

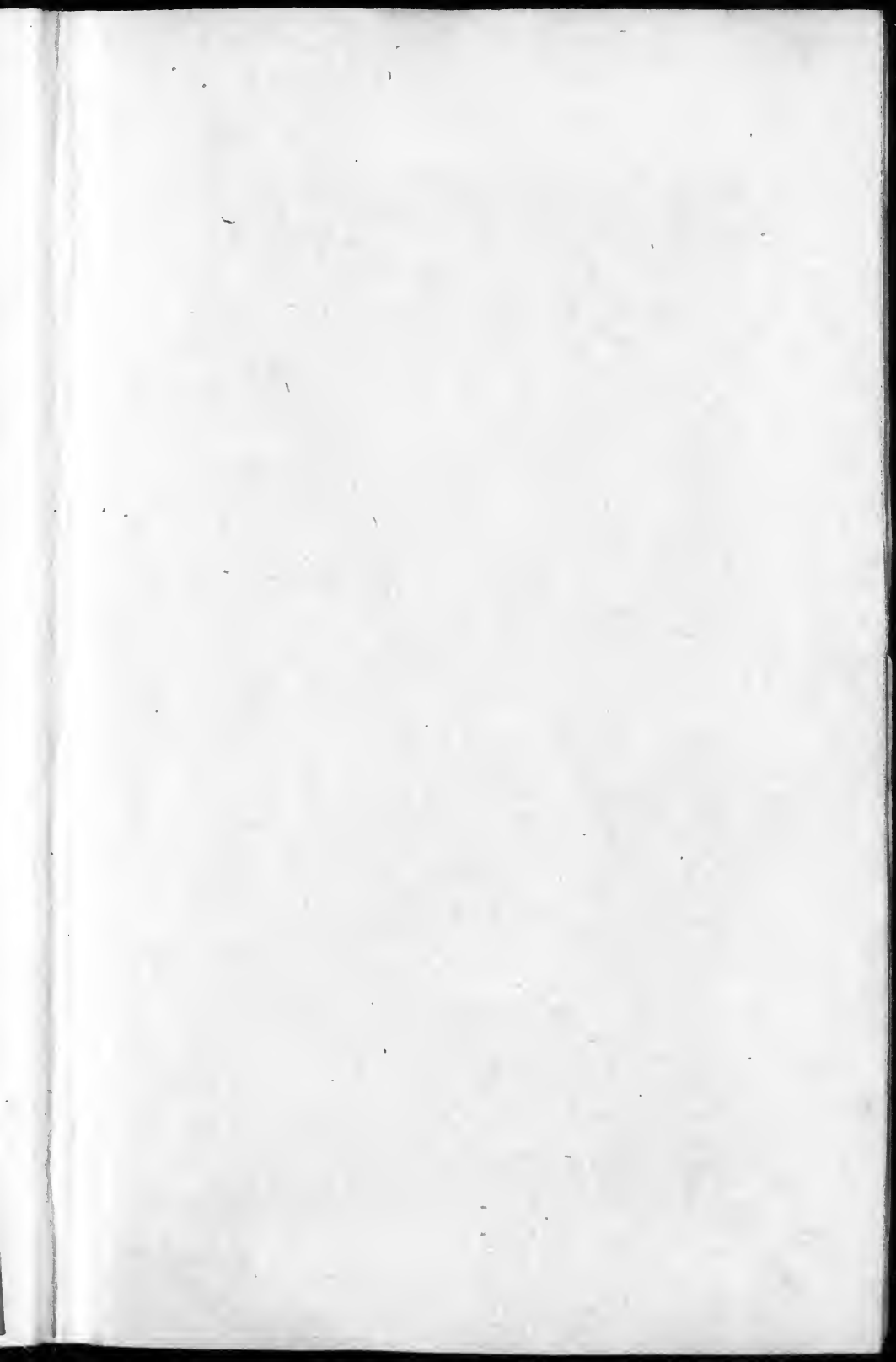
BW286

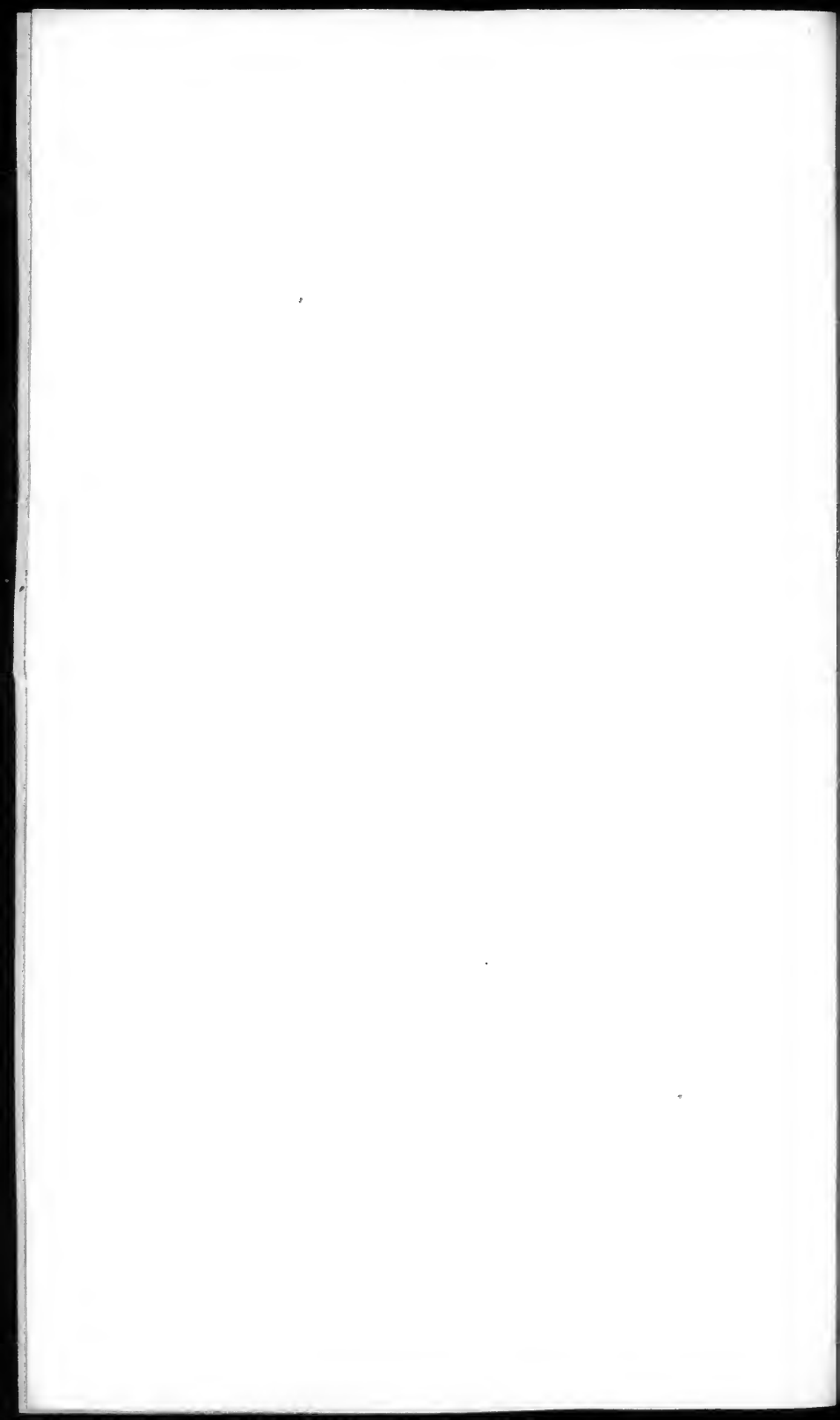
.W/38J3

1840



W/es. 975





922.7  
201

MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

181

THE REV. RICHARD WATSON,

LATE SECRETARY TO THE WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

BY THOMAS JACKSON.

THERE is a sort of God's dear servants who walk in perfectness; and they have a degree of clarity and divine knowledge more than we can discourse of, and more certain than the demonstrations of geometry, brighter than the sun, and indeficient as the light of heaven. As a flame touches a flame, and combines into splendour and to glory; so is the spirit of a man united unto Christ by the Spirit of God.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN MASON, 14, CITY-ROAD;

AND SOLD AT 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1840.

BW 286

W 38 J 3

1840

ENTERED AT STATIONERS'-HALL.

LONDON: PRINTED BY JAMES NICHOLS,  
46, HOXTON-SQUARE.

Wes. 975

## PREFACE.

---

THE years 1832 and 1833 were a season of great and affecting mortality among the Wesleyan Ministers. During this period several men of leading influence in that body were separated from their brethren and the church, and called to resign a charge which they had fulfilled with superior fidelity and success. Of this number the most distinguished were, Dr. Adam Clarke, and the Rev. Richard Watson; both of whom were universally esteemed and beloved for their piety, attainments, and usefulness. The loss of these excellent men has been painfully felt; and their memory will long be cherished by a large circle of friends, and by the numerous congregations to whom they were accustomed to preach the word of life.

In the following pages an attempt is made to trace the personal history of Mr. Watson; and though the narrative has been compiled under many disadvantages, chiefly arising from the pressure of other engagements, it is presumed that the work contains a faithful, though inadequate, record of his life and labours. The writer will always consider it as one of his greatest privileges, and one for which he will ever be thankful

to divine Providence, that he was favoured with the friendship of this great and good man, and for several years lived in habits of constant intercourse and correspondence with him. They have conversed together on almost every subject of theology, and of public interest, as well as upon all the literary projects in which Mr. Watson was engaged. To give an honest and just view of his habits, character, and opinions, has been the writer's aim; but no one is more sensible than himself that his descriptions fall vastly short of the original. It would have required a pen like his own to do full justice to Mr. Watson's intellectual endowments, and his great exertions in the cause of Christianity.

To those friends who have kindly furnished materials for this volume, the cordial thanks of the writer are due, and are very sincerely tendered. It is unnecessary to specify the names of the parties in this place, as they are generally mentioned in the body of the work, in connexion with their respective communications. Mr. Watson's correspondence, of which many specimens are given, will be found to be rich in interest, on account of its piety, elegance, and variety.

No man was more deeply impressed than the subject of these memoirs, with the conviction, that devotedness to God is the principal end of human life; and it is earnestly hoped that the exhibition of his own character will tend to pro-

mote this most important of all objects. Such an example of sanctified talent, and of holy zeal, in the midst of pain and disease, has seldom been witnessed. He had learned the great practical lesson of connecting the labours of time with the awards of eternity; and hence arose his impressions concerning both the sacredness and vanity of the present life.

“ Sacred how high, and vain how low,  
He knew not here, but died to know.”

LONDON,  
*March 25th, 1834.*

---

IN the third edition some of the extracts from Mr. Watson's writings have been shortened, and others omitted, to bring the narrative within the prescribed limits. The phraseology also, in a few instances, has been improved. These are all the alterations which the work has undergone. It is again commended to the candid attention of the Christian public, and to the divine blessing.

LONDON,  
*April 2d, 1840.*



# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

*Mr. Watson's Ancestry—Birth—Childhood—Education—Apprenticeship—Conversion—Subsequent Piety* Pages 1—24.

## II.

*Mr. Watson's Call to the Ministry—Persecutions—Success as a Preacher—Liberation from his Apprenticeship—Goes to the Newark Circuit—Is refused by the Conference because of his Youth—Becomes the Assistant of Mr. Cooper in the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Circuit—Mr. Stenson's Testimony concerning him—Mr. Burdsall's Testimony—Desultory Character of his Studies—Appointment to the Castle-Donnington Circuit—Henry's Method of Prayer—Mr. Winchester's Theological Scheme.....* Pages 24—51.

## III.

*Mr. Watson's Appointment to the Leicester Circuit—Plan of Study which he adopted—Poetical Composition—Appointment to the Derby Circuit—Mr. Seckerson's Testimony concerning him—Publication of his "Apology for the Methodists"—Methodist New Connexion—Dr. Watts's dangerous Speculations—Mr. Watson suspected of Arianism—Injustice of the Suspicion—Ungenerous Treatment—Retirement from the Wesleyan Connexion—Mr. Edmondson's Testimony in Mr. Watson's favour—Mr. Burdsall's—Mr. Watson's Entrance into Business—Union with the Methodist New Connexion—Appointment to the Stockport Circuit .....* Pages 51—86.

## IV.

*Mr. Watson's Ministry at Stockport—Publication of a satirical Pamphlet—Compilation of the Memoirs of William Bradbury and John Cash—Sermon on religious Meditation—Sermon on Sunday-Schools—Letter to Mr. Edmondson—Notes on Stackhouse's "Body of Divinity"—Removal to Liverpool—Letter to Mr. Thomas Faulkner—Two Letters to Mr. John Faulkner—Mr. Watson's Admission into full Connexion—Re-appointment to Liverpool—Continuation of Goldsmith's Abridgment of the History of England—Prospectus of the Liverpool Courier—Letter to Mr. Faulkner, jun.—Answer to Mr. Roscoe..* Pages 86—121.

## CHAPTER V.

*Mr. Watson's Appointment to Liverpool as a Supernumerary Preacher—Letter to Mr. John Faulkner—Poem entitled "Enjoyments"—Memoir of James Parry—Robert Nicholson—Fall of a Church in Liverpool—Mr. Watson's Appointment to Manchester—Character of his Preaching—Lord Sidmouth's Bill—Re-appointment to Manchester—Retirement from the New Connexion—Return to the Wesleyan Body—Letters to Mr. Watkin* Pages 122—147.

## VI.

*Mr. Watson accepted by the Wesleyan Conference—Appointed to the Wakefield Circuit—Mr. Buckley's Testimony concerning him—Re-opening of the Halifax Chapel—Letter to Mr. Watson's Father—His Death—Letter to Mr. Makinson—Opening of the Armley Chapel—Matthew Shackleton—Letters to Mr. Watkin . . .* Pages 147—168.

## VII.

*Mr. Watson's Re-appointment to the Wakefield Circuit—Dr. Coke—Wesleyan Mission to Ceylon—Missionary Meeting at Leeds—Mr. Watson's Sermon on the Occasion—Address to the Public on the Subject of the Wesleyan Missions—Mr. Watson's Services in connexion with various Missionary Meetings—Letters to Messrs. Makinson and Watkin*  
Pages 168—187.

## VIII.

*Restoration of Peace in Europe—Mr. Watson's Sermon on the Occasion—Services in Connexion with the Cause of Missions—Decision of the Conference respecting Missionary Meetings and Societies—Mr. Watson's Appointment to Hull—Waltham-Street Chapel—Mr. Watson's Usefulness in Hull—Letter to Mr. Walton—Missionary Meeting in London—Dr. Coke's Death—Mr. Watson's Visit to Newark—Attack upon him in one of the Hull Newspapers—Letter to Mr. Walton—Mr. Watson's Re-appointment to Hull—Ministerial Conduct. . . . .* Pages 187—216.

## IX.

*Mr. Watson's Sermon at the Missionary Anniversary in London—Appointed to the London East Circuit—Manner in which he discharged his Duties as a Preacher and Missionary Secretary—Letter to Mr. Ellis—Letter to Mr. Garbutt—Mr. Watson's first General Report of the Wesleyan Missions . . . . .* Pages 217—240.

## CHAPTER X.

*Attacks in Parliament upon the Wesleyan Missions in the West Indies—Mr. Watson's "Defence" of those Missions—Affecting Instance of Negro Oppression—Thanks of the Conference to Mr. Watson for his "Defence" of the West India Mission—Opening of Queen-Street Chapel, London—Letter to Mr. Ellis—Opening of a new Chapel at Oxford—Anecdote of Dr. Clarke and a Lady..* Pages 240—259.

## XI.

*Mr. Watson's Pamphlet on the Eternal Sonship of Christ—Opinion of Robert Hall in favour of it—Formation of a General Wesleyan Missionary Society—Letter to Mr. Walton—Arrival of two Buddhist Priests in England—Mr. Watson's Appointment to the London West Circuit—Sermon before the Sunday-School Union on Education—Ordination of Missionaries in Bristol ..* Pages 260—285.

## XII.

*Mr. Watson's Address at the Ordination of Missionaries at City-Road—Report of the Wesleyan Missions for the Year 1818—Publication of the Christian Reporter Newspaper—Letter to Miss Smith—Mr. Watson's Missionary Services in the Spring of 1819—Pastoral Address of the Conference—Instructions to Missionaries .....* Pages 285—299.

## XIII.

*Missionary Report for 1819—Mr. Watson's Visit to Cornwall—Mission in Southern Africa—Missionary Anniversary of 1820—Mr. William Ward—Conference of 1820—The Rev. John Emory—Pastoral Address—Mr. Watson's Re-appointment to the London West Circuit—Letter to Mr. Goy .....* Pages 299—314.

## XIV.

*Mr. Watson's Answer to Southey's "Life of Wesley"—Sceptical Tendency of Mr. Southey's Publication—Slandorous Character of Bogue and Bennett's History of the Dissenters—Death of Mr. Benson—Missionary Report for 1820—Missionary Anniversary of 1821—Letter to Mr. Walton*  
Pages 314—334.

## CHAPTER XV.

*Conference of 1821—Mr. Watson's Appointment to the Office of Resident Secretary—Letter to his Daughter—Class-Meetings—Letter to Mr. Young—Letter to Mrs. Watson—Mr. Watson writes for the Wesleyan Magazine—Resolves to write a Body of Christian Theology—Mission to New-Holland—Mr. Watson's Visit to Cornwall—Letter to Mr. Walton* ..... Pages 335—348.

## XVI.

*Missionary Anniversaries—Mr. Watson's Visit to the West of England—Letters to Dr. Ellis—Letter to Mr. Hoole—Letter to his Son—Mr. Watson's delicate Health—Letter to Dr. Ellis—Publication of the First Part of the "Theological Institutes"—Letters to Mr. Walton—Death of Messrs. Sargent and Lloyd—Letter to Miss Walton—Death of Mr. Ward—Letter to Dr. M'Allum concerning a Mission to Jerusalem—Mr. Cook's Visit to the Holy Land—Papers on the Witness of the Spirit—Mr. Watson's Sermon on "Man magnified by the divine Regard"—Letter on the Use of Organs in Chapels* ..... Pages 348—380.

## XVII.

*Publication of the Second Part of the "Theological Institutes"—On the Being of a God—Mr. Watson's "Catechism of the Evidences of Christianity"—His Sermon on "Honour all Men"—Letters to his Daughter* .... Pages 380—393.

## XVIII.

*Mr. Watson's Visit to Oxford—Leeds Conference of 1824—The Anti-Slavery Society—Mr. Watson's Visit to the North of England—Letter to Mr. Garbutt—Conference of Bristol in 1825—Marlborough—Singular Impression—Pastoral Address—Third Part of the "Theological Institutes"—Doctrine of the Trinity—Original Sin* ..... Pages 393—407.

## XIX.

*Mr. Watson publishes "The Labyrinth, or Popish Circle"—National Distress—Death of Mr. Butterworth—Mr. Watson's Sermon on the Occasion—Mr. Watson's Election to the Presidency of the Conference—Letter to a young Preacher—Fourth Part of the "Theological Institutes"—Doctrine of the Atonement—Justification.* ..... Pages 408—422.

## CHAPTER XX.

*Missionary Report for 1826—Mr. Watson's official Visit to Scotland—The Conference in Belfast—Charge addressed to the young Preachers at the Conference in Manchester—Appointment to the Manchester South Circuit—Manner in which he discharged his Duties as the Superintendent of a Circuit—Musical Festival . . . . .* Pages 423—437.

## XXI.

*Mr. Watson's Sermon before the Wesleyan Missionary Society in 1828—Fifth Part of the "Theological Institutes"—Peculiar Doctrines of Calvinism—Anecdote of Rowland Hill—Drs. Womack and Thomas Pierce—Dissensions in Leeds—Mr. Watson's Answer to the Southwark Address to the Conference—Re-appointment to Manchester—Completion of the "Theological Institutes"—Letter to Mr. Nichols—Church Order—Thanks of the Conference to Mr. Watson for the Copyright of his "Institutes"—His Appointment to the City-Road Circuit . . . .* Pages 437—463.

## XXII.

*Mr. Watson publishes his "Conversations for the Young"—Missionary Anniversary of 1830—Mr. Watson's Address—Anti-Slavery Meeting—Mr. Watson requested to write a Life of Mr. Wesley—Requested to accept a Professorship in the Wesleyan University of America—Letter on that Subject—Efforts to obtain the Extinction of Negro Slavery—Requested to compile a "Biblical and Theological Dictionary"—Thanks of the Conference for his Life of Mr. Wesley . . . . .* Pages 463—476.

