AN ACCOUNT OF THE EARLY PART OF THE LIFE, AND CONVINCEMENT

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THOMAS MELHUISH

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AN ACCOUNT

OF THE EARLY PART

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Life, and Convincement

OF

THOMAS MELHUISH,

LATE OF TAUNTON.

Given by himself in a Letter to a Friend:

Together with

A Short Account of his subsequent Life, &c.

With Extracts from some of his Letters

On Religious Subjects.

Collected and arranged by two Friends,

to whom he committed the Revisal of his Papers.

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1805.

NOTICE BY THE EDITORS.

The materials from which the annexed account is compiled, being very incomplete, we rely on the candour of those into whose hands it may fall, to make suitable allowance for any incorrectness or deficiencies that may appear; hoping the serious reader will think with us, that the value of this little compilation sufficiently warrants its being brought forward to general notice, even in its present imperfect state.

AN ACCOUNT, &c.

IT may not be amiſs to introduce the following letter with a ſhort account of our friend in his early life.

He was born at Bradninch in Devonſhire, about the year 1737, of parents not then profeſſing with Friends: but his mother ſoon afterwards joined the Society, his father continuing in profeſſion with the national church.

Having learnt the buſineſs of a taylor, he travelled to London for employment as a journeyman in that line, about the twentieth year of his age, and having been previouſly brought acquainted with the principles of Friends, he ſoon formed an intimacy with ſome in that city, particularly the family of the Marſhmans, who kindly noticed and entertained him; which doubtleſs proved a ſingular favour to him, and made a laſting impreſſion of gratitude on his mind, opening the way to a correſpondence after his return

 into

into the country, from whence it appears he addreſſed a letter to James Marſhman, of which the following is an extract.

2d Mo. ſeventh, 1758.

RESPECTED FRIEND,

THE many and repeated favours received at thy hands, call for my thankful acknowledgements; and I make uſe of this opportunity to return them, hoping I ſhall always retain a grateful ſenſe of thy kindneſs manifeſted to me at a time, wherein my poverty and diſtreſs (ſpiritually ſpeaking) were very great; and as from an obſervation I have made, I believe thou art mindful of the apoſtle's advice, "Be not forgetful to entertain ſtrangers," I doubt not but thou haſt largely experienced the bleſſings which attend ſuch a pious diſpoſition, and that they may be continued to thee is my ardent deſire.

The humble followers of the meek and crucified Jeſus, whoſe deſire it is to be found walking in the path of ſelf-denial, and are earneſtly

earneſtly concerned to attain a thorough reſignation to the divine will, are oftentimes drawn to look back and take a ſorrowful proſpect of their once fallen and loſt eſtate; and under a humbling ſenſe thereof are made to adore the worthy name and magnify that powerful arm, by which they were called and delivered from darkneſs, and brought to a ſtate of marvellous light; and from blindneſs and ignorance to be meaſurably acquainted with the hidden myſteries of the everlaſting kingdom: theſe being filled with a ſenſe of their unworthineſs, are at all times ready to acknowledge that it is not in the least by any might, ſtrength, or even deſire of their own, but through the free, univerſal love of God, by the revelation of that inviſible power in their hearts, which made Felix tremble, that they are preſerved from the ſins and groſs enormities by which they were once led captive; and as by a ſteady obedience to divine grace they are kept in a humble ſtate, and know themſelves to be (what they really are) poor dependant creatures, inſufficient of themſelves to do, or even think any good, they have nothing to