory of that bright abode is a perfect resignation, fully consistent with the most faithful activity. You are permitted to pray, *Father, let this cup pass from me*; yet, while you add, *not my will, but thy will be done*, you join in spirit with the *Saviour and Captain of your salvation*. I have often found, in an hour of temptation, when no other anchor seemed to hold, that thought, *the Lord reigneth*; his will and glory shall be accomplished, and in that I will rejoice, has brought peace, and laid the storm. Lie down at his dear feet, and remember, "Whom he loveth, he chasteneth, and correcteth every son whom he receiveth." He brings your sins to your remembrance, that your soul may be brought to know its misery and wants, and in order that he may burn them up with the purifying fire of his love. Take courage, then, and, with one voice, let us all unite in the cry—*Thy will be done! Thy will be done!* And our song shall be echoed through

all the courts above. Here, then, drop your anchor. It is sound ground, and it will not come home. With this patient faith, therefore, be found in all the means of grace, walking humbly, while you do his will, "And pleading the promises, which are yea and amen in Christ. Blessed are all they who wait for him."

We read of Paul's company, that *they cast out four anchors, and wished for the day*. Do you the same, for that is a wish very pleasing to the Lord. I observed before, that it is not daylight with the soul till that promise is accomplished, *I will manifest myself unto him*. Here is the great design of the wonderful plan of salvation—to restore man to his original communion with God; and he who hath said, *I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely*—now waits to make your souls his loved abode, the temple of indwelling God. There is a rest which remains for the people of God; and you who love the Lord, remember, *He came not only that you might have life*, but that *you may have it more abundantly*. Cry, my beloved friends, day and night, that you may "enter into the land of uprightness, on which the eyes of the Lord are continually," from the beginning of the year to the end. But when the people of Israel slighted the rest of Canaan, and had lost that courage by which alone they could enter—how greatly did it offend the Lord! And will he approve lazy dull seekers of that spiritual Canaan, that *baptism of the Spirit*, to which every believer is expressly called? We often talk of the time when *righteousness is to overspread the earth*, but this millennium must overspread our own hearts, if we would see the face of God with joy. For the very end of our creation is, that we may become *the habitation of God through the Spirit*.

THE END.