## XXIII.

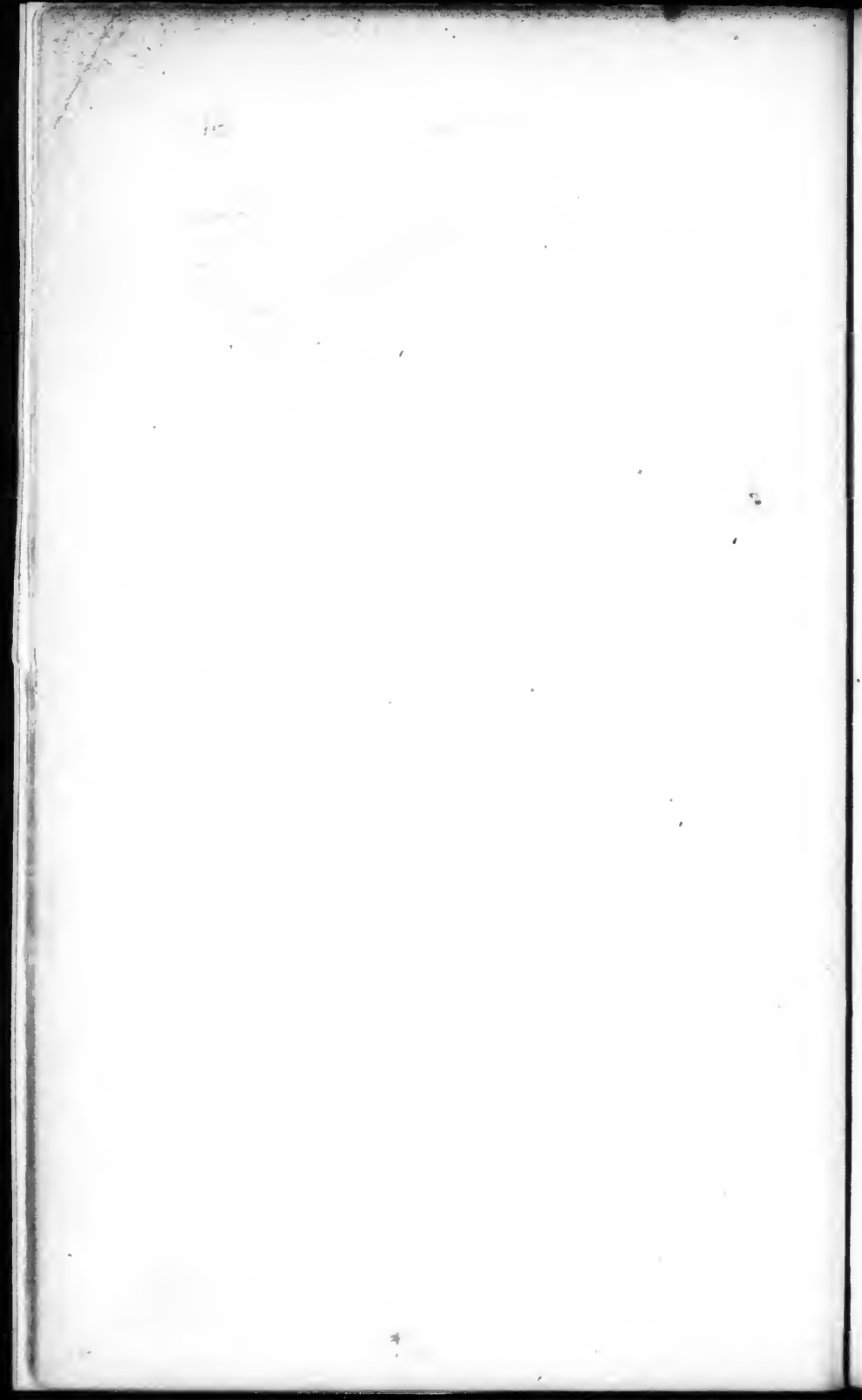
*Appearance in England of the Asiatic Cholera—Meetings for Prayer at the City-Road—Watch-night—Persecution of the Missionaries in Jamaica—Mr. Watson's ill Health—Retirement to Brighton—Completion of his Dictionary—Literary Projects—Resolution to write an Exposition of the New Testament—Conference of Liverpool—Sickly Appearance—Sermon on Zech. ix. 9-12—Re-appointment to the Office of Resident Secretary to the Missions—Conveyance of his literary Property to the Connexion—Resignation of his pastoral Charge at City-Road* Pages 476—496.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*Death of Dr. Adam Clarke—Of Mr. Thomas Stanley—Letter to Mr. Blaine, of Hull—Mr. Watson's last Sermon—Death of Mr. James—Mr. Watson's Diligence—Declining Health—Letter to Mr. Buxton on the Emancipation of the Negroes—Act of Parliament for the Extinction of Negro Slavery—Mr. Watson's last Illness—Account by Mrs. Bulmer—By Mr. Beecham—By Mr. Marsden—By Mr. Ince—By Mr. Dixon—By Mr. Watson's Daughter—His Death and Funeral—Sermons on his Death—Manuscripts . . . . .* Pages 497—542.

## XXV.

*Mr. Watson's personal Appearance—Manners—Vigour of his Imagination—Soundness of his Judgment—Extent of his Attainments—Quickness of his Apprehension—Elegance and Correctness of his Taste—Versatility of his Talents—Practical Character of his Mind—Christian Diligence—Habit of Self-denial—Pastoral Character—Humility—Readiness to forgive Injuries—Exemplary in the Discharge of domestic Duties—Qualifications for the Missionary Secretaryship—Catholic Spirit—Modesty—Conversational Powers—Character as a Theologian—Peculiarities as a Preacher—Manner of conducting public Worship—Attachment to the religious Body to which he belonged—Zeal in its Defence—Friendly to the Ecclesiastical Establishment of this Country—His deep Piety, improved by Affliction . . . . .* Pages 542—591.



MEMOIRS  
OF  
THE LIFE AND WRITINGS  
OF  
THE REV. RICHARD WATSON.

---

CHAPTER I.

FEW subjects of inquiry excite deeper interest than the personal history of men who have been distinguished by learning, genius, or any peculiarities of character and conduct. The church and the world, therefore, have each their favourite biographical works, in which their respective heroes are exhibited. To meet the public demand for some authentic record of one of the most eminent men of modern times, the following narrative has been prepared. It suggests many important lessons of practical instruction ; and presents, in a very striking view, the power and excellence of true religion, as giving strength and elevation to intellect, sanctifying a life of affliction, inspiring universal charity, and affording consolation and hope in the prospect of death and eternity.



The Rev. Richard Watson was the son of Thomas and Ann Watson, and was born at Barton-upon-Humber, in Lincolnshire. His father, who was a native of Ledenham, near Lincoln, was the son of a respectable farmer; but as the family was somewhat large, and could not be all conveniently employed in agriculture, he was brought up to the business of a saddler. The earlier years of his life were spent in Nottingham; where it is probable he served his apprenticeship. In this town he was connected with the Methodists. He subsequently removed to Bawtry, and from thence to Barton.

Mrs. Watson, the mother of Richard, is still living, (1834,) and resides in Nottingham. She was born in London; but removed in early life with her parents to Finningley, near Bawtry, where she became acquainted with Mr. Watson, and was married to him in the parish church of that village. Though far advanced in years, she is in full possession of her faculties; and in her features greatly resembles her son. She bore eighteen children, of whom Richard was the seventh. They all died in their infancy, except Richard, and three sisters, two of whom are still living.

Richard was born February 22d, 1781. His father at that time was connected with the Dissenters; yet, being a freeman of the city of Lincoln, and thinking that the parish register might be of advantage to his son in future life, the child was baptized at St. Peter's church, in Barton. During his infancy his health was exceedingly delicate; his death was almost daily anticipated; he was taken to the church to be baptized on the 5th

of March, being then only eleven days old; and his parents, who were passionately fond of him, had scarcely the slightest hope that he would be spared to arrive at manhood. He was so extremely weak, that his mother was for a long time compelled to nurse him upon a pillow; his feeble and attenuated frame not being able to bear the slight pressure of its own weight upon her arms.

When he was about three or four years old, so as to be able to walk, he became very lethargic. If his mother suffered him to leave the house for the purpose of play, a messenger generally arrived in a very short time, informing her that her son had reclined his head upon the threshold of some neighbouring house, and was there fast asleep. This drowsiness was only temporary, and was succeeded by unusual playfulness and vivacity. At a proper age he was placed under the tuition of an old lady who kept a school within a few doors of his father's house. The very earnest and vehement manner in which he repeated the letters, when learning the alphabet and beginning to form syllables, greatly interested his governess; who often exclaimed, "Bless thee! Thou wilt be a great man." The prediction has been amply verified; and the kindness and generosity under the impulse of which the prophetess thus oracularly spoke were honourable to her character; although the attainments of her pupil at that time could not be regarded as any proof of future eminence.

Having acquired the rudiments of instruction under the care and encouragement of his female teacher, Richard was sent to a school which was kept in a room adjoining St. Peter's church, by the

Curate, whose name was the Rev. Matthew Barnett, the Clergyman by whom he had been baptized. He was then about six years of age; and during the first quarter of his admission, his intelligent tutor, seeing the capabilities of the boy, waited upon his parents, and proposed that he should immediately enter upon the study of Latin. With this suggestion they readily complied; although they had not previously contemplated, in the education of their son, any thing more than a bare preparation for some ordinary business. A higher Power, however, designed him for more important employment; and had it not been for that sound classical training which he received in early life, he would have been very inadequately qualified for those momentous services in the church for which he was intended. The parties concerned in conducting his education, at this period of his life, were unconscious instruments in the hands of a wise and gracious Providence, which was preparing him for extensive and permanent usefulness in the world. He had great aptitude for the acquisition of learning; so that he could freely indulge himself in play, which, considering the peculiar delicacy of his constitution, was necessary to his health, and yet he was always ready to obey the call of his master, when the time arrived for repeating his lesson. His mother often reminded him of the length and difficulty of his classical tasks, and of the consequent necessity of application; and his general reply was, "I can say my lesson." Fearing that he did not pursue his studies with sufficient diligence, she inquired of Mr. Barnett respecting the proficiency of his pupil;

who told her that she might lay aside all anxiety on that subject, inasmuch as the improvement of her son was to him perfectly satisfactory. Richard remained under the efficient tuition of this Clergyman about two years, when the family removed from Barton.

During his residence in this town, Mr. Watson, sen., was accustomed, when the tide served, to cross the Humber from Barton to Hull on the Sunday morning, to attend the preaching of the Rev. Mr. Lambert, an eminent Dissenting Minister in that town; and also that of the Rev. Joseph Milner, the ecclesiastical historian. In Mr. Milner's church he often heard Mr. Stillingleet, of Hotham, and other evangelical Clergymen of celebrity. On these occasions he was frequently accompanied by his son Richard, who thus early in life was trained to an attendance upon the public worship of Almighty God, and enjoyed the means of Christian instruction. That salutary impressions were then made upon his tender mind, he afterwards gratefully acknowledged. His father's sentiments, at this period, appear to have been Calvinistic; and as he was anxious that his neighbours should enjoy such a ministry as that which he conscientiously preferred, and to which he attached so much importance, he united with some other persons, like-minded with himself, in the erection of a small chapel at Barton, in which a Minister belonging to the Connexion of the late Countess of Huntingdon was invited to officiate. He lodged in the house of Mr. Watson during his stay in Barton; but as he did not succeed in raising either a congregation or a church, so as to

obtain adequate support, he at length left the place, and the attempt to raise a Dissenting interest was abandoned. The sale of the chapel became necessary; and Mr. Watson would not consent to this measure, unless his fellow-trustees would dispose of it to the Methodists, that it might still be used as a place of religious worship. To this they agreed; and this humble structure is believed to have been the first Methodist chapel in Barton. By this attempt to introduce a Dissenting ministry, Mr. Watson offended many of his customers, who therefore withdrew their patronage from him. His business, in consequence, declined; and he was ultimately induced to leave the town. He was an upright man; and among those who were personally acquainted with him in those times, he had the reputation of possessing considerable powers of memory; while his general intelligence, and especially his knowledge of divinity, raised him considerably above the greater part of his contemporaries of the same rank in society. The discipline which he maintained in his family was strict. His children were trained up in a regular attendance upon religious worship; were restrained from evil company, from Sabbath-breaking, and from the use of profane songs; and regularly instructed in the Assembly's Catechism. His parental care and solicitude were not in vain. Though often called to follow his infant offspring to the grave, in one of them, at least, he was favoured with a signal display of the power of divine grace. He had a daughter who was a remarkable example of early piety. She was a year or two older than her brother Richard; and they were tenderly attached

to each other. They were accustomed to sing hymns together; and when they were left in the dark, she often reminded him that they need not be afraid; for that good angels, who sing hymns to God continually, would always take care of them. She had strong presentiments of an early death; and frequently told the family that she should soon die, and go to heaven. Once, when the shoemaker brought her a pair of new shoes, instead of being elated, as is usually the case in children of her age, she said that he might take them back again; for that she should not live to wear them. Her anticipations of an early death were realized. She died of the small-pox, when her brother Richard was about four years old; and he was thus deprived of his favourite companion.

In the mean while, his mental improvement kept pace with his age. When he was not more than six years old, he read, with intense interest, sixteen or eighteen volumes of the Universal History, relating to the European nations, which his father purchased for him in one of his visits to Hull. He was exceedingly desirous to obtain the remainder of that voluminous work; but in this he was disappointed. In those times he also practised himself in drawing, in which he took great delight, and manifested considerable taste. When he wanted a fresh supply of brushes, or of colours, he generally made application to his mother, whom he found, as other children have also done in similar cases, somewhat more accessible on such subjects than the father. It was his practice to repeat his Latin Grammar to his elder sister who survived him; till at length she became nearly

as well acquainted with it as he himself was. At one time, being both confined to the house by indisposition, they committed nearly the whole of Fenelon's *Telemachus* to memory. His sister used to speak of his fraternal spirit and conduct in those times, and in his subsequent life, in terms of delight and affection. If any misunderstanding ever took place between them, it was generally ended by a repetition of two stanzas in Dr. Watts's *Hymns for Children*, with which their minds were familiar :—

“ Let dogs delight to bark and bite,  
For God hath made them so ;  
Let bears and lions growl and fight,  
For 'tis their nature too.

“ But, children, you should never let  
Such angry passions rise ;  
Your little hands were never made  
To tear each other's eyes.”

When Richard was about eight years of age, the family removed from Barton to Lincoln, where his father carried on business for several years, in the parish of St. Mary. On their arrival in that city, Richard was sent to a private seminary, kept by a person of the name of Hescott, till his parents should be able to obtain for him admission into the Free Grammar School. Here his classical studies seem to have been in a great measure suspended ; and his attention was directed to the mathematics, and to those branches of education which have a reference to commercial transactions. At this school he does not appear to have been distinguished either by his application or his proficiency. His hand-writing was not good ; and,

indeed, he was never ambitious to excel in this most useful art. He made amends, however, in some degree, by the superiority of his reading. In this he was proposed as an example to the whole school; and it became a common remark among the boys, "Dick Watson will make a capital Parson, he is so good a reader." To him, the most important arrangement connected with this period of his life was the course of catechetical instruction which he attended, under the direction of the Minister who officiated in Lady Huntingdon's chapel. The catechism which was used, and the sections of which he was required consecutively to commit to memory, was that of the Westminster Assembly of Divines; which, with the Confession of Faith, drawn up by the same authorities, is well known to be the standard of doctrine in the Scottish Church. Both these formularies are decidedly Calvinistic on the question of predestination and its concomitants; but they are, otherwise, among the best summaries of Christian theology ever compiled. To young Watson it must have been a great advantage to be rendered familiar with this brief system of divine truth; a part of which was explained to him and his fellow-catechumens every Saturday afternoon, when they resorted to the chapel for that purpose. Though the effects of this course might not immediately appear, he doubtless derived from it great benefit, when he became pious, and especially when he was called to instruct others in the concerns of salvation. Religious training is an essential part of sound education; and no mode of accomplishing this object has been found so efficient as that of



catechising ; the duty of which ought most conscientiously to be discharged by all those persons on whom the care of children and youth devolves. To say nothing of parents, those Ministers incur a fearful responsibility who publicly admit children into the church by baptism, and afterwards neglect to take them under their pastoral charge, and afford no direct assistance in bringing them up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Catechetical instruction, as an elementary process, is necessary to qualify young persons to derive due advantage from the ministry of the word ; and as a means of bringing the Ministers of Christ and the junior portion of their charge into regular intercourse, it is intimately connected with the spiritual interests of the rising race, the prosperity of the church, the preservation of public morals, and the national welfare.

After remaining at the seminary of Mr. Hescott about two years, Richard Watson was removed to the Grammar School at Lincoln, then conducted, it is believed, by the Rev. Mr. Outhwaite, assisted by the Rev. John Carter ; the latter of whom was afterwards, for a series of years, the Head Master of that establishment. His application and proficiency were highly satisfactory, under the tuition of those gentlemen. He read Cæsar, Virgil, Horace, and some of the orations and epistles of Cicero, with Homer and Xenophon. It was without any specific object, either in his own mind, or in that of his parents, that he was subjected to this course of grammatical study in early life ; but to him it afterwards proved to be of incalculable advantage. By this means a sobriety and disci-

pline were given to his mind, when more directly turned to the various branches of knowledge ; the literary treasures of Greece and Rome were placed within his reach ; and he was prepared to enter upon the study of the Greek Testament, to avail himself of the theological writings of the ablest Divines and Commentators in Europe, to form an acquaintance with ecclesiastical antiquity, and to read the Hebrew Scriptures, with far less difficulty than he would have experienced, had he not been acquainted with the general principles upon which language is constructed. These advantages he ultimately realized to a considerable extent.

While pursuing his studies at the Grammar School, he gave indications of that generosity which afterwards became one of his most distinguishing characteristics. Among his school-fellows was a son of Colonel Broomhead. The youth was desirous to learn ; but his ability was not equal to that of some of his associates ; and Richard was accustomed to assist him in his difficulties. The kindness shown him made a deep impression upon his ingenuous mind ; he was anxious to repay the valuable assistance of his friend ; and therefore proposed to Mr. and Mrs. Watson that their son should enter into the army ; suggesting that the Colonel would soon place him in a situation of honour and emolument. Young Broomhead was himself in a course of training for the profession of arms, regarding it as the most direct road to fame ; and he was greatly disappointed and grieved when he found that the parents of his friend had thoughts concerning a military life very different from those which he cherished, and were therefore

deaf to all his proposals and entreaties on this subject. When he arrived at a suitable age, he entered into the army, and was killed in the first engagement with the enemy. His friend Watson lived to acquire a fame which the sword and musket can never confer.

In connexion with his classical studies, he cherished a taste for general literature and knowledge. His father purchased for him a History of England, in four folio volumes; most probably that of Rapin, with the Continuation by Tindal. This work he read with avidity; and so fixed was his attention, that when he sat, as he frequently did, with one of these volumes on his knee, he appeared to suffer no interruption from the conversation and bustle of the family. Being deeply interested in the manners, wars, and adventures of former ages, and finding that the leisure which he could command during the day was insufficient to gratify his appetite for this kind of information, he requested permission to sit up all night for the perusal of his favourite work. This request, of course, was denied by his parents, for reasons which his limited experience rendered him unable to appreciate; and he was, in consequence, painfully disappointed. At last, he thought of an expedient which was likely to secure his purpose. He concealed the iron bar which fastened the shutters of the shop; and when the night came, and this necessary article of security was wanting, affecting to sympathize with the family in the loss which they had sustained, and suggesting that it would be very unsafe to leave the property exposed to depredation, he recommended that the

family should retire to sleep, and he would sit up all night, to prevent the intrusion of thieves. The fraud was not discovered till some time afterwards. This ingenious scheme shows his passion for reading, but is not to be commended. It rather merited a sound flogging for the falsehood which it involved.

On the removal of the family to Lincoln, Mr. Watson, sen., attended the chapel of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion. He subsequently united himself to the Methodist society. His family were accustomed to accompany him to the chapels of these communities ; but it does not appear that his son gave any satisfactory indications of piety at this period of his life. He was prompt at his studies, fond of play, full of animation, possessed a ready wit, and gave striking proofs of a strong and determined mind ; but the solemn truths of religion engaged little of his attention, and did not seem deeply to impress his heart. As his parents had not the means of educating him for a learned profession, when he arrived at the age of fourteen years, it was necessary that he should be taught some business, as a means of honourable subsistence. His father recommended that he should be a draper, or an ironmonger ; but he chose rather to be a carpenter and joiner. The reason which he assigned for this preference was, that the life of a shopkeeper is comparatively idle ; and he thought it much more manly and becoming to be engaged in an active and laborious employment. In a yard connected with his father's house was a shop, at which machines of various descriptions, and especially for the winnowing of corn, were manufac-

tured ; and it is probable that his intercourse with the workmen, whom he daily saw using the implements of their craft, suggested to him the business which he selected. According to his wishes, he was apprenticed, for the term of seven years, to Mr. William Bescoby, whose work-shop was not far distant from his father's house ; and as his health was delicate, it was arranged that he should reside with his parents.

At this time his appearance was very singular. Though only fourteen years of age, he had attained his full stature, which was six feet two inches ; his hair was lank, and of a deep black ; his countenance was that of a mere boy, and his manners were unformed. His extraordinary height was the more remarkable, as both his parents were considerably below the middle stature.

After the commencement of his apprenticeship, his general spirit and conduct underwent a change for the worse. He became less studious and thoughtful, and cherished an unbounded passion for mischief. Within a few yards of his father's house there lived a Methodist shoemaker, in very humble circumstances ; but he was distinguished by deep piety, and active zeal. This poor man, who had once beaten Richard in the chapel for indecorous behaviour, became an object of almost constant jest with the thoughtless youth. A habit of treating religious persons with ridicule generally prepares the way for greater evils ; and the contempt shown for the shoemaker was only the prelude to acts of direct hostility to the pious associates of that good man. The only road leading to the Methodist chapel in Lincoln lay by the side

of the canal ; and for many years the congregations, in passing and repassing, were exposed to the most grievous annoyance. Men and boys were accustomed, especially on the winter evenings, to congregate on the opposite side of the canal, and pelt them with offensive and even dangerous missiles. This practice was carried on, with various degrees of violence, for several years ; and was only terminated by the just and spirited conduct of one of the Judges, before whom it was found necessary to bring some of the worst delinquents for trial at the Assizes. Richard was, unhappily, led, doubtless by his love of sport, rather than by direct and systematic hostility to religion, to connect himself with the persons who were concerned in these practices. Disregarding parental authority and example, he took his stand on the side of the canal opposite to that on which the chapel stood, and joined in pelting the worshippers of God with whom his father was associated in Christian fellowship. Sometimes he also went to the chapel, to disturb the congregation and the Preacher during the time of divine service, by throwing horsebeans against the front of the gallery, and raising other unseemly noises. His father was grieved to witness such a destitution of pious feeling in one so young, and who had been religiously educated ; but the heart was hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and remonstrance was unavailing. The misguided young man had no conception of happiness, except in levity and frolic, and in the company of persons of similar tastes and pursuits. Considering the manner in which he began, thus early in life, to neglect the house of God, profane

the Sabbath, associate with evil company, and to ridicule sacred things, the anticipations of his friends respecting his future character and habits were very discouraging. Had it not been that he was arrested by an unseen hand, and made a remarkable instance of the freeness and power of divine grace, his own opinion was, he would have become one of the most wicked among his comrades. Possessing extraordinary energy of mind, it was not in his nature to rest in mediocrity. He must have been eminent either in good or evil; and now, having entered upon a downward course, the fearful probability was, that he would pursue it to his ruin.

With God, however, "judgment is a strange work." He hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner; and by a signal display of that mercy and power of which the history of the church furnishes many examples, the thoughtless and ungodly youth, who had just entered upon a ruinous career, was effectually converted from the error of his way. The manner in which this change was wrought is worthy of special record. There lived in Lincoln, at that time, a watchmaker, who was no relation to Richard, though he bore the same name. He was a remarkably intelligent man; and to his house Richard was accustomed to resort, for the pleasure and benefit of his conversation, and especially for assistance in his mathematical studies, to which he continued to devote a portion of his time. The wife of this man was a professor of religion; but more remarkable for her loquacity, than the depth of her piety. She was an endless disputant on doctrinal topics; and especially on the five points

at issue between the disciples of Calvin and those of Arminius ; and when Richard came to the house for scientific purposes, she greatly annoyed him by lengthened speeches on questions which he did not understand, and in which he felt little interest. The family of the Watsons at that time had, in a great measure, forsaken the Calvinistic ministry, and attached themselves to the Methodist chapel ; and this good woman seems to have been very desirous of convincing Richard how grievously they had mistaken their way, in preferring the Wesleyan theology to that of Calvin. His patience was severely tried by what he considered an impertinent occupation of his time ; and his vanity was mortified when his female assailant pressed him with arguments which he knew not how to answer. For some time he had absented himself from the Methodist chapel ; but at length he resolved to attend the preaching there for a few times, in the hope of hearing something that would enable him, as Bishop Horsley expresses it, "to grapple with the difficulties of the quinquarticular controversy," and to silence his antagonist. Such was the motive which induced him again to resort to the place where his father worshipped ; and under the first sermon that he heard after his return, he learned what he little suspected, that there were subjects of greater importance than those on which he had come to seek information, and that they demanded his first attention. The late Rev. George Sargent was the Preacher. The word came with power to the young man's heart, and he was deeply convinced of sin. He saw that he was guilty in the sight of God, and exposed to



the curse of the divine law ; that his nature was totally corrupt, so as to render him unable either to serve God acceptably on earth, or to enjoy him in heaven. Life appeared as a dream ; eternity, with all its realities, seemed to be just at hand ; and he was in danger of perishing everlastingly. His sins, incalculable in number, and attended by many aggravations, were brought to his remembrance. They had been committed against a kind and long-suffering God, in contempt of his compassionate Redeemer, and in the midst of evangelical light and instruction, which greatly enhanced their guilt. Fear succeeded to that hardihood which he had for some time maintained, and penitential sorrow to that levity which he had indulged. He thought no more of supplying himself with arguments on the subject of "fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute ;" but of the way by which he might escape the wrath which was suspended over his head, and ready to break forth upon him. At the conclusion of the service he left the chapel, not to rush into company, but to retire into secret ; not to engage in vain and wordy disputation, but to meditate and pray. The principal object to which his attention was now directed, was not the silencing of the eager controversialist who had puzzled him, but the removal of his guilt, by an application of the blood of Christ to his conscience. In this state of mind, "sorrowing after a godly sort," he was induced to accompany some religious people to a village, a few miles from Lincoln, to hear a sermon preached by the Rev. William Dodwell, Vicar of Welby, near Grantham. Under the sermon of this Clergyman, Richard's religious convictions

were deepened ; and his grief, occasioned by the remembrance of his rebellion against God, was rendered more poignant and severe. The secrets of his heart were laid open ; and the evils of his nature were presented to his view in a new and fearful light. He was alarmed for the consequences of his wickedness ; weary and heavy laden under the yoke and burden of sin ; and he could only pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner." His state he perceived to be one of equal peril and wretchedness.

Happily for him, he was surrounded by men who had passed through the same painful process to the joys of pardon and purity of heart. They had individually felt the anguish of a wounded spirit ; and knew how to sympathize with their weeping friend, who now preferred walking with them in company to the house of God, and being hooted by the mob, to the society of scoffers, and the noisy hilarity of foolish men. His religious friends had obtained the salvation of the Gospel ; and well knowing the nature of that inward kingdom, for which his poverty of spirit was designed to prepare him ; and the richness of that comfort which is promised to them that mourn as he did ; while they rejoiced to see the prodigal return, they directed his attention to the perfect sacrifice of Christ, and encouraged him to believe with the heart unto righteousness in his crucified Redeemer. From early life he had been accustomed to hear the doctrine of justification by faith stated and enforced ; but he never before saw its adaptation to his state and character. The doctrine of atonement for sin came to his heart with a freshness and

power which he had not previously experienced ; his understanding approved of the evangelical method of a sinner's justification before God, through faith in the blood of Christ ; and believing that Christ died as a sacrifice for the sins of men, —that Christ died as a sacrifice for *his* sins,—he put his trust in Christ for pardon, for a title to eternal life, and for that “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.” It was done unto him according to his faith. His midnight was turned into the light of day ; guilty fear in his breast gave place to filial love ; the Holy Ghost bore a distinct and indubitable witness with his spirit that he was a child of God ; he was “filled with all joy and peace in believing ;” he loved God under a deep and impressive assurance of God's love to him ; and he loved all mankind for the Lord's sake.

It has been justly observed, that a change like this can never be forgotten ; that a man might as well attempt to forget a hairbreadth escape from shipwreck, or from his house at midnight when he suddenly found himself enveloped in smoke and flame, as forget the period when, in the scriptural sense of the expression, he “passed from death unto life.” The subject of this account retained to the end of his days a vivid recollection of the feelings and occurrences connected with this period of his moral history. In familiar intercourse with his friends he often referred to the callous state of his heart before his conversion, and the spiritual enjoyments which succeeded that happy event. After a lapse of nearly thirty years he visited the place of his spiritual birth ; and amidst the

delightful services of a Missionary Anniversary, a love-feast was held for the members of the Methodist society in Lincoln and its neighbourhood, at which he was present. With deep emotion, the tears gushing from his eyes, he related the particulars of his early life; especially his wickedness in connecting himself with the persecutors of God's people; the penitent distress which he experienced when convinced of sin; and the state of light and liberty into which he was brought when "the love of God was shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him." During his last illness, when death appeared in full view before him, he said to a friend, with strong feeling, "What a light was that! what a day, when the blessed Spirit first struck the light of heaven into our dark minds!"

The principles which Mr. Watson recognised in conversion, he cherished through the labours and afflictions of life. He regarded the sacrifice and intercession of Christ as the only ground of a sinner's justification before God; and faith in the blood of atonement as inseparably connected with salvation from the guilt and power of sin. The Holy Spirit he honoured as the author of saving faith, and of all holiness, power, and comfort. The salvation of the Gospel, consisting of these blessings, and obtained in this manner, he felt to be the great end of existence; necessary to prepare mankind both for the duties and trials of life, and the joys of heaven. An enlarged acquaintance with theology, the Scriptures, religious people, and the history of the church, only served to strengthen his attachment to these principles; and he realized

their truth and efficiency both in life and death.

The effects of regenerating grace were perhaps never more strikingly manifest than in the spirit and conduct of this extraordinary youth. Not many days had elapsed after he was convinced of sin, before he was made a happy partaker of the pardoning mercy of God. In him "old things were passed away, and all things become new." His attention to secular duties was most sedulous and exemplary; and his proficiency in the practical knowledge of his business was rapid and surprising. All unnecessary connexion with his ungodly companions was immediately and for ever abandoned. He became a willing and happy member of the Methodist society; and meekly submitted to all the contumely and insult with which they were then treated in that city. His passion for folly and mischief was entirely subdued; and his spirit, sanctified by divine grace, was serious, cheerful, and devout. Notwithstanding his youth, his entire deportment was marked by such circumspection and decorum, that religious parents were accustomed to direct the attention of their children to him as an example; and in some instances, young people were so struck with the change which they saw in him, as to be deeply impressed with the reality and power of religion. His conversion, as might be expected, excited considerable attention among the persecutors of the Methodists, who were roused to more determined opposition and outrage; and the congregations were subjected to every species of annoyance, both in the chapel, and on their way to it. One evening, a number

of men, dressed in a most ludicrous and fantastic manner, came to the chapel with a fiddle to disturb the worshippers of God. This impious adventure, had it occurred a few months before, would have been exactly adapted to his taste; but now he viewed it in a very different light. On his return home he related to his mother what had occurred; at the same time weeping, because of the dishonour done to God by the profane interruption of his worship, and the folly and wickedness of the men who were thus indifferent to every obligation of decency and religion.

After his conversion, the improvement of his time became with him a matter of supreme importance; and "no moment lingered unemployed." The day was cheerfully spent in the labours of his calling; and his evenings were devoted to the acquisition of useful knowledge, and attendance upon the worship of God. His mother states, that he spent much time in secret prayer, wrestling with God for spiritual blessings, and for the prosperity and enlargement of the kingdom of Christ. Public prayer-meetings were frequently held; and he was constantly present in these means of grace. His heart expanded with the love of Christ; his peace often flowed like a river; he longed for the salvation of others in the bowels of his Lord; and under the impulse of these hallowed feelings he sometimes took a part in the public addresses to the throne of the heavenly grace. This provoked, in a high degree, the ridicule of his former companions: they used to mock him, and even prick him with pins, when he was engaged in public prayer. Yet his self-possession appears never to

have forsaken him ; nor was he at all hindered in his Christian course. He steadily held on his way ; and neither the scoffs of the ungodly, nor the more dangerous suggestions of those who thought him "righteous overmuch," moved him from his purpose to serve God, and him alone. He resolved, in reliance upon the promised aids of divine grace, to be a Christian altogether.

The prayer-meetings in the chapel often began about the time when his labours in the shop were ended : considerable haste, therefore, was requisite, that he might be at the house of God when the service commenced ; and it is a remarkable fact, that, at two different times, when running to the chapel, in his eagerness to join his Christian friends in divine worship, he fell, and broke his arm. This was probably occasioned, in part, at least, by the rapidity of his growth, and the enormous stature to which he had so suddenly attained. In these instances the ardour of his mind received a temporary check ; and, instead of pursuing his way to the "place where prayer was wont to be made," he returned home pensive and sad, holding the fractured limb in his hand, and relating to his parents the disaster which had befallen him.

---

## CHAPTER II.

THOSE persons who had carefully observed the progress of Richard Watson from his infancy must have been aware that his mental powers, though as

yet very imperfectly developed, were above the common order. The readiness with which he acquired the elements of classical learning at Barton, and the rapid advancement which he made in the same studies in the Grammar School at Lincoln, showed something of his capabilities; and the eagerness with which he encountered the voluminous History of England, and even that of Europe, seemed to give an earnest of future application, and of the eminence to which he might arrive in the various departments of knowledge. But it was not till after his conversion that his true intellectual character appeared. Up to that period his mental faculties had never been fully called forth. This complete change in "the inner man" gave an intensity to his feelings unknown before, and directed his attention to the sublimest and most important topics that ever occupied the thoughts of either men or angels. The perfections of the Godhead, the redemption of the world by the death of the incarnate Son of God, the guilt and misery of fallen man, the necessity of repentance, faith in the blood of atonement, the salvation of the Gospel, the pleasures of religion, triumph in death, the resurrection of the dead, the general judgment, the joys of heaven, the endless miseries of hell; these and many collateral subjects roused his feelings, and stimulated all the energies of his imagination and understanding. His talents for usefulness soon became apparent. The moral state of the surrounding country was eminently calculated to awaken his sympathies, while it called for the most strenuous exertions; and with the full approbation of his religious friends, who saw that his piety was



deep, and the growth of his mental stature as rapid as had been that of his corporeal frame, he soon began to deliver exhortations in the prayer-meetings, and to officiate as a Local Preacher. The employment of persons so young in the public service of the church requires great caution. There is a danger lest their personal religion should be injured by vanity and spiritual pride, while as yet their knowledge of themselves and of Satan's devices is very imperfect; and there is an equal danger lest they should injure the sacred cause of true religion by advancing crude and undigested views of divine truth, and erroneous interpretations of Scripture. The case of this remarkable youth, however, was peculiar. In ordinary instances such juvenile ministrations are seriously to be deprecated; but he possessed a strength and sobriety of judgment, of which, at such a period of life, there have been few examples. The depth and solidity of his piety would have done honour to hoary years; and the cordiality with which he was received by the most pious and intelligent of his hearers, and the success which attended his labours, proved that he had not mistaken his calling. He was a man in understanding when people in general are mere children.

The manner in which he was led to speak in public was striking. His maternal grandmother lived in the family of his father. She was upwards of eighty years of age, and appears to have been a woman of a very devout spirit. It was her practice regularly to attend the religious services of her parish church on the Sabbath; and almost every day in the week besides she was present at the

worship of God in the cathedral ; although that edifice was nearly a mile from her home, and was situated on the summit of a steep and lofty hill, which it was necessary for her to ascend. She was not a member of the Methodist society, but was a frequent attendant at the chapel, where she joined in the service of God, and listened to "the word of his grace." To this venerable relation, who, like another Anna, "was of a great age," and "departed not from the temple, but served God with prayers night and day," the pious youth was tenderly attached. One day, when he was at work in the shop, she said to her granddaughter, the late Mrs. Robinson, of Nottingham, "Ann, my dear, get the Prayer-Book, and read to me the whole of the burial service. I should like to hear it." Her request was complied with, notwithstanding its singularity. She then said, "I very much wish to see Richard. Will any of you ask him to come home?" Her message was conveyed to him ; but he could not be spared from his work. He added, however, that he would see his grandmother in the evening, when his work was done. In the mean while, she said to her daughter, "I am very sleepy." "I will fetch you a pillow, mother," was the reply ; "and you shall lean your head upon the table, while you sit in your chair." The pillow was brought ; she reclined her head upon it, closed her eyes, and instantly expired, without the slightest indication of pain. When Richard returned home, and found that his grandmother was no more, and that she had departed this life in this calm and peculiar manner, he was greatly affected. A prayer-meeting was held in

the chapel that evening ; he, according to his custom, resorted to that means of grace ; and, under the strong impulse of the feelings thus excited, he delivered an address to the persons then assembled, on the solemn event which had just occurred in his father's house ; adverting to the lessons of piety and diligence it was calculated to teach. This appears to have been the commencement of his public ministry ; the future character of which neither he nor his humble auditors at that time anticipated. The remains of his venerable grandmother were interred in the church-yard of St. Mary's ; and the following inscription is still legible upon her grave-stone : "In Memory of Sarah Weeden, who departed this life February 10th, 1796, aged eighty-one years. Also William, son of Thomas and Ann Watson, who died an infant, April 9th, 1792." As Richard was born February 22d, 1781, it appears that he was scarcely fifteen years old when he began publicly to call sinners to repentance : an instance of precocity almost unexampled.

Having begun to declare "the truth as it is in Jesus," he was impelled onward by a conviction of duty, and an intense zeal for the spiritual good of mankind : and on the 23d of February, the day after he was fifteen years of age, he preached his first sermon, in a cottage, at a small village called Boothby, a few miles from Lincoln. He saw the vanity of the world, and its utter insufficiency to confer the happiness to which the deathless soul of man aspires ; he saw, in an impressive light, the evil and danger of sin, and the necessity of salvation from it ; he was himself happy in the enjoy-

ment of the divine favour, and it was his ardent and restless desire that all the world might share with him in the blessings of the Saviour's love. The moral state of the villages in the neighbourhood of Lincoln was deeply to be deplored. The people were generally indifferent even to the forms of religion, and lamentably ignorant of its spirituality and power. They were also strenuously opposed to all attempts to instruct and reform them, because such attempts they felt to be a direct reflection both upon them and their forefathers. The men who were to bring about a new state of things needed a courage which no personal danger could daunt, and a patience, charity, and self-possession which no provocations and insults could move. These qualifications were found in Richard Watson, young as he then was in years, and younger still as he was in true religion. Not many months had elapsed since he was a companion of ungodly men; but now his views and feelings were so changed, that life itself was of small value in his estimation, when placed in competition with the Christian instruction and consequent salvation of the people. The harvest was at once plenteous and difficult, and the labourers were few and unpromising. In what is now the Lincoln Circuit, there were then only about six Local Preachers; and there was no chapel in which to officiate but that in the city. They had no regular plan of operation; but each man went to the places where he found an opening, or where he thought his labours were the most needed. The entire Circuit comprehended what are now the Circuits of Lincoln, Gainsborough, and Slea-

ford. These distant places were regularly visited by the Itinerant Preachers; but the labours of the Local Preachers, being generally confined to the Sabbath, were of course circumscribed within much narrower limits. In this work our youthful evangelist took his part. There were no dwelling-houses open to him in which he could be accommodated for the delivery of his message in several of the villages which he felt it his duty to visit; the erection of chapels was out of the question; and he was accustomed, therefore, accompanied by one or two friends of a kindred spirit, to stand up in the open air, and, after the example of his Lord, inculcate the truths of Christianity. The principal scene of his early labours lay in what is called the Cliff Row; a number of agricultural villages situated on a range of hills a few miles south of Lincoln, and running nearly parallel with the road between Lincoln and Grantham. The treatment which he frequently met with was rude and offensive; and his mother states, that, when he returned home in the evenings, his clothes often bore sad marks of the violence with which he had been assailed by lawless men. The pious shoemaker, of whom he had been accustomed to make sport, was generally his faithful associate and companion in these evangelical labours. He used to encourage his young friend in his arduous work, stand by him in the midst of mobs, and endeavour to guard him against injury and interruption. The spiritual and moral good effected by the blessing of God upon the disinterested labours of Richard Watson and his coadjutors, in a comparatively short space of time, was incalculable, as the writer

of this account can testify from personal knowledge. For many years the shoemaker here referred to was a very zealous and useful member of the Methodist society in Lincoln, and afforded valuable assistance in extending the work of God in the neighbourhood ; but his latter end, unhappily, was not worthy of his previous life. Surrounded by a large family, he extended his business beyond his pecuniary means, and involved himself in difficulties, under the pressure of which his moral principles were overcome ; and his sun set behind a cloud. His name is therefore withheld ; and his case is recorded as a warning to others. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

Mr. Watson and his brethren met with opposition more formidable than that which was raised by mobs. Their fears were strongly excited by men who threatened to put obsolete and persecuting laws in force against them. Among the persons who adopted this mode of intimidation was an aged and intemperate Clergyman in the neighbourhood of Lincoln, who greatly frightened them by his menaces. They deemed it necessary, therefore, to take the oaths prescribed by the Act of Toleration, and claim the legal protection to which they were entitled as British subjects. Richard applied to the bench of Magistrates at the Quarter Sessions in Lincoln, requesting that the oaths might be administered to him, and that he might receive a licence to preach. With this request they refused to comply ; the Mayor assigning, as the ground of the refusal, that, as the applicant was an apprentice, his time was not his own. A wise and tole-

rant reason, truly! Because his time during the week-days belonged to his master, if he should dare on the Sabbath, when his master made no claim upon his services, to follow the convictions of his own mind in calling sinners to repentance, he should be subjected to pains and penalties, under the operation of iniquitous Acts of Parliament passed in the reign of the Stuarts! Such was the justice then awarded to the Methodists by the civic authorities of Lincoln. In consequence of this disappointment Mr. Watson afterwards repaired to the Quarter Sessions at Newark, accompanied by one of his brethren, where they met with a more favourable reception. Being duly licensed, they were placed under the guardianship of the law, and authorized to continue in the course of useful and honourable toil, to which they believed themselves providentially called, without fear of legal molestation, and to the mortification of the men who wished to harass and annoy them.

It was impossible that a person so young, so deeply pious, and so gifted, should continue to preach without exciting general attention. He sometimes occupied the pulpit of the Methodist chapel in Lincoln, to the astonishment of the congregation, and especially of those who were acquainted with his former levity and folly. Those of his hearers who were possessed of spiritual discernment saw in his hallowed seriousness and fervour, his distinct and forcible elocution, and his manly sense, the elements of the ministerial character; and they glorified God in him. In his conversion and endowments they also recognised the

fulfilment of the sacred word, which declares that God shall "ordain strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings;" and they silently adored that blessed Spirit who can enrich with wisdom, knowledge, and utterance, and who "giveth to every man severally as he will." Reports concerning the character and success of his preaching spread into districts where he was personally unknown; and many were induced to say, "I would hear the young man myself." Among other places, he was requested to visit Newark, and to preach in the Methodist chapel. With this request he complied; but when he ascended the pulpit, his boyish aspect excited alarm in many who had come to hear, and who could scarcely believe it possible for one so young to preach extempore. Their alarm was increased when he read for his text, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;" (John iv. 24;) thinking that the words presented difficulties which he was not prepared to encounter. As he proceeded in his discourse, however, and they heard from his lips some of the most important verities of the Christian revelation, delivered with a gravity, and with a correctness both of sentiment and expression, that would have done honour to an aged Divine, their apprehensions on his account subsided, and they listened to his message with feelings of admiration and delight. This visit to Newark led to the most important results. It was a link in that golden chain of Providence, by which he was ultimately drawn from all secular pursuits, and "separated to the Gospel of God."

To those intelligent Christians who had observed



even Mr. Watson's first attempts at preaching, it must have been manifest that he was providentially designed for the work of the ministry. The business in which he was employed as a mechanic afforded no adequate scope for the exercise of his mental powers; and his mind was perpetually occupied in the study of the Scriptures, in the preparation of sermons, and in plans of usefulness to the neglected souls of men. His attention was drawn to these subjects by an influence which he knew not how to resist; and in preaching the doctrines of the cross, the truth and power of which he himself had realized, he found the richest joy and satisfaction. Formidable difficulties, however, appeared to beset his path. About five years of his apprenticeship yet remained; and if he should employ the whole of this time in manual labour, the cultivation of his mind must continue in a great degree neglected; and his means of usefulness in future life be proportionably diminished. Under these circumstances, he meekly pursued his course of duty, leaving himself entirely in the hands of God, and taking no anxious thought for the morrow. His heart was the seat of holy peace and love; he had no object in view but the glory of his divine Lord; and at length his way was made plain before him, in a manner which he could never have anticipated. His master was not wealthy, nor did he make a strict profession of religion. The services of his apprentice had become very valuable; and were likely to be so, in an increasing degree, through a series of years. Yet he saw that his gain would be the permanent loss of the young man; and with a generosity which

reflects the highest honour upon his memory, he delivered up the indenture by which Richard Watson was bound to him ; saying to the father of this interesting youth, " Your son has learned every thing that I am able to teach him ; and his abilities are such, that he is capable of providing for himself far better than he will be if he continue with me to the end of his apprenticeship. I understand he has an uncle in London, who carries on an extensive and lucrative business as a cabinet-maker ; and I advise you to send him thither, where he will have an opportunity of exercising his ingenuity, and of turning it to a good account." Richard was thus at liberty to act as God in his providence might direct. On the part of Mr. Bescoby, the liberation of his apprentice was a perfectly voluntary act ; and he seems to have had no object in view but the secular advantage of the youth, whose character he admired, and in whose welfare he cherished a friendly concern.

When Mr. Watson had, in this honourable manner, obtained his liberty, his father proposed to him that he should repair to London, for the purpose which his late master had suggested ; but in reply to this Richard said, he did not think that he should long confine his attention to business of any kind. His mind was strongly drawn to preaching ; and he believed himself to be called of God to the Christian ministry. " If that be the case," rejoined the father, " it is useless to expend any more time and money in acquiring a knowledge of any trade."

At this juncture the Rev. Thomas Cooper, then stationed in the Newark Circuit, lost his health ;

and it was found necessary to engage some person to supply his lack of ministerial service. Mr. Watson had preached in Newark with acceptance a little while before ; and in this emergency the attention of the people in that town was immediately directed to him. He was accordingly requested to take Mr. Cooper's work for a time ; and as he was disengaged, and had a strong predilection for the ministry, he complied, and repaired to Newark in the spring of 1796. Some of his friends in Lincoln, especially among the Local Preachers, disapproved of this arrangement. They had no doubts respecting his piety, or the competency of his abilities ; but they thought his experience too limited to justify him in undertaking the labour of a Travelling Preacher.

On his arrival in Newark Mr. Watson went to the house of Mr. Cooper, where he was very kindly received. He had not been long there before he became greatly affected with his situation. He had just left his kind parents, for the first time ; he was separated from his religious companions and associates ; surrounded by strangers ; about to enter upon a work of great difficulty, and of fearful responsibility ; and he felt that his abilities were inadequate to the task which was laid upon him. Under the impression of these views the tears began to glisten in his eyes ; he sighed deeply ; and at length, overcome by his feelings, he wept like a child. Mr. Cooper, who knew the heart of a young Preacher, and a stranger, sympathized with his sorrowing friend. He took him into his study, apart from all company ; conversed with him at considerable length ; encouraged him

in the most feeling manner ; and united with him in earnest prayer that the Lord would assist him, and bless him in his labours. It was finally arranged that he should board and lodge in the house of Mr. Eggleston, an experienced Christian, and a man of leading influence in the society. This excellent man has been dead several years ; but his son, and other branches of the family, remain ; and from them we learn, that such was the piety, the good sense, the propriety, with which their inmate conducted himself when under their roof, that to this day they cordially cherish his memory, and always speak of him in terms of the highest respect. In a letter addressed to the author of this narrative, Mr. Eggleston, jun., says, " His kind, affectionate, and pious deportment highly endeared him to my late parents, and the other members of the family ; and his preaching was marked by a gravity above his years. There was also in his sermons an exhibition of mind, and a self-command and regularity, very unusual in young Preachers. The general remark among those who heard him was, ' He preaches like one who has been many years in the work ! ' "

Mr. Watson entered upon his itinerant labours in the Newark Circuit with fear and trembling ; and it was a considerable disadvantage to him that he was sent in the place of Mr. Cooper, whose talents as a Preacher were of a very popular kind. When he went to one village in the Circuit, the family by whom he was entertained had not the magnanimity to suppress their feelings of disappointment and mortification at the unpromising appearance of Mr. Cooper's substitute. They had

expected their favourite Preacher ; and when they found that his place was to be supplied by a stranger, of boyish mien, whom they had never previously seen, they uttered in his presence the most unseemly complaints, and in a manner calculated to make a painful impression upon his mind. He listened, with perfect silence, to all their expressions of regret ; and when the time arrived for the commencement of the service, he rose, and with becoming seriousness called upon the congregation to unite with him in singing the hymn beginning,—

“ How happy is the pilgrim’s lot,  
How free from every anxious thought,  
From worldly hope and fear !  
Confined to neither court nor cell,  
His soul disdains on earth to dwell :  
He only sojourns here.”

The entire service was conducted with such decorum and impressiveness, and such a heavenly influence attended the sermon, that the congregation were deeply affected ; and the persons who had formed an estimate of his abilities from his youthful appearance, finding that they had judged erroneously, expressed concern for the unkindness of their remarks, and joined with the rest in earnestly requesting him to visit them again, even in the place of Mr. Cooper.

After his removal from home his parents, of course, were very anxious to know in what manner he was received in the different places, and how he succeeded in his preaching ; and in answer to their inquiries, Mr. Eggleston informed them by letter, that the ministry of their son gave great and

general satisfaction ; for, had he been employed in the ministry many years, his sermons could hardly be more edifying and instructive.

Mr. Watson remained in the Newark Circuit, as Mr. Cooper's assistant, till the Conference of 1796 ; but he had no expectation that he should then be received into the regular itinerancy, for he was only fifteen years and six months old. He was ready to obey the call of Providence, either by labouring in the word and doctrine, or returning to his secular employ. In the account of his own life Mr. Cooper says, "When I had been about a year and a half in this Circuit I was deeply afflicted, and therefore sent to invite Mr. Watson, of Lincoln, who, though only sixteen years old, was a Local Preacher, to come and help me. He kindly consented, and continued with me during the remainder of the year. When I arrived at the London Conference, I earnestly entreated our brethren to accept Mr. Watson upon trial as a Travelling Preacher ; stating that he had been exceedingly useful while with me ; and, though so young, I knew the Lord had called him to the work, and fitted him for it, and I believed he would be an able and useful Minister of the Gospel : but all my pleadings were in vain ; for the senior Preachers thought he was too young for the important work. Nevertheless, when I arrived at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in 1796, the Circuit appointed for me, I found it quite necessary to have more help ; I therefore sent for Mr. Watson again, and he cheerfully came to me, and continued the whole year, and was very acceptable. At the next Conference I met with no reproof for thus acting.

Mr. Watson was received with great satisfaction ; the year was allowed him ; and he went to his second Circuit with comfort."

Before he received Mr. Cooper's invitation, Mr. Watson began to make arrangements for working at his own business in Newark. During this interval the Rev. Jonathan Edmondson preached in that town, on his way from the Conference to the Colne Circuit. He gives the following account of Mr. Watson at that time :—"The moment I fixed my eyes upon him in the congregation, I was struck with his singular appearance. He was very tall and thin ; his look was serious, but dignified ; and his countenance indicated great intellectual power. When I left the pulpit, and inquired who he was, the friends told me that he was a youth of sixteen, who was employed in the Circuit, to assist the Travelling Preachers."

Mr. Watson repaired to his new sphere of labour ; and here he co-operated with his colleagues, Messrs. Cooper and Burdsall, in the most faithful and affectionate manner, for the furtherance of the work of God. Their Circuit was very extensive, including what are now the Circuits of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Burton-upon-Trent, and Uttoxeter. The testimony of Mr. Cooper is confirmed by other persons who were acquainted with him at this period. His entire spirit and conduct proved him to be a man of God ; and the talent which he displayed in his ministry excited general surprise. Mr. Robert Stenson, a respectable Local Preacher, now resident in Nottingham, lived at that time in the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Circuit, and was very intimate with Mr. Watson, having

accompanied him in his visits to the villages in the neighbourhood of Burton. From him the following particulars have been received :—

“Soon after Mr. Watson came into the Circuit, I went with him to a village where the Methodist ministry had but recently been commenced, and heard him preach on Heb. ii. 2, 3. He introduced his discourse in a very luminous and interesting manner, and with the seriousness of an aged Divine. But when he entered upon the discussion of his subject, I was truly astonished. From that day to the present I do not believe that I have ever heard the salvation of the Gospel, in its fulness and spirituality, more clearly set forth, or more impressively urged upon the acceptance of perishing sinners, than it was by him on that occasion. During his stay in the Circuit, his piety, zeal, and talents bore him up in the esteem and affections of the people; and although his colleagues were both of them men of superior abilities as Preachers, and had greatly the advantage over him in experience, yet Mr. Watson commanded equal congregations with them.

“I remember to have met him one Sunday at Brislington, where he had begun a series of discourses on the Lord's prayer, in the delivery of which he gave great satisfaction to his hearers. In one of those discourses, when he was proceeding with considerable fluency and enlargement, in a moment he lost all recollection of the subject, and was compelled to conclude the service. Under this peculiar embarrassment, his composure, humility, and submission were very apparent; and these indications of piety made a deep impression upon



the congregation. The effect was very striking ; and the spiritual good which was done rendered it a time to be remembered. Mr. Watson preached on the evening of that day at Burton. He commenced the service with more than ordinary solemnity, fully sensible of his dependence upon divine aid ; the congregation was very large ; and he delivered his message with his usual ability and self-possession, and to good effect. At this period his zeal was intense ; his soul, like that of the Apostle, seemed always to ' travail in birth ' for the conversion of sinners ; and his ministry was admirably adapted to be useful. In the pulpit he was deeply serious. His public addresses to the throne of grace were characterized by great fervour ; and his preaching was lucid and powerful. He was careful to discriminate, in almost all his discourses, between the open violater of the law of God, the self-righteous pharisee, the formal professor of religion, the mourning penitent, the backsliding Christian, and the upright and conscientious believer ; and he gave to every one his portion of meat in due season. The matter of his sermons was solid and important ; and they were remarkable for clearness, fulness, and precision. He was bold as a lion in the cause of Christ, without any appearance of forwardness and self-confidence. In preaching, he was very faithful, energetic, pointed, and successful. During the first six or seven months he laboured very hard, even beyond his strength ; and was instrumental in the conversion of many souls to God. A blessed revival of religion took place in Ashby, Griffydam, Burton, Repton, and some other places, towards which his

services, in conjunction with those of his fellow-labourers, were greatly conducive. His earnest exertions, both in prayer and preaching, were more than his feeble constitution could bear. His health, therefore, failed; and he was obliged to return home, and rest for some months, in order to the recovery of his strength. This loss of his labours was greatly lamented by the congregations; for he was generally beloved by the people. In his intercourse with his friends and the societies, he was more like a man of forty years of age, than a youth of sixteen; exhibiting an admirable mixture of Christian cheerfulness, sobriety, and seriousness. His habits were sociable and friendly, and his company very agreeable. At the same time he was deeply studious, and his thirst for useful knowledge was unbounded. I knew him well from the time that he was sixteen years of age till he was twenty; and with regard to that period of his life, among persons of the same age, I have not found his equal for piety, moral worth, and efficient preaching. In the course of forty years' experience and observation, and intercourse with the church, I have never met with any young man who, in these respects, could, in my estimation, bear a comparison with Richard Watson."

With this testimony, that of Mr. Burdsall is in full accordance. Referring to the year which he and Mr. Watson spent together in the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Circuit, he says, "At that early age he exhibited such ardour in the pursuit of knowledge of every sort, as exposed him to the danger of becoming desultory in reading and study; and he was only preserved from this by the quickness of

his apprehension, and the tenacity of his memory. He was eager to know, and had a mind capable of acquiring knowledge in the most rapid manner. His father supplied him with money for the purchase of books; so that, as far as he had judgment to guide him in the selection, he had the means of improvement at his command. His Circuit, indeed, was extensive; so that his studies were greatly interrupted; nor did his Superintendent, though very fond of him on account of his superior intellect and fine spirit, take any pains to forward and direct his attempts at mental cultivation. In consequence of these disadvantages he fell into some indiscretions, both in the nature and mode of his studies; but these were afterwards corrected by his growing experience. It has been stated, that he never preached twice from the same text, even in those early days; but this, like many other things which have appeared in print since his lamented decease, is a fabrication, neither according with his principles nor his practice. The fertility of his invention, and the vividness of his imagination, indeed, gave him a greater diversity of subjects than a person so young as he was could otherwise have commanded; and the precocity of his understanding gave considerable solidity and interest to his pulpit labours. He was naturally cheerful and buoyant, but not trifling; and his general seriousness rendered him acceptable and useful to all. Such was Richard Watson when we travelled together at Ashby."

When Mr. Cooper invited Mr. Watson to become an Itinerant Preacher, he incurred a responsibility, the full extent of which he does

not appear to have appreciated. There are some Ministers, in all religious communities, who obtain a sort of elementary acquaintance with the various branches of knowledge, and who do not seem to have either an inclination or a capacity for further attainments. To them a right course of study is a matter of minor importance. They become familiar with the first principles of religion; and these they inculcate with fidelity, acceptance, and success; accompanying their public ministrations with pastoral visitation, and recommending practical Christianity by a holy and an upright life. Such Ministers fill a very important station in the church; and are often largely instrumental in the conversion of men to God, and in the edification of believers. But Richard Watson was not a man of this class. As a Christian Minister he was ready to engage with alacrity in every duty of his office, and was thoroughly imbued with its spirit; but, at the same time, his mind was inquisitive, penetrating, quick of perception, and untiring in its activity. It was evident that he would not be satisfied with a superficial knowledge of any subject that might come under his investigation; and the whole world of thought and speculation lay before him. History and philosophy, in their various branches; the principal controversies on which the Christian sects are divided; the evidences of revelation; the facts, prophecies, criticism, doctrines, and interpretation of the Scriptures; were all likely to come under his review, and to undergo his strict scrutiny. To him, therefore, it was a matter of the greatest moment, that his studies should be prosecuted with regularity; and

especially that he should thoroughly understand the principles upon which all theological investigations ought to be conducted. Like the greater part of his brethren, he had been thrust into the ministry without much of that scholastic training which is so desirable and advantageous ; and hence a judicious superintendence of his course of self-tuition, considering the peculiarities of his character, was necessary at least to prevent a waste of time and labour. With this superintendence, unhappily, he was not favoured. Mr. Burdsall, though somewhat his senior, was, like him, only in the first year of his itinerancy. Mr. Cooper loved and admired him ; but gave him no effectual assistance in the pursuit of knowledge. He neither taught him how to render his classical learning available in reference to the ministry, nor suggested to him what books he might read with the greatest advantage. That he was preserved from doctrinal error, with a mind so constituted, and left entirely to itself at this early period, is doubtless to be attributed, under the blessing of God, to his personal piety ; and the practical mistakes into which he fell with regard to the nature and method of his studies, his own good sense enabled him subsequently to rectify ; but to the end of his life he lamented the time which he lost in his youth, by a desultory mode of reading and study ; and he therefore felt particularly concerned for such young Preachers as are placed in circumstances similar to his own. Next to the reading of the Greek Testament, and of Mr. Wesley's sermons, a careful perusal of Bishop Pearson's "Exposition of the Apostles' Creed" would have been to him one of

the most useful exercises. The profound, original, and orthodox views of revealed truth, which that incomparable work contains, would have served to settle his mind, and fix his theological principles; the perfect simplicity and rugged terseness of its diction would have corrected that taste for excessive rhetorical ornament into which juvenile minds are apt to fall; and the ample body of notes with which it is enriched would have called forth his classical learning, and have been an excellent introduction to the study of ecclesiastical history, especially in regard of Christian doctrine. It is painful to see a mind of the first order left to luxuriate, without any of the salutary restraints and directions which a just discipline and experience would supply. Till the establishment of the "Wesleyan Theological Institution," by the Conference of 1834, it was a serious defect in the system of Methodism that it made no adequate provision for the education of its Ministers. A few of them, by the force of their own talents and application, have risen to considerable eminence as scholars and Preachers; but the usefulness of the greater part of them has been retarded through life by the want of a sound literary and theological training.

At the Conference of 1797 Mr. Watson's name was placed in the list of Preachers on trial who had travelled one year; and he was appointed to the Castle-Donnington Circuit, under the superintendency of Mr. George Sargent, through whose ministry he had been convinced of sin. By some mistake he was called Robert; an error which was repeated the following year in the Minutes of Conference. In this station he conducted himself

in an upright and Christian manner; attended his appointments with regularity; and preached with fidelity and success: but his studies still retained their desultory character; so that his improvement in solid and useful learning was not equal to his opportunities and capacity.

Mr. Watson has been heard to say that, during these early years of his ministry, one of his most favourite books was Matthew Henry's "Method for Prayer." His admiration of this work was peculiarly strong; he carried the volume about with him; and scarcely a day passed in which he did not spend some time in the perusal of it. From this manual he doubtless derived considerable advantage. It would suggest to him many excellent plans of sermons; assist him in the scriptural elucidation of several important topics; and give to his public addresses to the throne of grace a sober and devotional character, as well as great variety both of thought and expression. But the constant reading of that book, at this early period of his life, was productive of one inconvenience which he regretted, and from which he was never entirely free. It induced a habit of quoting Scripture incorrectly. His extempore citations from the word of God, in his discourses, were not always verbally correct, even when the true meaning was given. Such a habit was likely to be produced by the daily use of a book consisting principally of passages of holy writ, not literally quoted; but so altered as to form continuous supplications, praises, and thanksgivings, on all subjects connected with personal religion, and the interests of the church and the world. The habit, however, into which

Mr. Watson fell was rather the result of an immoderate use of an excellent book, than a necessary effect of such compilations upon a youthful mind. As the doctrines and duties inculcated in the Christian pulpit derive all their authority from the word of God, that word should always be adduced with the most perfect accuracy; and an aptitude in doing this cannot be too sedulously cultivated by every Christian Preacher. In the latter years of his life Mr. Watson was not under the influence of this habit to any serious extent; but he was aware of the defect, and attributed it to the cause just specified.

During Mr. Watson's stay in the Castle-Donnington Circuit, he did not satisfy himself with a general inculcation of evangelical truth; but directed his preaching against prevalent evils, under whatever form they might be presented. In those times the theological sentiments of Mr. Winchester excited considerable attention among religious people. By connecting Calvin's theory of absolute predestination, with Arminius's doctrine of general redemption, and applying his principles to the fallen angels, as well as to the human race, he contrived to secure, as he thought, the final restoration of all lapsed intelligences. He contended zealously for the ultimate recovery to purity and heaven, not only of that part of mankind who die in their sins, but of all the fiends of hell; and, in the teeth of holy Scripture, contemplated a period when the "worm that dieth not" shall expire, "the fire that never shall be quenched" will cease to burn, and when the apostate, of whom the Lord said, "Good it had been for that man if he had



never been born," shall bless the day when he was brought into existence. The works of this theologian, which are now nearly forgotten, display considerable ingenuity; yet they are full of sophistry; and his canons of Scripture interpretation are so licentious as to lead directly to scepticism. To superficial thinkers, however, his scheme appeared to exalt the divine benevolence, and to be sanctioned by reason and humanity; and hence, not a few persons professing godliness, in different parts of the kingdom, became its admirers and advocates. Young as he was, Mr. Watson saw the character and tendency of this popular error. He perceived that it makes the sinner against God the self-complacent judge of his own demerit; that it magnifies the mercy of God at the expense of his justice and truth; contradicts the express testimony of revelation; represents the great end of legal punishment, not as the maintenance of order, by operating upon the fears of moral agents, but merely the reformation of the offender, leaving the authority of law unprovided for; and that in its moral effect, it is equally pernicious to the church and the world. By holding out to the unregenerate the assurance of final happiness, even if they should die in their sins, it neutralizes the principal motive to immediate repentance and conversion; and renders wicked men scarcely objects of pity to their pious neighbours. Religious people are, in effect, told, that whether they are watchful, circumspect, and devout, or negligent, lukewarm, and even immoral, they cannot in the end fall short of salvation. The Church of Rome, fruitful in inventions, devised a purgatory, as a sort of middle place between heaven

and hell. Winchester made hell itself a purgatory. He taught, that the design of the Almighty in kindling its fires, and in subjecting men and angels to its miseries, is, to bring them to repentance, and prepare them for his kingdom ; so that the torments of hell are the road to celestial blessedness. With this ensnaring modification of Antinomianism Mr. Watson held no compromise. He detected its sophistry, and warned his hearers of the fearful consequences connected with its practical adoption. A sermon which he preached upon this subject, at Barrow, commanded great attention. It roused the opposition of one of Winchester's disciples, and led to the interchange of several letters between him and the Preacher who had so faithfully raised the warning voice. This correspondence, it appears, is irrecoverably lost ; but it is said that, in conducting it, Mr. Watson showed a knowledge of the questions at issue, and powers of argumentation, which were highly honourable to a person of his age. On several subjects of this nature, he gave pleasing indications of his future eminence as a theologian.

---

### CHAPTER III.

DURING the year in which Mr. Watson was stationed at Castle-Donnington, he spent a Sunday in Leicester, having exchanged places with one of the Preachers resident in that town. On this day he preached two sermons on Hebrews xi. 6: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek

him." In the first of these discourses he undertook to prove the being and perfections of God, in opposition to that branch of infidel philosophy which denies a First Cause, a superintending Providence, and a moral government; and in the second, he directed the attention of the congregation to the manner in which God is to be sought, and the reward which will crown the exertions of those who seek him according to his word and will. These sermons displayed such a range of thought, a power of reasoning, a richness and force of diction, and a glow of pious feeling, as excited great surprise, especially when viewed in connexion with the youthful aspect of the Preacher; and a strong desire was expressed that he might be appointed to the Leicester Circuit the ensuing year. A request to that effect was forwarded to the Conference; and he was accordingly sent to that station, under the superintendency of the Rev. Jonathan Edmondson. This appointment was in every respect a happy one. His lot was cast among an affectionate people, who esteemed and loved him; and his labours were both acceptable and useful. Here one of his most intimate and faithful friendships was formed,—that with Mr. Carr,—which only ended with his life. But the greatest advantage which he derived from this appointment arose from his intercourse with his Superintendent; who was himself a great reader, a hard student, and a kind-hearted and friendly man. From him Mr. Watson received valuable advice and help in the acquisition of different branches of knowledge; and for the person of this enlightened "guide of his youth" he ever after

cherished a strong regard. The following particulars respecting this part of Mr. Watson's personal history have been furnished by Mr. Edmondson, who has been spared to survive his distinguished friend:—

“In the year 1798 Mr. Watson was stationed with me at Leicester. I soon perceived that he was a youth of very superior parts; that he had a most surprising grasp of intellect; and that, if he held on his way, he would become one of our brightest luminaries. I could not render him all the assistance he should have had at that critical period of his life; but I did what I could; and, with a generosity of soul worthy of himself, he always expressed a grateful sense of my poor services.

“As an inmate of our family he was social, friendly, and affectionate. He gave no trouble, was well-pleased with every thing, and was greatly beloved by all under my roof. We never saw him out of temper. He never put on any lofty airs; but was humble, modest, and unassuming. We never had an angry word, an unkind look, or the slightest interruption of a most delightful friendship; and when he left us, at the end of the year, we sustained a loss in our domestic circle which we deeply deplored.

“The studies of Mr. Watson, before he came to Leicester, had been extremely irregular and desultory; and he had acquired such a habit of passing rapidly from one thing to another, without going to the bottom of any, that it was difficult for him to fix his thoughts for any length of time upon any given subject. But when he conquered that habit,

he could acquire more information in a few days, than some others could in as many months. Perceiving this defect, I strongly urged the necessity of steady perseverance in all his literary pursuits; and afterwards found that my advice had not been disregarded.

“The principal subject of his study was divinity; but he did not altogether neglect the sciences. What he had learned of Latin when a boy he had partly forgotten; and he had never turned his attention to the Greek of the New Testament. But in after-life, by persevering application, he acquired a familiar acquaintance with both those languages.

“As a reader, he had no taste for common and ordinary works. Standard books, of high reputation, were his favourites; and that circumstance assisted him much, when he became an author, both with regard to the style and sentiments of his valuable publications; though I am not aware that he adopted any writer as a model of composition. His memory was remarkably strong. He told Mrs. Edmondson, that if he read a work once, it was almost all his own; and that if he read it twice, it was his own altogether.

“I gave Mr. Watson a plan of reading and study, adapted to the itinerant life, which I had formed for myself, and which I afterwards published in my ‘Essay on the Christian Ministry.’ How far this plan was observed by him, while he continued to travel, I cannot say; but I know it met with his approbation, and that he adopted it while we were stationed together. When we went out into the Circuit, our saddle-bags were loaded with books; and when we returned, we

generally gave an account of what we had read and studied. Our Circuit was not one of the most extensive, but it included Melton-Mowbray; and we were a fortnight out and a fortnight at home. During the fortnight at home we walked thirty or forty miles a week; and supplied Leicester, and six or eight adjacent villages, generally returning home three or four miles after the evening service. I mention this to show the necessity and utility of the plan now given to an Itinerant Preacher.

“While I was in that Circuit, I made a resolution to select some important subject of meditation on every journey, when I was alone; or of conversation, on every journey when I had company. This I recommended to Mr. Watson, and have reason to believe he continued to observe it in after-life; for I have heard that he could employ his thoughts on the most profound subjects while walking even in the noisy streets of London.

“Finding that Mr. Watson had an extraordinary gift in composition, I proposed that he should write essays on given subjects, and read them to me when finished. This he did with considerable success, and very much to my satisfaction. The first subject, I believe, was, the best method of redeeming time; but what became of that, or his other early essays, I cannot say. I know that they were valuable; and am of opinion, that, if they could be recovered, they would do him credit, even now, when his literary character stands so high. We had then several works on the ministry, and many ordination sermons and charges, which we examined with great care. Mr. Watson compared them together, and prepared a treatise

on the Christian ministry ; but that has been long since lost or destroyed.

“ Mr. Watson’s temper was noble and generous, without the slightest tinge of suspicion, or mixture of either littleness or meanness. He indulged in the innocent cheerfulness of youth, and occasionally amused his friends with anecdotes of an extraordinary character ; but he was generally grave, solemn, and dignified.

“ When he travelled with me he was much esteemed as a Preacher, though not remarkably popular. His sermons were not of that finished character which they assumed in his riper years ; and yet there was in them a strength of mind and a grasp of thought which was admired by all judicious hearers. I heard him occasionally ; and was of opinion that his discourses were more remarkable for boldness of thought, and appropriate figures of rhetoric, than for regularity of composition.”

While in the Leicester Circuit, Mr. Watson’s studies were not exclusively directed to divinity, literature, and science. He also turned his attention to some of the useful arts of life ; and his ever-active mind aspired to an acquaintance with every subject within his reach. In his visits to the different villages he made minute inquiries into the nature of the various manufactures in which the people were engaged. Nor did he satisfy himself with verbal answers, and the inspection of the machines and operations which were presented to his view ; but at the houses where he lodged he often tried his skill in wool-combing, stocking-weaving, and other employ-

ments, as a matter of relaxation from severer pursuits.

With some men, preaching is a sort of mechanical exercise. They can speak with fluency on most theological topics, especially after a certain degree of premeditation and writing; and, relying upon their own powers of memory and elocution, they are accustomed to address their congregations with little variation of either manner or feeling. Very different from this were Mr. Watson's views and habits in regard of the Christian ministry. It was, indeed, his practice both to study and write with reference to the pulpit; but he felt, at the same time, that he could not preach with comfort to himself, unless the Holy Spirit were to excite in him suitable affections when delivering God's truth; and thus give him an "utterance" which unassisted human nature can never attain; and that he could not preach with profit to the people, unless that Spirit were to apply the word to their understandings and consciences. He therefore gave himself to prayer, especially in his closet; and earnestly implored the blessing of God both upon himself and his hearers. Although his mind was sometimes exercised by strong temptations, in common with every "good Minister of Jesus Christ;" yet he was not disappointed of the divine blessing; but often proved, that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" in preaching, as well as in acts of devotion, and in religious duties generally. A remarkable instance of this kind occurred one Thursday evening in Leicester. On entering the pulpit, at the usual time of divine service, he requested the prayers of the congrega-



tion in his behalf in a very feeling manner; adding, that his mind had been in a state of distressing perplexity and embarrassment through the day, nearly the whole of which he had spent in prayer; that, immediately before he came to the chapel, he had been upon his knees a full hour, pleading with God for his blessing and help; and that he was still in doubt whether he should be able to preach at all. After this statement, by which the sympathy of his friends was excited, and their supplications for him were called forth, he read, as his text, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man;" (Gen. vi. 3;) and then preached with great enlargement and power. The sermon was very striking and impressive; and its effect upon the congregation most beneficial. Nearly all present were deeply affected by the train of thought into which he was led; and several persons united in an urgent request that the sermon might be printed. To prevent all possibility of pecuniary loss to him, and to express the sense they entertained of the discourse, they engaged to assist in the sale of the publication, and pledged themselves to give half-a-guinea for every copy which they might purchase for their own use. He acknowledged his obligations to the kindness of his friends, but refused to comply with their request; perhaps thinking that it was the influence which attended the delivery of his sermon that constituted its principal interest; and that he had no reason to believe the same influence would attend its perusal, should it appear in print. Many persons who have heard particular sermons with deep feeling, wonder whence their emotions

originated, when the same sermons are read in silence and with critical attention.

That Mr. Watson's mind was eminently poetical, will be readily conceded by those who have attended his ministry, or read his works; but at no period of his life did he pay much attention to poetical composition. His mental conceptions often partook of the true sublime; and he could easily clothe them in diction of appropriate force and beauty; but it was seldom that he suffered his thoughts, noble and lofty as they were, to flow in "harmonious numbers." Occasionally he indulged himself in versification; but his mind was too busily employed with other subjects, which he deemed of superior importance, to study poetry as an art. One of his poetic effusions, written at Leicester, and presented to his friend Mr. Carr, of that town, has been preserved; and is no mean specimen of his capabilities in that department of literature. He gave it as an "imitation;" but the name of the poet whose manner he professed to copy has escaped recollection. Some of the thoughts, it will be observed, are borrowed from Adam's morning hymn, as given in *Paradise Lost*. The structure of the verse occasionally indicates a want of practice; but the youth who wrote these stanzas could, in after-life, had he turned his attention to the subject, have produced poetry of superior merit.

#### PRAISE TO GOD.

THESE are thy works alone, O God of power!

And these thy heavenly attributes display;

Moving, reveal new glories every hour,

And pencil thy perfections bright as day.

Fairest of all, thyself enthroned above,  
 Fountain of being, life's ethereal flame,  
 Object divine of universal love,  
 In ages past, and years to come, the same.

Ye morning stars, the first-born sons of light,  
 Ye angel-choirs, pour forth your notes along ;  
 Stretch all your powers, your ardours all unite,  
 And swell the' august, the universal song.

Struck out of darkness, I, while life's pure flame  
 Shall glow within, and animate this clay,  
 Oft as the rising sun thy praise proclaim,  
 And oft as he, declining, ends the day.

Praise from thy lower works to thee shall rise,  
 Inanimate and animate conspire ;  
 The variegated earth, and starry skies,  
 And brutes themselves, shall strike the sounding lyre.

The sun, the mighty sovereign of the day,  
 Whose powerful beam the genial warmth inspires,  
 Shines not in vain, but pays to thee the lay,  
 Who gav'st him birth, and kindlest up his fires.

Queen of the night, we hail thy silver gleams,  
 Instance of Goodness and of Care divine,  
 Which, when we lose the sun's superior beams,  
 To lighten up our darkness bid thee shine.

The starry arch, the wide ethereal blue,  
 The comet's sweep in vast eccentric line,  
 The circling systems, and the fiery glow  
 Of central suns, all praise thee as they shine.

The rushing hurricane, the whisp'ring breeze,  
 The pois'nous wind, and the salubrious air,  
 The gentle zephyrs quiv'ring on the trees,  
 Alike thy justice and thy love declare.

The boist'rous ocean, too, the finny swarm,  
 The flowery tribes that on earth's surface grow,  
 All that the philosophic sage can charm,  
 All that is grand above, or good below :

Join nature all, join all harmonious tongues!

Sacred to thee be every tuneful string!

See clouds of incense rise ; hark, hark their songs,—

“Great is the Lord, our Father, God, and King!”

1798.

R. WATSON.

At the Conference of 1799 Mr. Watson took leave of his esteemed Superintendent and kind friends in Leicester, and repaired to Derby, where he was appointed to labour with the Rev. Messrs. William Shelmerdine and Anthony B. Seckerson ; men whom he esteemed and loved to the end of life, for their piety, sense, and Christian affection. Mr. Sargent was then leaving the Derby Circuit ; and Mr. Watson hastened to his new appointment, where he spent a week in the house of his former colleague and his kind wife before their removal. On the first Sunday after his arrival he preached in Derby ; and under his ministry two persons are said to have obtained the salvation of the Gospel. One of these was a blind woman belonging to the workhouse ; who from that time adorned her profession, and some years after died in the Lord. He was greatly affected by this display of the divine goodness, in thus owning his instrumentality ; and resolved to devote himself afresh to the service of God and his church. His personal piety was sensibly improved by this occurrence. Mr. Edmondson says, “The friends in Derby esteemed Mr. Watson very much ; and thought that, if he held on his way, he would be a first-rate Preacher in the Connexion. That year he generally paid me a visit once a month, either at Burton-upon-Trent, or at some other convenient place in the Circuit ; so that our intercourse, as friends and

fellow-students, was kept up with mutual pleasure."

Mr. Seckerson states, that, during this year, Mr. Watson "possessed an affectionate interest in the regards of his fellow-labourers; with whom he acted in the most entire concert, in maintaining and exercising the various branches of Christian discipline; and especially upon one trying occasion, when a strenuous effort was made to exclude one of our societies and congregations from a chapel which they had built, and in which they had long and peaceably worshipped God. The attempt thus made was happily rendered unsuccessful; and the religious privileges of our people were preserved."

With respect to Mr. Watson's mental character and habits at this period, Mr. Seckerson adds, "It is observed, in the Life of the late Bishop Heber, 'His elder brother used to say, Reginald devoured books, rather than read them. At almost a single glance his eye caught the contents of a whole page; and his memory was so remarkably tenacious, that such passages as particularly struck him were remembered with almost verbal accuracy.' Very similar to this was the strength of mind and memory which I have often noticed and admired in Mr. Watson, when we were stationed together, and he was only in the nineteenth year of his age."

While Mr. Watson was stationed in Derby, a Clergyman in that town excited some attention by the circulation of a weak and illiberal pamphlet, entitled, "An Address to the People called Methodists." The design of this unworthy publication was, to alienate the public confidence from

the Methodist ministry, by attempting to prove that the Preachers have no legitimate authority; and that the doctrines which they teach are erroneous and enthusiastic. The writer contended, that there is no regeneration besides that which is assumed to take place in baptism; that the Methodists lay claim to the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit; that they deprive men of innocent pleasures and gratifications, and subject them to needless terrors and alarms; that justification is a very difficult subject, concerning which there have been many clashing opinions among good men; and that people had far better set themselves to discharge the duties of life, than give themselves anxious concern respecting the manner of their justification before God. The charges and reasonings of this author had been advanced and refuted a hundred times; yet, as the pamphlet was extensively and gratuitously circulated, and was calculated to make an injurious impression in certain quarters, an antidote was deemed desirable; and Mr. Watson was requested by the friends in Derby to write an answer to it. With this request he complied; and produced his maiden publication, under the title of, "An Apology for the Methodists; in a Letter to the Rev. J. Hotham, B. A., Rector of St. Werburgh's, Derby; in Answer to a Pamphlet lately circulated amongst the Inhabitants of Derby, entitled, 'An Address to the People called Methodists.' By Richard Watson, Preacher of the Gospel." Of course, this production was vastly inferior to the eloquent, argumentative, and finished works which in subsequent years emanated from his pen; yet it was no discredit to

the youth of nineteen. As the author with whom he entered the lists had indulged himself pretty freely in invective and insinuation, and had given himself no trouble to ascertain the sentiments of the people whom he assailed, Mr. Watson treats him with little ceremony, and tells him some truths which we may suppose would not be very palatable. There are passages in this concise publication of considerable power and acuteness, and which give pleasing indications of future eminence; although the style is not formed, and the punctuation inaccurate. The motto, which is selected from Cowper, is very appropriate, and describes the character of those rash men who speak and write before they either read or think.

During these early years of Mr. Watson's itine-  
rancy, the Methodist Connexion was greatly agitated by controversy respecting ecclesiastical order and discipline, and the administration of the sacraments. Many of the societies had long desired to receive the Lord's supper at the hands of their own Preachers; and it had required all Mr. Wesley's influence and energy to repress that feeling, and preserve the general tranquillity of the body. While he lived, the power of regulating the Connexion was vested in himself; and at his death, in the year 1791, by his appointment it devolved upon the Conference, the members of which were placed in a situation of great embarrassment and fearful responsibility. The call for the sacraments in the Methodist chapels, and for public religious service in what were called church-hours, in several quarters, was loud and urgent; and, in addition to these demands, not a few con-

tended for a larger measure of lay-agency in the management of the societies, and of the general affairs of the Connexion, and for guards against the possible abuse of ministerial power. After anxiously and maturely considering these subjects, the Conference met the wishes of the societies by adopting the "Plan of Pacification," in the year 1795, and various other important regulations, which were detailed in an "Address to the Societies," in the year 1797. The concessions and arrangements contained in these documents gave great and general satisfaction to the Connexion; and their practical wisdom and utility are demonstrated by the fact, that, so far as the subjects to which they relate are concerned, to the present day they have secured the peace of the body; and its prosperity and success during this time have exceeded all that had been previously witnessed. These measures, however, did not meet the views of every one; and a few Preachers, with a number of private members of society and others, separated from their brethren, and formed the "Methodist New Connexion," in the year 1798.

In the discussions which led to these results, Mr. Watson took little or no interest. He was satisfied with the discipline of the body, and with those modifications of it which men of greater wisdom and experience than himself deemed it necessary to make in peculiar emergencies. The societies in the Circuits where he laboured were in peace; and his mind was too much occupied with biblical and theological studies, and the acquisition of information on all subjects within his reach, to concern himself with affairs of this nature. He



read none of the numerous publications, which were then so eagerly and extensively circulated, recommending deep and extensive changes in the Methodist discipline and order, but with diligence and zeal pursued "the noiseless tenor of his way;" for his leading desire was, to be a Pastor according to God's own heart, feeding the people with knowledge and understanding.\* His inattention to the subject of church government, perhaps, may be excused, but it is not to be commended. Had he carefully studied the Methodist economy, and compared it with the principles of ecclesiastical order laid down in the New Testament, he would have been better qualified for his official duties, and better prepared for those trials which awaited him.

His character and labours in the Derby Circuit were very cordially approved by the societies and congregations, who were anxious to secure his services a second year; but the delicacy of his health, he thought, rendered him unfit for that station, and induced him to decline their request to remain with them as one of their Ministers. The wisest of men are often very imperfect judges of things relating to themselves. Had Mr. Watson continued at Derby, with his faithful and affectionate colleagues, Messrs. Shelmerdine and Seckerson, who knew his worth, he would have escaped the calamitous circumstances in which he was involved during the ensuing year, and which filled with bitter sorrow and vexation so large a portion of his life. The Circuit was very extensive, reaching to a place within four miles of Chester-

\* Jer. iii. 15.

field ; many of the journeys were long and bleak ; the accommodations in several of the country places, both with regard to food and lodging, were very indifferent ; he was afraid lest his strength should fail, as it had done during the first year of his itinerancy ; and therefore wished to be removed to another station, more congenial to his habits, and feeble constitution. The friends in Derby, especially the more judicious and intelligent of them, duly appreciated his excellencies, and were sorry to be deprived of his ministry so soon ; and therefore took an affectionate leave of him at the expiration of the year, when he accompanied his Superintendent to London, for the purpose of being admitted into full ministerial connexion with the Conference. Having passed acceptably through the four years of his probation, and undergone a strict examination, both with respect to his personal piety and his doctrinal views, he was cordially approved by his fathers and brethren, solemnly set apart to the full duties of the Christian ministry, and appointed to the Hinckley Circuit, having then attained to the age of nineteen years and six months.

Mr. Watson entered upon his work in his new appointment under very encouraging circumstances. His talents as a Preacher had been greatly improved by exercise ; his attainments as a theologian were very considerable ; he had the full confidence of his brethren ; by attending the Conference he had seen and heard the fathers and most esteemed Ministers of the Connexion ; and he must have been more deeply than ever impressed with the efficiency of the body to which he

belonged, and its adaptation to reform the morals and promote the salvation of mankind. His past success, his present prospects, and the examples of ministerial zeal and ability with which he was surrounded, all conspired to operate upon his ardent and ingenuous mind, and to stimulate him to renewed diligence both in his ministry and studies. Previously to this period he had walked twenty miles to hear the far-famed Mr. Bradburn preach; and he never lost the impression which the sermon of that distinguished orator produced. He often related this adventure; and sometimes said, in reference to it, "I am not a very excitable subject; but Mr. Bradburn's preaching affected my whole frame. I felt the thrill to the very extremity of my fingers; and my hair actually seemed to stand on end." Mr. Edmondson, his faithful and tried friend, was now in the neighbouring Circuit of Ashby-de-la-Zouch; and their improving intercourse was still continued. "While he was stationed at Hinckley," says that excellent man, "Mr. Watson paid me a visit at a village near Ashby; when I advised him to enter upon the study of the Hebrew language, assuring him, from my own limited experience, that he might soon read a considerable portion of the Old Testament with ease. He took the advice; and on that day month, meeting me again at the same place, he read the first psalm in Hebrew, accounting grammatically for every word; and he read to me a beautiful paraphrase on the whole psalm, which he had drawn up from the fine ideas expressed in the original. Such, indeed, was the strength of his mind, that he could quickly master any sub-

ject, however difficult, to which he directed his thoughts."

For some time he had been successfully engaged in reading the Greek Testament; and having, with such encouraging results, entered upon the study of the Hebrew Bible, the rich and endless stores of sacred literature were placed within his reach, and offered the highest gratification to his understanding and taste. But while he was thus employed in the duties of his office, and in laudable endeavours to render himself "an able Minister of the New Testament," he met with trials which he had never anticipated, and for which, therefore, he was not prepared. His happiness as a man, and his usefulness as a Minister, were about to undergo a serious interruption. His reading was unbounded; but it was not always judiciously selected; and perhaps it was not in every instance duly sanctified by prayer. At this time the doctrine of the Trinity engaged his special attention; and he read all the books within his reach that bore upon the subject. Some of these were far from paying that absolute deference to the holy Scriptures which is requisite in all questions of this nature; and mixed up the simple and authoritative declarations of inspiration with the speculations of a vain philosophy. It is not, therefore, surprising, that his mind was occasionally perplexed, though he never denied those sound and orthodox views of divine truth in which he had been trained. When the late Mr. Benson was a young man, and devoted to theological studies, he enjoyed the friendship and correspondence of Mr. Wesley; and happy would it have been for Mr. Watson had he been favoured with

the advice and control of some such master-mind in the earlier years of his public life. It was his misfortune to be frequently associated with men greatly inferior to himself in knowledge and intellectual power. In one of his letters to Mr. Benson, Mr. Wesley says, "I believe just what is revealed, and no more ; but I do not pretend to account for it, or to solve the difficulties that may attend it. Let angels do this if they can ; but I think they cannot. I think even these

‘ Would find no end, in wandering mazes lost.’

Some years since, I read about fifty pages of Dr. Watts's ingenious treatise upon the glorified humanity of Christ. But it so confounded my intellects, and plunged me into such unprofitable reasonings, yea, dangerous ones, that I would not have read it through for five hundred pounds. It led him into Arianism. Take care that similar tracts (all of which I abhor) have not the same effect upon you." Dr. Watts's mischievous book occupied Mr. Watson's anxious study ; and if it produced so injurious an effect upon the mind of Mr. Wesley, when he was advanced in life, and his correct judgment was matured, its influence upon the thinkings of a youth like Mr. Watson could not be altogether salutary ; especially as he had not yet learned accurately to discriminate between the distinct provinces of revelation and philosophy. We have, however, the most decisive testimony that he never renounced "the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

At this period Mr. Watson had acquired considerable readiness in argumentation ; and as he

was familiar with the different forms which error had assumed in the church, and the reasons by which they were supported, he took delight in exercising his dialectical skill among his friends. Sometimes, for the sake of argument, and to elicit the views of others, he appeared as the apologist of heterodox opinions, in the presence of persons who were unable to perceive his motives, and incapable of justly appreciating his character. Such a practice may succeed in the schools; but it is a dangerous habit, and should never be resorted to in the presence of "weak brethren." By indulging this propensity Mr. Watson fell under the suspicion of heresy. It was affirmed that he was an Arian, and denied original sin, and the proper Godhead and atonement of Christ.

Had this allegation been true, attempts should have been made to convince him of his errors, and to reclaim him from those doctrinal aberrations which would have utterly disqualified him for the duties of a Methodist Preacher. If reasoning and remonstrance had been unavailing, the discipline of the body should have been brought to bear upon his case. A District-Meeting should have been summoned, to investigate the affair; and had he been found corrupt in doctrine, and at the same time incorrigible, a sentence of suspension till the ensuing Conference should have been pronounced. By this just and constitutional process, the accused would have been allowed to answer for himself; and the congregations would have been guarded against an alleged liability to destructive error. It is a strong presumption of Mr. Watson's innocence, that no step of this kind was taken; doubt-

less from a conviction, that the charge could not be substantiated. The report of his alleged heterodoxy was circulated in his absence ; but no means were employed to bring him into the way of truth, from which he was said to have departed. Whether this treatment of Mr. Watson had its origin in any malignant feeling towards him, or was merely the result of weakness, must be left to the decision of that "day which will try every man's work, of what sort it is." Unapprehensive of what was going on against him, he proceeded in his work, till the terrible fact was disclosed to him in a manner which his spirit was not able to brook. When he went to one of the villages to preach, the house where he had been cordially entertained was closed against him ; he was refused permission to address the congregation ; and was denied even a night's lodging where he had often been received "as an angel of God." Had he fallen into the errors imputed to him, and made it his business to propagate them, this would have been perfectly proper ; for Christians ought not to "receive into their houses" the men who impugn the essential verities of Christianity, nor to "bid them God speed ;" but Mr. Watson was guiltless in this matter. The astounding repulse which he met with in this village was more than he could bear ; and he immediately withdrew from his work as an Itinerant Preacher.

That he did not take this step because he was dissatisfied with either the doctrine or discipline of the Methodist Connexion, as some persons have supposed, but on account of the circumstances just related, we have the most indubitable evidence.

We have the testimony of his friends, who enjoyed his confidence ; and we have his own solemn and oft-repeated declaration. Speaking of this period of Mr. Watson's life, Mr. Edmondson says, " I will state the case in a few words, and in the fear of God. Mr. Watson had carefully examined the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, before his appointment to the Hinckley Circuit ; and after meeting many perplexing difficulties in the course of his inquiries, he adopted the Nicene Creed, as the best exposition of that profound mystery ; and he afterwards defended that view of the subject in his celebrated work on the Sonship of Christ. But some of our people supposed, perhaps from some unguarded expressions in private conversation, that he was an Arian. But it is certain this was entirely misconception or misrepresentation.

" I was involved in the same condemnation ; and was interrogated on these subjects, with a threat that my opinions should be stated to the Conference ; and yet no man living had ever heard me, either in public or private, deny those scriptural verities. I had carefully studied what is now called the Sonship of Christ, many years before it was debated in our Connexion, and had taken that sound view of it which was clearly taught by the venerable Wesley, both in his Hymns, and in his Notes on the New Testament. I may say, I had been perplexed, like many others, in studying the doctrine of the Trinity ; that I had made inquiries of the Preachers, which had excited suspicion ; but that I never fell into the fatal snares either of Socinianism or Arianism.

" When I heard the report that Mr. Watson was



an Arian, and that he had said I was of the same mind, I went to see him at Castle-Donnington, and asked him if he had ever uttered such a sentiment. He said, in reply, that it was, like some other things in his own case, all misapprehension and misrepresentation. He then wrote as follows : — ‘ I am not myself an Arian, nor ever professed myself to be one ; and, as I am convinced that Mr. Edmondson no more holds such opinions than myself, I never could say that Mr. E. disbelieved either the divinity of Christ, or original sin. I believe that what I said respecting Mr. Edmondson’s opinions related entirely to the revival, so called, and some peculiar opinions advanced by the advocates of it.\*

‘ *July 15th, 1801.*                      RICHARD WATSON.’

This paper I have carefully preserved, both as a defence of myself and of the friend who wrote it.

“ Mr. Watson did not leave us on account of any change in his views, either of our doctrine or discipline ; nor was any charge ever preferred against him, as to his religious and moral conduct, even by those who suspected his orthodoxy ; but he was grieved at a wilful misrepresentation of his opinions ; and, without the least view of joining any other religious denomination, he went into business with a respectable Local Preacher at Hinckley ; but he soon gave it up, and went to live at Castle-Donnington, where he married Miss Henshaw, a young lady of genuine piety, and ot

\* This document, in which Mr. Watson positively disclaims the tenets that had been charged upon him, was written a few weeks after he had retired from his Circuit and itinerant work.

suitable accomplishments. But, even there, he was not kindly treated, though no one could prove any charge against him."

Mr. Burdsall, with whom Mr. Watson spent the first year of his itinerancy, and with whom he carried on a free correspondence on doctrinal subjects to the time of his secession from the Methodist body, fully confirms the statement of Mr. Edmondson, as to the uprightness and orthodoxy of their common friend. "Never would he have left our Connexion," says Mr. Burdsall, "but for the usage of two or three of his brethren, who had neither the mind nor the generosity that was requisite in order to the right treatment of this active and inquiring young man. At that time we were busily occupied in reading Watts and others on the indwelling scheme, and on some other difficult subjects; and we were sometimes puzzled and perplexed; but that we were ever heterodox, I utterly and indignantly deny. Could I have found one or two letters that he wrote to me about the third and fourth years of his itinerancy, communicating some of his thoughts and criticisms on the theory of Dr. Watts, they would reflect great credit both on his mind and heart; but those letters, I fear, are irrecoverably lost. We lodged together at the Conference of 1800, when he was admitted into full connexion; and we afterwards held a correspondence by letter until he retired from his public work; and during all that time, I do aver that he was sound in the faith, and well-affected to what was right."

In full accordance with these testimonies is the express declaration of Mr. Watson, which he has

often repeated in the company of his friends. The writer of this narrative has heard him, on innumerable occasions, avow the fact, that he withdrew from the itinerant ministry solely on account of the personal treatment which he met with, and not because of any alteration of his views respecting either the doctrine or the discipline of the Methodist body. And indeed, not many days before his lamented death, when all hope of recovery had been abandoned, thinking that perhaps an attack might be made upon his reputation after his decease, he repeated this avowal to his son-in-law, the Rev. James Dixon; that, in the event of the revival of the old calumny upon his orthodoxy, the means of refutation might be at hand. At the same time he explained the particulars of that unhappy case; and said to Mr. Dixon, "I leave my character in your hands."

While it is contended that Mr. Watson was treated with flagrant injustice when stationed in the Hinckley Circuit, it is not pretended that he acted either a wise or a blameless part in the course which he adopted under the injuries which were inflicted upon him. It appears, indeed, to have been impossible that he should continue his public labours, either in that or any other station, with the hope of comfort and success, under the imputations which were then cast upon him; but he does not seem to have used the requisite means to justify himself. His friends in the Circuit, at least, were led inadvertently into the sin of unjust prejudice, and evil-speaking; and a frank and explicit disavowal on his part of the errors which he was said to hold, would doubtless have satisfied them. But his

spirit was high and unbending. He felt that he possessed powers and knowledge greater than those of which his principal accusers could boast; and he would not stoop to defend himself against their unjust aspersions. Instead of obeying the apostolic injunction, "Let not your good be evil spoken of," he despised the clamour which was raised against him. Deeply did he afterwards repent of this unadvised step; and when he referred to it in the latter years of his life, so perfectly had he forgiven the men who laid this stumbling-block in his way, that he never spoke of them in terms of unkindness; but attributed the troubles which were consequent upon the resignation of his ministry to the loftiness of his own mind, and a spirit of independence which was impatient of control. Several years after he had returned to the Wesleyan body, the late Dr. Townley said to him, "Mr. Watson, why did you leave our Connexion?" To which he significantly replied, "Because I was young and foolish."

Mr. Watson is greatly to be commended for making no attempts to raise a party, and to promote strife and division in the societies, where he might doubtless have obtained partisans, had he used any efforts to procure them; but on no account ought he to have given up his ministry. By doing this he put it out of the power of his friends effectually to defend his reputation; and, in consequence of this, unjust suspicions with regard to his orthodoxy were attached to his name for several years. Many persons, who greatly admired his talents and general character, and regarded him as one of the most extraordinary

men of the age, for a long time had serious doubts whether he was, in all respects, uncorrupt in doctrine. These doubts, indeed, rested upon no good foundation; but they were naturally enough excited by the circumstance, that, under a suspicion of heterodoxy, he had voluntarily retired from the Methodist Connexion.

But an evil of still greater magnitude was connected with Mr. Watson's retirement. By this act he was disobedient to that divine call to the pastoral office which he had unquestionably received; and, like another Jonah, "fled from the presence of the Lord." It is the ungodly remark of a Scottish Professor, addressed to students, that, although the Christian ministry may be "deemed gloomy and unpromising," yet it is not to be despised, inasmuch as "the great leisure it affords, if converted to purposes of literature, may be rendered subservient both to fame and fortune." \* Widely different from this were the views of the venerable founders of the English Church; who attach so much importance to the sacred office, as to assume that all the true Ministers of Christ are specially called by him to labour in the word and doctrine, and to take the charge of his people. To each of her candidates for the ministry, therefore, the momentous question is proposed, "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?" Mr. Wesley and the religious Connexion established by him have always regarded

\* Barron's Lectures on Belles Lettres and Logic, vol. i., p. 593.

this divine call as essential to the ministerial character ; and hence the inquiry which forms a part of their permanent discipline, "How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?" This is a principle of great practical importance. A Minister who enters upon his work, not only under the influence of pure motives, but under the full conviction of a call from God, has the most perfect encouragement to expect divine help, and at least some degree of success ; while he who has no such conviction, but has reason to fear that he has run before he was sent, is constantly liable to the paralyzing apprehension that he has no right to expect the blessing of God upon his labours, and therefore can only "spend his strength for nought." Having received this call, the Minister of Christ is not at liberty to leave his work at his own option, under any circumstances of discouragement whatever. His Master has appointed him his sphere of labour ; and his Master only can dismiss him from the allotted service. "Through evil report, and through good report," "in perils among false brethren," and under trials which unassisted human nature can never sustain, he is to remember that "a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to him" by its Author ; and that a "woe" is denounced against him if he "preach it not." A man who takes up the Christian ministry merely as a profession, or in reference to the acquisition of "fame and fortune," of course may lay it down whenever he finds its duties irksome and inconvenient ; but he "whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them their portion of"

evangelical "meat in due season," is to remain in that office "till his Lord shall come;" even though his "fellow-servants should smite him" in the tenderest part,—his honour and reputation.

It would be difficult to mention any ordinary Minister, either in ancient or modern times, who had more satisfactory and decisive proofs of a divine call to preach the Gospel than Mr. Watson. He was in very early life made a subject of deep piety; and he possessed the requisite gifts,—powers of elocution, judgment, memory, imagination, far above the common order. Providence had wonderfully prepared his way. His master gave him his liberty under circumstances almost unexampled; fields of labour were unexpectedly opened before him, and invited his cultivation; he had received, in a most unequivocal manner, the official sanction of that branch of the universal church to which he belonged; he began to preach under a deep and impressive sense of duty, constrained by the love of Christ; and the blessing of God had so far attended his ministrations, as to render them successful in the conversion of many souls from the error of their way. In the different Circuits where he had laboured, he might have pointed to several holy and happy Christians, once the slaves of error, vice, and sin, and have said to those who questioned his credentials, "The seal of mine apostleship are these in the Lord."

Under these circumstances he could not voluntarily resign his ministry, and be guiltless in the sight of God. Nor was such a step at all necessary. It was not pretended that he had ever preached erroneous doctrine; nor was he informed

that it was intended to bring any direct accusation against him. The discipline of the body would have afforded him effectual protection; and the candour, the justice, the love of his brethren, had an appeal been made to them, would have put that discipline in force. Had he only beckoned to them in his distress, they would have rallied round him, and have "brought forth his righteousness as the noon-day." In this case, his valuable labours would have been saved to the Connexion; and he would have been mercifully preserved from placing himself in circumstances which often wrung his heart with anguish. Here was his capital error. His mind, conscious of its integrity, was wounded beyond endurance; and partly through inexperience, and partly through temptation and resentment, he took the matter into his own hands; and the affecting record stands in the Minutes of Conference for the year 1801, "Richard Watson has desisted from travelling by his own choice." In reference to this period of his life, he has been often heard to say, "I only regret that I did not lay my case before my brethren, and leave myself in their hands:" a sentiment which he repeated, with considerable emotion, within a few days of his death, when his anxious attention was directed to his past life, and to its consequences in that world upon which he was about to enter.

On his retirement from the itinerant ministry among the Methodists, Mr. Watson did not connect himself with any other body of professing Christians. His views of evangelical truth, and his personal predilections, all served to attach him to his old friends, whose religious assemblies he



still frequented, and whose pulpits he occasionally occupied. Among them he had received his religious impressions; in happy intercourse with them he had spent the entire period of his Christian life; and his heart and judgment still clave to them as the objects of his affection and confidence. That he might have been restored to his place in the body, had the requisite means been employed, there can be no doubt. Unhappily, no generous attempt appears to have been made to meet his lingering attachment to the Connexion. Those who knew him best were at a distance, and were probably imperfectly acquainted with the situation in which he was placed; the fault which he had hastily committed in forsaking his work appears to have rendered inexorable the friends by whom he was immediately surrounded; and, in some instances, he met with open and marked disrespect. In the mean while, his mind was far from being at rest: he felt that he had left the path of duty; he saw that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to retrace his steps; his spiritual enjoyments were in a great measure lost; and, although his moral conduct was unimpeachable, as a man of God he was shorn of his strength. Direct religious intercourse with his Christian friends was at length discontinued; and even his attendance upon public worship for a few months was irregular. He laboured with exemplary diligence to establish himself in business, as a means of honest subsistence; but nothing prospered in his hands. All his powers of ingenuity were put in requisition; but he was baffled at every point: for a merciful Providence designed him for a higher service than

that which he had chosen ; and would not suffer him to bury his fine talents in secular cares. The subject is too serious in itself, and was connected with too many distressing feelings in the mind of Mr. Watson, or it might provoke a smile to see a man possessed of mental abilities which would ultimately enable him to soar with Milton to the heaven of heavens, and to accompany such men as Butler and Locke in their most profound and original thinkings,—a man whose powers as a Theologian and a Preacher have been rarely equalled,—assuming the character of an ordinary tradesman in a small market-town. So humbled are the noblest minds, when they cease to act under the divine authority and direction ! At this period Mr. Watson was happy in his marriage, but in nothing else ; and on some occasions the upbraidings of his conscience, because he had laid aside the ministry, to which he had been called and solemnly set apart, were overwhelming. Once, in particular, when travelling alone, between Redditch and Birmingham, on a journey of business, his feelings of regret and compunction rose to agony ; and he expressed his persuasion that the misery of a lost soul could scarcely be more intense than that which he experienced.

In this state his first concern was to regain his spirituality of mind. His late father-in-law, Mr. Henshaw, was a zealous Local Preacher in the Methodist New Connexion ; and with a reference to his own personal salvation, Mr. Watson was induced to unite himself to a small society belonging to that religious community, at Hemington, an agricultural village, about a mile from Castle-

Donnington. His conduct from this time excites a high opinion of his simplicity and godly sincerity. The Leader of the class was a farmer's labourer, of plain manners, and humble capacity; and the other members were mostly of the same rank in society. The class met on the evening of a week-day; and, notwithstanding the distance, his attendance was punctual and regular. Seldom was he known to be absent. He was indeed generally the first in attendance, often unlocked the door, and opened the shutters of the little chapel, where they were accustomed to assemble, and got every thing in readiness for the meeting. It was observed by those who met in the same class, that his religious improvement was very rapid. His piety soon regained its wonted ardour and stability; and it was not long before he was requested to officiate as a Local Preacher among his new friends. With this request he readily complied; no compromise of principle being required; as the Methodist New Connexion hold the theological tenets which are entertained by the Wesleyan body. His preaching was generally approved; he was introduced to persons of respectability and influence in the community with which he was now united; and it was proposed to him to become an Itinerant Preacher among them. To this he promptly acceded; and it is impossible for language to express the joyous feelings with which he resumed the labours of the regular ministry after this painful interval. He was requested, in the first instance, to go to the Manchester Circuit to supply the place of another Preacher; and on receiving this appointment, with a bounding heart he

hastened to the sphere of his labours. Scarcely could he have shown more alacrity, had he been for years an imprisoned exile, who had just regained his liberty, and was returning to his kindred and home. The exercise of his ministry was the grand object to which his mind was now directed. With the principles and details of church government his acquaintance was very limited; as he had never seriously turned his attention to the subject, nor felt any interest in it. He saw nothing in the discipline of the New Connexion to hinder him from becoming a Minister in that community; especially as the financial regulations adopted in the Wesleyan body, affecting him as a married man with two children, and other causes, seemed to preclude all hope of re-admission in that quarter; otherwise there is every reason to believe that he would have preferred a union with his old friends. It is a permanent honour to the Methodist New Connexion to have been a means of rescuing him from obscurity and sorrow; and that it afforded him an opportunity of cultivating those talents by which multitudes of mankind have been instructed and edified, and which are likely to promote the interests of generations yet unborn. Had it not been for that Connexion, according to all human probability, he must have sunk under an overwhelming load of distress and obloquy.

On his admission into the New Connexion Mr. Watson gave perfect satisfaction, as to the correctness of his doctrinal views, after a very strict examination, with reference to his alleged heterodoxy; but on the subject of church government,

concerning which he knew and cared little, no questions whatever were proposed to him. He arrived in Manchester in the autumn of 1803; and it was arranged that he should reside at Stockport. As he left the Hinckley Circuit in the spring of 1801, he was more than two years and a half unemployed in the regular duties of the ministry: a period of his life during which he was taught many important lessons, but upon which he could never look with pleasure. He had maintained a high reputation before the world, for uprightness and integrity; but it was a blank in his history as a Minister of Christ. The entire case is highly monitory. It is calculated to teach young Ministers caution and self-diffidence; and their seniors, who are over them in the Lord, to watch over them with fidelity and kindness. Had the Methodist Connexion made provision for his theological training, before he was sent into a Circuit as an Itinerant Preacher, it was Mr. Watson's full conviction that he should have escaped the evils into which he fell; and that his personal comfort and public usefulness would have suffered no interruption. In the latter years of his life his heart yearned over the young men who are appointed to study and preach without adequate instruction and guidance.

---

#### CHAPTER IV.

AT Stockport Mr. Watson was not only respected by his own people, but also lived on terms

of intimacy with some of the Methodists of the Wesleyan Connexion. They admired his spirit, abilities, and knowledge, and were highly gratified with his visits. During his stay in that town, the Wesleyan society there was agitated by a dispute respecting the use of instrumental music in the public worship of God; and Mr. Watson was induced to write a satire upon the most distinguished of the parties, which was printed, and put into circulation. Some of the rebukes contained in this small and ephemeral publication were duly merited; others are totally inapplicable, being founded in mistake, occasioned, doubtless, by misinformation. This is the case especially in what is said concerning the decision of the Conference in regard of the contending parties. It is also just to say, that, as the writer belonged to another community, and was not immediately interested in the questions at issue, it would have been more seemly if he had forbore to interfere. The tract was smart and clever, and afforded amusement to witty people, at the expense of an erring individual, and of the parties by whom he was sanctioned and supported; and the design of it was praiseworthy. It was intended to expose an evil of very serious magnitude,—the immoderate use of instrumental music in public worship; yet its moral effect was not good, in consequence of the nature of the composition. The style was an imitation of the historical books of the Old Testament: and therefore presented an example of that levity which connects the most sacred things with ridicule; the practice of which is equally condemned by piety and good taste. In the subsequent years of his life, Mr.

Watson had a deep conviction of the evil of such sallies of perverted ingenuity; and no man was more free from all approaches to them, both in his writings and conversation.

When Mr. Watson had become a regular Preacher in the Methodist New Connexion, his general approval of the discipline and order of that body might be expected to follow, as a matter of course. He had entered it with an especial reference to the exercise of his ministry, and because its theological creed was in full accordance with his own; but as an honest man he was also bound to conform to its usages himself, and to enforce the same conformity on others. It is no just reflection upon him to say, that, immediately after his official connexion with that body, and as a natural consequence of his daily intercourse with its members, he was led to entertain their views, even before he had deeply studied the principles of church-government, or had witnessed, upon an extensive scale, the practical workings of the system which he had adopted.

On his restoration to the full duties of the Christian ministry, his mind was in a great measure at rest; and he soon recovered his wonted cheerfulness. He applied himself to study with a diligence and an ardour almost peculiar to himself; and his "profiting appeared unto all." His habits were sociable; his conversation was lively, instructive, and greatly admired; and his preaching often displayed a vigour of thought and expression, which gave strong indications of future eminence. Among other means of usefulness, he sometimes practised himself in literary composition, with a

reference to publication ; and his name occasionally appeared in the Magazine of the Methodist New Connexion, as a contributor to that work. His first communication was a memoir of Mr. William Bradbury, of Manchester ; and the second, an account of John Cash, of Warford, in Cheshire ; both of which were published in the year 1805, and are written with elegance and spirit. The subjects of these biographical sketches had both belonged to the Wesleyan body, in union with which they had obtained "the faith of God's elect." They had separated from their religious friends in the division of 1798 ; and, of course, it became their biographer, not only to relate that fact, but also the motives by which they were actuated. These motives are stated in a cursory manner, but yet so as to imply a censure upon the discipline of the Wesleyan Connexion. This was unavoidable ; and supposing Mr. Watson to have concurred in that censure, no candid person would attach to him any serious blame, considering the peculiarity of his situation. With him the comparative merit of the two systems of church-government must, at that time, have been merely a matter of opinion ; and that opinion could only be formed on very limited knowledge and observation, and under circumstances strongly calculated to bias the judgment. But the fact is, he had no personal acquaintance with either Mr. Bradbury, or John Cash, in the year 1798 ; and the history of their secession from the Wesleyan body was supplied by their respective friends ; Mr. Watson's task being that of preparing for publication the documents which were put into his hands. His



design was not so much to state his own opinions, as those of the men concerning whom he was writing. This is his own account of the affair, as will appear from a letter in a subsequent part of these memoirs, written by him when he was accused of abandoning his former principles after his return to the Connexion in which he was originally nurtured, and in which he spent the happiest and most useful part of his life.

The following introduction to the memoir of Mr. Bradbury is worth quoting, for the justness of the sentiment it contains, and the eloquence with which it is written :—“ One of the most conclusive arguments in favour of Christianity may be drawn from its influence upon the character and conduct of those who cordially embrace its doctrines, and wholly submit themselves to its discipline. If it reclaims them from the practice of vice, if it subdues the unruly passions, if it implants virtuous and holy affections in the human breast, if it sweetens the tempers, and purges away the dregs of envy, malice, and self-love, rendering a man not only pious towards God, but also kind and benevolent to his fellow-men ; then it achieves a conquest which manifestly proves that it is attended with a divine and supernatural energy ; inasmuch as the whole of human power and reason have frequently been exerted, for the attainment of the same objects, without effect.

“ Thanks be to God, that Christianity never was, nor is at present, destitute of this evidence. Time, which works mighty changes in things terrestrial, cannot change or destroy the influence of religion ; for, like its glorious Author, it is ‘ the

same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' If the first Christians could say, 'We have our conversation in the world in purity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in gentleness, in the Holy Spirit, in the word of truth, in the power of God, with the armour of righteousness on the right hand, and on the left;' we trust that it is not impossible for us to select a number of living characters, of whom the same things might justly be affirmed. Bad as society is, there is not so great a paucity of moral virtue, but that in the circle of our knowledge we can point out one and another who do honour to the Christian profession, and by example, as well as precept, recommend their religion to the notice of mankind.

"Some of those worthies we have the happiness to number amongst our present acquaintance and friends; and our recollection will furnish us with others, in whose friendship we once shared, whose knowledge instructed us, and whose example fired us with holy emulation. They are now with God; they have left us for a season; but their memories are still precious to us, and their virtues are engraven upon our hearts."

That Mr. Watson still considered the ministerial office, with its peculiar responsibilities and duties, as a standing ordinance in the church of God, and not to be modified and contemned by the caprice of unruly men, is manifest from the following remarks respecting John Cash, and the system of ecclesiastical discipline which he had adopted:—"Warmly as he was attached to it, he did not consider it as designed to degrade the Ministers of Christ from that authority and influence which the very nature of their office supposes, or as

giving a licence to captiousness, self-will, and unsubmission to rule and order in the people."

In the year 1804 Mr. Watson's name appears in the Minutes of the New-Connexion Conference; and he is stated to have travelled one year. In 1805 he was made assistant Secretary to the Conference: a mark of respect which was never shown by that body to any other Preacher at so early a period of his itinerancy.

The next production of Mr. Watson's pen was a sermon; the first pulpit discourse that he ever prepared for publication. The subject was Religious Meditation; and the text, "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide." (Gen. xxiv. 63.) It was inserted in the Magazine of the Methodist New Connexion in an early part of the year 1806; and reflected great credit upon the abilities and piety of the writer. It will be found in the first volume of his Sermons; and is at once judicious, eloquent, and devout. While this discourse was passing through the press, he preached a sermon in Stockport, in behalf of the Sunday-school connected with the chapel in which he regularly ministered. The congregation was so impressed with the sentiments of this discourse as to request that it might be printed. He complied with their wishes; and sent it forth into the world under the title of "A Sermon preached at Mount-Tabor Chapel, Stockport, March 9, 1806; for the benefit of the Methodist Sunday-school." It contains passages of considerable force and beauty; and the whole presents strong indications of that philosophic cast of thought, and of those enlarged and comprehensive views, by which he

was so distinguished in the subsequent years of his life. Considering the religious education of the poor as a work of patriotism, the Preacher says, "We love our country. It is endeared to us by considerations the most important. It is endeared to us by its government. Property is respected; life is sacred; liberty is secured. It is endeared to us by its privileges. 'The Lord hath not dealt so with any nation.' It is endeared to us by its religion. Its religion is Christian; the religion of the cross; the religion of love and charity. It is endeared to us by the character of its inhabitants: mild, humane, friendly, and benevolent. Would to God we could also say, it is endeared to us by its morality. Here we must hesitate. We are a foolish people, and unwise, and have ill-requited the Lord our God.

"To what, then, ought patriotism to be directed? It has secured our civil rights; it has organized our armies; it has rendered our navy invincible; it has extended our commerce, and enlarged our dominions; but there is yet one object to be accomplished, without which, well-appointed armies, an invincible navy, extended commerce, and enlarged dominion, will add little to our dignity, our happiness, or our real strength;—I mean, the correction of our morals. Immorality and irreligion as certainly dry up the resources of a nation, and hasten its downfall, as a worm at the root of the finest plant will cause it to fade, to wither, and to die. Wickedness arms God against us; and if he 'speak concerning a nation, to pluck up and to destroy,' no counsels, however wise, no plans, however judicious, no

exertions, however vigorous, can avert the sentence. 'Righteousness exalteth a nation;' and every endeavour to promote it is patriotic. In this view the preaching of the Gospel is patriotic; the execution of the laws against vice and immorality is patriotic; the support of Sunday-schools is patriotic. From the latter, much may be expected towards national reformation. Their good effects are already obvious; and when they shall have become more general, these will become more striking. Here, then, is a work worthy of your patriotism. Hasten to counteract vice by the inculcation of virtue; to prevent the destructive effects of ignorance by instruction; to purify society, by purging the elementary parts of which it is to be composed from corrupting principles and vicious propensities. Your endeavours will not strike by their splendour, and raise hope by the boldness of enterprise: yet they will not be less effectual; but, like the secret, silent influences of the spring, they will penetrate and vivify society; it will bud and blossom, and fill the whole land with fruit."

About this time Mr. Watson addressed a letter to Mr. Edmondson, with whom he had been so happily and advantageously associated in the Leicester Circuit some years before. It exhibits, in a striking light, the feelings with which he contemplated his former attachments, and proves that his generous affection for his old friends had not been extinguished by the new connexions into which he had been unexpectedly thrown. The following is an extract:—

“Whilst I write this, the remembrance of our

former friendship rushes into my mind. But the social intercourse, the friendly interchange of thought, the joint pursuit of truth, are no more! In the midst of many changes, under the pressure of many bereavements, what has most affected me is the loss of my friends. Have I deserved it? I have often said to myself, 'It is true, I have been surrounded with the mists of calumny and detraction; my conduct, my principles, my intentions have been scrupulously examined;—NO: they have been presumed upon, and——; but this is my consolation, that, though many of my friends, looking at me through a factitious medium, saw me distorted and preposterous, I have not sacrificed one generous thought at the shrine of resentment; and it gives me the highest pleasure, that there is a time approaching, when, in a state more congenial to the happiness of man, the operations of benevolence will be unobstructed by the misapprehensions which mark the imbecility, as they increase the misery, of the present.'"

At this period Mr. Watson laboured as a Minister of Christ with great fidelity and zeal; and was much respected for his personal virtues and piety, and for his admirable ministry. Though his health was never vigorous, and occasionally very delicate, like his divine Master he often preached in the open air, particularly at Stockport, seeking in order that he might save the lost. Several persons attended his preaching, who refused to unite in church-fellowship with any denomination of Christians; and with a special reference to their case, he preached three sermons in succession at Stockport, on the duty and advantages of Christian

communion. In Manchester he was greatly beloved, and formed some cordial and permanent friendships, particularly with the Messrs. Faulkner, father and son ; and with Mr. Absalom Watkin ; with whom, for many years, he carried on an improving and affectionate correspondence.

Among other works which Mr. Watson carefully studied at this period of his life was Stackhouse's *Body of Divinity* ; a large folio volume of great research, and of an argumentative character, compiled principally from the writings of the English Episcopal Divines. A copy of this work has been preserved, with manuscript notes, which are dated "Stockport, Cheshire," some of which display considerable acuteness. For the purpose of illustrating his habits of attention, a few specimens may be given. In p. 44 Stackhouse mentions the opinion, that the art of writing was coeval with mankind ; and that the substance of the book of Genesis was transmitted, in verse, to Moses, through the antediluvian ages. He then remarks, "This can hardly be a probable conjecture, because it is scarce conceivable how men could have lost the sense of religion so totally, as we find they did, had there been any standing records of it at that time." To this Mr. Watson replies, "Why not ? when we find the Jews, in after-ages, with the law in their hands, falling into as gross idolatry."

At p. 282, Stackhouse suggests, "that the parley between the serpent and Eve might have been of long continuance, though it is briefly set down by Moses ;" an opinion for which he assigns several reasons. Mr. Watson observes, "A subject of no importance at all ; but these remarks are

certainly forcible. For, evil being contrary to the constitution of their nature, there must needs have been very strong temptations to overcome the natural tendency of the will to obedience; and these temptations must first become familiar, by being often repeated, to remove that disgust which they at first sight were likely to create. Some time they must have had to operate upon the passions, unless we suppose Eve to have been taken by surprise, which is not at all probable."

Stackhouse proposes, p. 289, a number of questions respecting God's permission of the fall of Adam, with suggestions of means by which it might have been prevented. Mr. Watson writes, "The best answer to such queries is, Here is a fact, which cannot be disproved. Man is fallen. The *whys* and the *wherefores* belong not to us, but to God. 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord?'"

In reference to the theory mentioned by Stackhouse, that there was something physically deleterious in the forbidden fruit; and that death was therefore a natural consequence of eating it; Mr. Watson says, "Either man's body depended upon the divine power for its incorruptibility, or upon the application of some natural means, as the fruit of the tree of life. If on the former, then no kind of aliment could affect its constitution; if upon the latter, the withdrawing of the means would of itself be sufficient to account for its dissolution. But this is very doubtful."

Stackhouse says, p. 574, "This was the natural effect of sin in all ages, that it, filling men's minds with dreadful apprehensions of God, and making



them afraid to approach him of themselves, drove them to the necessity either of giving off all intercourse with him, or of finding out some other to make intercession for them ; and this seems to have given rise to the first institution of demon worship among the Gentiles." Mr. Watson remarks, "I do not think that this accounts for demon worship. Did not men become gross in their conceptions of the divine nature, and give to God a far-distant locality ; and then invent these imaginary beings to act, not only as intercessors, but as messengers betwixt them and the far-distant gods?"

These hasty memoranda are not given as the mature thoughts of Mr. Watson, or as in every instance solving the difficulties to which they refer ; but to show the habit of strict investigation which he had formed. He wisely read, not to fill his mind with indigested notions, "but to weigh and consider." The happy consequences of this course became increasingly manifest as he advanced in life. He became an example of extensive and well-digested reading.

In the spring of the year 1806 Mr. Watson removed from the Manchester Circuit to Liverpool, where he was stationed alone. Here he was placed in a situation highly favourable to that mental cultivation upon which his heart was bent. His pastoral duties were very limited. He had regularly to supply one small chapel in the town ; and this was nearly the whole of the official duty that devolved upon him ; for with this chapel scarcely any Circuit was connected. A large proportion of his time was therefore at his own dis-

posal ; and how well he improved it, his subsequent ministry and writings amply demonstrate. This was a very important era in Mr. Watson's life ; for his residence in Liverpool greatly tended to the formation of his character as a public man. Here some of his most valued and lasting friendships were formed ; he had access to literary and scientific institutions ; books on all subjects were within his reach ; and he had frequent intercourse with men of learning and intelligence. At the same time his preaching excited considerable attention ; and Christians of various denominations, particularly the Wesleyan Methodists, both Preachers and private individuals, were often found assembled round his pulpit, listening with emotion to a ministry equally original, evangelical, and impressive.

The following letters were written during the first year of his residence in Liverpool. They illustrate his personal history, and show that his correspondence was affectionate and instructive. Before his appointment to Liverpool he spent about a month in that town, taking Wigan on his way, where he stayed a Sabbath. Mr. John Faulkner, one of the persons to whom he was accustomed to write, at that time was a lively young man, well disposed, but not decidedly pious ; and hence the peculiarity of Mr. Watson's manner of address to him. He recommends to him true religion under the name of "virtue ;" and attempts to draw his attention to subjects of infinite importance by means of topics somewhat light and amusing.

TO MR. THOMAS FAULKNER, DENTIST,  
MANCHESTER.

LIVERPOOL, *July 2d*, 1806.

DEAR SIR,

By another revolution of the wheel of human vicissitude, I am found in Liverpool; and as I am unwilling to believe that my friends are so perfectly uninterested as not to wish to know how as well as where I am, I have sat down to scribble four epistles for one post. The air of this place I found, for the first four or five days, to be extremely piercing. I was unwell; and my hard-laboured lungs "shot pangs, strange pangs; and, as I thought, prophetic of their end." I thank God, however, that they proved to be of a more assimilating nature than I apprehended; and the air and they appear to have entered into a closer alliance, and more strict terms of friendship. I have bathed, and it has been beneficial; I walk along the shore, and enjoy the double advantage of solitude and exercise, meditation and animal refreshment. Could I transplant my old friends to Liverpool, or the advantages of Liverpool to my old friends, I should think myself the happiest man on earth; but "shall it be as thou wilt?" Nature has not formed me in one of those rugged moulds, nor of those rigid materials, which cannot relax and feel. I have felt most sensibly my separation from that little chosen band with whom I have spent so many hours of improvement and pleasure. The remembrance is equally painful and pleasing; and it is painful in proportion to the pleasure. I should think worse of myself if I did not feel, though I have felt more than I expected.

There are many fibres which entwine themselves insensibly about the heart, and the existence of which we do not even suspect, till the whole is broken by entire separation, and every one bears its proportion of pain. But God will not condemn the softness of the heart; the milder strokes of tender nature. He is love; and he commands the heart that loves him to love the brethren too.

My situation is in every respect comfortable; and I doubt not will remain so. I thank God for an increasing attachment in my own mind to his religion and to his work. He is my God, and I will exalt him.

TO MR. JOHN FAULKNER.

LIVERPOOL, *Sept. 13th*, 1806.

MY DEAR LAD,

You desire me to write you a long letter. I will, though I should tire your patience. But I will not fill it with trifles, because I have too much attachment to you; and you have too much good sense to desire it. You are now in the most important stage of life. You occupy the anxieties, and inherit the warmest wishes, of your friends. Now is the time for you to acquire that knowledge, to form those principles, to engrave that character upon your mind, which shall favour your entrance into life, and direct you with safety through it. To neglect in the morning of life those pursuits for which it is given, is to put off that which the space betwixt noon and night may not be found sufficient to accomplish. It is, at least, to throw our greatest business into disorder, and to place the highest interests, and the most

important engagements, in a situation which can only, at the best, afford the probability of security and accomplishment.

There are two objects to which your attention is imperatively called,—knowledge and virtue; children of the same parent, inseparable companions, and mutual helpers of the happiness of man. The importance and value of the first I need not attempt to prove. “That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good,” and that none but fools love folly, are positions of one of the wisest of men, which neither you nor I shall question. Knowledge is the food of the mind, the support of its vigour, and the parent of its growth. There is a capacity of improvement in the human intellect, of which the more we avail ourselves, the greater amplitude and greatness of soul we acquire; the more we honour God by the improvement of his gifts; the more real dignity we associate with our characters; the more worthy we are of the appellations of rational and immortal; and the better are we fitted for every useful purpose in life. The objects of human knowledge, however, being almost infinite, we must select those which our time and opportunity place within our reach; taking care that whatever we fix upon, it shall be capable of affording us solid and useful information. Have you not seen with disgust, a pert, two-legged animal, miscalled a man, on whom a decent education has been thrown away, or its effects been annihilated by a passion for novel-reading? His imagination, heated by fiction, and, like a balloon filled with inflammable air, ascending the higher in proportion as the solidity of judgment is

separated from it, he acts a contemptible and romantic part in common life; he offends by his ceaseless loquacity; he insults by his ignorance; he becomes intolerable, because he burlesques and caricatures human nature. Sensible conversation is to such a being insipid; sober-minded men constitute a company irksome and repulsive; he glitters, but does not shine; he tattles, but does not talk; his stage is the tea-table, and his audience love-sick lasses. It is well, however, if he stops short of egregious vices; if he learns not the vices of the heroes of novel and romance, and forgets their virtues; if he has not learned to puzzle right and varnish wrong; to blaspheme God, and to ridicule his laws; to join hollowness to pretended friendship, and to debase love by sensuality. With the names of honour, friendship, and virtue on his lips, he is base, treacherous, and licentious. From reading of this kind, little is to be gained but sponginess of intellect, pertness of demeanour, and an unnatural character. Is the real world so barren of incident, that we must create an ideal one to furnish it? Is man as he is so barren a subject of speculation, that we must contemplate him as a faultless or faulty monster that the world never saw? Are paintings after nature so scarce, or, rather, is it so difficult to find originals, that we must ever laugh at the daubing of a caricature? Are the calm, tranquil scenes of nature, or the steady, wise dispensations of Providence, so uninteresting, that the magic of romance must ever and anon conjure up exaggerated pictures of beauty or of horror, and the pen of invention be continually forging surprising events, and unexpected catastro-

phes? Are the common means of information established by the appointed law of our nature, so defective, or has truth ceased to speak in the still small voice of reason, that we must learn nothing, never hear her charming voice, but in the whirlwind of the passions, the tempest of the soul? It is a libel upon our Maker; it is a satire upon humanity.

Let us seek solid information in history, which makes us acquainted with our forefathers; philosophy, which displays the wondrous works of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; geography, which is conversant with the abodes, habitudes, and relations of men; astronomy, which carries us to distant worlds, and colonies from heaven; and, above all, in theology, which leads us even to the throne of God, and displays his glory, which presents us with a copy of his secret counsels, and the determinations of his wisdom respecting man, which unfolds the amazing scene of human redemption, and enables us to behold the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;—explains the causes of the misery we all feel, and promises the happiness we all wish; raises the degraded spirit from the servitude of vice, and restores it to honour, to dignity, to holiness;—forms the purpose of return in the heart of the restless and unhappy fugitive, aids the execution, and withdraws not her influence till she hath placed us in the forgiving bosom of eternal Love, and in the unalienable fruition of life and immortality. This is knowledge, rational, exalting, beneficial, and immortal.

Having introduced you to knowledge, let me have the honour of presenting you also to virtue.

You have the greatest reason to be thankful that you have examples of virtue in those who continually surround you, and whose influence is strengthened by natural relationship as well as religion. To their well-wishes I would join my own. How should I, as your friend, wish you to reason with yourself? "Is it all enchantment around me? I cannot, I will not, trust it. Something whispers me at this moment, that there is nothing so beautiful, so sweet, as virtue. As for my passions, which were made to submit and serve, shall they usurp the command, and precipitate me whithersoever they will, in spite of reason, and in spite of conscience? Dignity and independence, disdain the thought! It is easy to talk and boast of pleasure; but, in the opinion of a reasonable being, no gratification that is inconsistent with peace and purity can merit so agreeable a name. Why should I be tempted to dream of liberty, in breaking the laws of virtue? Do I not perceive that I am then only free and self-possessed, when I follow cheerfully the dictates of my soul? When I act otherwise, do I not feel myself enslaved and wretched? With regard to the praise of others, what were the caresses of thousands, if conscience should accuse, and reason condemn? Then as to the world, with all her gaudy and fantastic train, how frivolous, impotent, and contemptible, when opposed to the dominion of truth, rising in her naked and unadorned majesty? Begone, ye gay, glittering, but inconstant and deceitful, phantoms of criminal and vain delight! By whatever name you may be called, whatever plausible appearance you may assume, begone;



must beat in unison. It must not be unnoticed, that esteem is the only sure basis of love. Build it upon whatever else you please,—on youth, on beauty, on wealth, on affability of temper, on diligence, on assiduity,—all will fail but virtue; and the fondest affection by degrees will sink into indifference, carelessness, aversion, and perhaps hatred. Just views of God, a conduct regulated by them, the temper of the heart softened by divine influence, supreme love to the Author of all our benefits, a calm, tranquil confidence in his mercy and guidance through the promise of his Son, and a constant endeavour to approve yourselves to him in all the public and private walks of life: these will make you respectable to each other; you will reflect with pleasure upon the commencement of your acquaintance; you will bless the Providence which has made you the sharers of each other's griefs and joys; and, after having filled up the offices of life, you will find your friendship and love made perfect in a better and heavenly state. I feel much interested in your welfare. May the gracious Being who superintends the affairs of his unworthy creatures guide you by his counsel, and distinguish your future lives with the communication of every necessary blessing of life and salvation.

On completing his first year in Liverpool, Mr. Watson finished the period of his probation, as a Minister in the New Connexion: he therefore attended the Conference in Leeds, in the year 1807, when he was admitted into full connexion with that body. His brethren showed the esti-

mate which they formed of his character by appointing him the Secretary of the Conference at the same time.

Being re-appointed to Liverpool, Mr. Watson returned to that town, where he continued his acceptable ministry, and still exercised himself in literary composition. During this year (1807) he compiled a popular history and description of Liverpool, which was deduced from the large works of Enfield and Aikin, with a considerable portion of original matter. It was published by his friend Mr. Kaye, in a neat pocket volume, and was well received. At the request of the same friend, Mr. Watson also wrote a brief history of the reign of George III., as a continuation of Dr. Goldsmith's "Abridgment of the History of England." It occupies about seventy closely-printed duodecimo pages, and contains some spirited sketches of the characters of eminent individuals, and of public events. The sentiments of the writer throughout are eminently loyal and patriotic; and his anxiety for the national independence and honour, in the tremendous conflict with France and the greater part of Europe then combined against her, is very apparent. His heart was truly British; and his attachment to George III., and to the favourite Ministers of that revered Monarch, was strong and decided. Having related some brilliant successes of the English fleet and army, and the death of Nelson, Pitt, and Fox, Mr. Watson thus concludes his narrative:—

"Thus at the close of the year 1806 did Britain mingle her triumphs and her afflictions. On the one hand she had seen her navy triumph in every

part of the globe ; she had extended her colonial possessions, and multiplied the sources of her commerce ; from her enemies she had wrested some of their most valuable settlements, and seen her arms triumph over those of the conquerors of the Continent, on the plains of Maida. But, on the other, some of the ablest directors of her councils, and the brightest ornaments of her senate, were removed by death from her service, and that at a period when the alarming circumstances of the times called most imperiously for the assistance of every thing great and patriotic in man. She was almost entirely excluded from the Continent ; and nearly the whole of Europe was prostrate at the feet of her natural and implacable enemy and rival. The year 1807 has, however, been ushered in with the dawn of hope. The eyes of the world are fixed upon the eventful contest between the hardy sons of the north, and the legions of an unprincipled but successful usurper. What the event will be, is highly problematical. The occurrences of late years have sported with the penetration of the wisest, and have made it folly to conjecture."

On completing this early publication Mr. Watson addressed the following *jeu-d' esprit* to his friend Mr. Kaye. The personage mentioned in the first line is the messenger employed by printers in carrying manuscripts and proof-sheets to and from authors and editors.

No longer haunted by your devil,  
Though late in dumps, I 'm now grown civil ;  
And though I boast a patriot's merit,  
Nor ranc'rous hate of Kings inherit,

With warmest loyalty attended,  
 I'm glad the reign of George is ended.  
 Let no sly Bow-street prowling sinner,  
 Gaping for treason as he gapes for dinner,  
 For this one word clap on his fetters,  
 And take poor author 'fore his betters.  
 'Tis no complaint of canting faction,  
 Dyed black in heart, though fair in action ;  
 'Tis not rebellion's exultation,  
 Degrading Prince to raise the nation ;  
 'Tis author's trump of jubilee,  
 Who, from his pens and papers free,  
 From parlour close, and subjects bare,  
 Struts stately forth, and breathes the air ;  
 And, from dull books and thinking free,  
 Tastes idleness and vacancy.  
 Yes ; George's reign is fully ended,  
 And, sent to press, can't now be mended.  
 The books of ref'rence sent by you,  
 Affording news both old and new,  
 Are in brown paper closely penn'd in,  
 And you may have them home for sending.

R. W.

The critical situation of Great Britain at this period awakened in Mr. Watson's mind a deep solicitude. As an humble Methodist Preacher, without wealth, connexions, or personal influence, he appeared to be incapable of rendering her any service. But he had an understanding to comprehend, a heart to feel, and an eloquent and vigorous pen ; and he determined, so far as his official duties would permit, to employ these in maintaining her interests and honour. His friend Mr. Kaye resolved on the publication of a weekly newspaper, upon loyal and constitutional principles ; and Mr. Watson lent his assistance in its management. The following extracts from the

prospectus, which was written by him, will show the political principles which he then entertained, and his general views concerning public affairs :—

“In times like the present, when Europe is continually presenting great and alarming political revolutions ; when a bold and successful usurper, infatuated with the ambition of universal dominion, extends the rod of his tyranny over the prostrate nations ; and when, in consequence of his intrigues and conquests, the foreign relations of Great Britain become daily more intricate and embarrassing ; every man who has the least stake in his country’s welfare must enter warmly into its interests ; and, if not blinded by party rage, and perverted by political fanaticism, will heartily cooperate in those measures which tend to maintain its dignity and preserve its independence.

“Serious, however, as are the affairs of Europe, they are not so distressing to reflection as the divided state of politics at home. Britain at one with herself is invulnerable to her enemies ; in her resources equal to her wants, and in her energies equal to her contests. It is therefore sincerely to be lamented, that, at the time when unanimity is most pressingly required to employ those resources, and direct those energies, faction should divide our counsels, and the rancour of opposition disturb the operations of patriotic virtue. There are critical periods in the history of empires, when every thought should be absorbed in the public safety, and in which division is discomfiture. Philip conquered by the disputes of Athens ; and the animosities excited between the patricians and the plebeians

brought the Æqui and the Volsci to the gates of Rome.

“Devotedly attached to the person and family of a Sovereign who has so long adorned the throne by his virtues, and heartily embracing the principles of the British constitution in Church and State, the publisher scruples not to profess himself an enemy to those measures which would derogate from the dignity of the one, or violate the purity and endanger the existence of the other. Equally opposed to intolerance and to anarchy, he shall feel proud if any attempts of his be successful enough to lead his readers more highly to estimate that mild and paternal government which so fully secures us from both; and more carefully to guard against those delusions which would steal away our great and real privileges under the frail pretence of granting others greater and more valuable.

“Should we even allow the zeal of our modern reformers to be real in its principles, and sincere in its objects, it will not follow that on this account it is less dangerous. No qualities are perhaps more rarely to be found in man than those which are requisite to the task of political reform, when even necessary. The time when, and the manner how, will not be readily descried by clamour and violence, by precipitation and pertinacity. The application of the pruning-knife to the branch is often relinquished to strike a blow at the root, merely to show the vigour of the arm that wields the exterminating axe.”

With these views and principles Mr. Watson lent his aid to his friend in the establishment of a journal which exerted a powerful influence upon

the public mind. It was decidedly in favour of the existing Administration, and very extensively read; and, appearing in one of the largest towns in the empire, the assistance which it afforded the Government in the protracted and arduous struggle with France and her allies was valuable and efficient. The leading articles were regularly copied into one of the most popular of the London daily papers, and thus circulated through the kingdom.\* That a young man who had never been accustomed to associate with statesmen and senators, and had spent the greater part of his life in comparative obscurity, should have acquired the requisite knowledge for such a service, and the necessary facility in composition, is a striking proof of the energy and resources of his mind. Indeed, such was his readiness in comprehending any subject, and the rapidity with which he expressed himself in writing, that his literary engagements in connexion with the Liverpool Courier were in many instances rather a relaxation from severer studies, than an onerous addition to his limited official duties. Public papers are indispensable, as vehicles of intelligence, in a trading community; and when the very existence of the nation was menaced by a mighty and determined enemy, so that almost every post was expected to bring information of the deepest importance, the public prints, of course, commanded almost universal attention; and it

\* The paper here referred to was the London Courier, the conductors of which had the meanness, from year to year, to copy the leading articles from the Liverpool journal of the same name, without acknowledging the source whence they were derived.

must have been a high gratification to Mr. Watson, that he was able to place before so many of his countrymen a record of passing occurrences, connected with a recognition of divine Providence, and in a tone of pure and elevated morality. Men who thus contribute to the knowledge and improvement of society are among its greatest benefactors. Mr. Watson's services in this respect were perfectly voluntary; the spontaneous effusions of personal friendship, and of patriotic and loyal feeling; for through life he was as much distinguished by disinterestedness and generosity, as by the strength of his understanding.

In the midst of his engagements and studies he found time occasionally to correspond with his friends. The following letter shows the kindness of his heart, and his anxiety to turn a painful bereavement to the spiritual benefit of a young friend. It was addressed to Mr. Faulkner, jun.; and is dated, Liverpool, December, 1807.

DEAR SIR,

I WAS affected, but not surprised, to hear of the death of your sister. From events of this kind much good may be derived, however painful they may be to our feelings.

“Smitten friends are messengers of love :  
For us they sicken, and for us they die.”

The fervent glow of life does but waste the oil of the lamp which sustains its light; and our approaches to vigour and manhood are but approaches to the grave. Few love to think on death. The thought is not pleasing. It cannot,



with its melancholy reflections ; and it is not necessary that it should constantly occupy our minds. But it is necessary that it should occupy them more than perhaps it does ; and the death of friends imperiously forces the subject upon us. The wise consider their latter end, and make it their business to divest its approaches of alarm ; and so to live, that the last act of life, the act of dying, may be honourable to their memories, and easy to their minds. "For me to live is Christ," says an Apostle, "and to die is gain ;" and it is only such a life that can produce such a death. The living faith of a Christian realizes unseen objects, and gives them, even in this world, a present subsistence. Hence his better thoughts repose in heaven ; and though he is in the world, he is not of the world. He enters now by faith where Jesus his forerunner is entered ; and death only brings him personally into that region in which by faith and love he had his dwelling-place before.

Two things prepare us either for life or death : an interest in Christ ; and a firm and settled intention to please him in our conduct. May they be possessed by you !

"Then when the last, the closing hour draws nigh,  
 And earth recedes before my swimming eye ;  
 When trembling on the doubtful edge of fate,  
 I stand, and stretch my views to either state ;  
 Teach me to quit this transitory scene  
 With decent triumph and a look serene ;  
 Teach me to fix my ardent hopes on high,  
 And, having lived to thee, in thee to die."

At the Conference of the New Connexion, held at Huddersfield, in June, 1808, Mr. Watson was a

second time appointed Secretary to that body. At this period his health was so delicate as to render him unable to take his full share of labour in the extensive Circuits of the Connexion to which he belonged : he was therefore returned a third year to Liverpool, where he was, in a great measure, exempted from travelling, and from exposure to the night air. At the same time, his ministry was characterized by such a richness and variety of matter, that there was no danger lest it should lose its interest with the societies and congregations. The event fully justified the appointment. During the first year in which he had the pastoral charge of the Liverpool Circuit, there was a decrease in the societies under his care of twenty-four members ; during the second year there was an increase of two ; and in the third year, an increase of sixty-five. His preaching presented strong attractions to people in general, and especially to young persons of education and intelligence ; many of whom were often drawn to his chapel by the report of his intellectual power and impressive eloquence. Not a few of these, who came to hear him from motives of curiosity, often quailed in his presence, and turned pale under his affecting appeals to the conscience on the all-important subject of personal religion. Christianity they perceived to be, not a matter of opinion and speculation, but a revelation of mercy to sinners, whose everlasting happiness is suspended upon their believing acceptance of it. They saw that Mr. Watson's preaching was not intended to gratify a sickly sentimentality, or to afford amusement to loungers ; but to bring

men to repentance, and to turn them effectually from sin and the world to God and holiness. The sanctions of the Gospel, derived from judgment and eternity, appeared in all their awfulness and certainty in the sermons which they had been induced to attend; the misery of lost spirits was described in all its intensity; and the manner in which triflers were admonished to flee from the wrath to come, and to apply to Christ for salvation, in many instances produced impressions the most salutary and permanent. Among others, the late Rev. John James derived great benefit from Mr. Watson's ministry, during his appointment to Liverpool.

Mr. Watson continued to cherish a lively concern for the national welfare; and in the course of this year (1808) he produced a political pamphlet, in reply to Mr. Roscoe. This gentleman was connected with a large banking establishment in Liverpool, and had recently represented that borough in Parliament. He was distinguished as a philanthropist, an elegant scholar, and a patron of the fine arts; and his connexions, as a public man, were extensive and powerful. In politics he identified himself with that party in the state which, during the war with revolutionary France, was perpetually prophesying evil against this country, attempting to embarrass the Government, and recommending the nation to crouch to Bonaparte. With this design he published a pamphlet, which quickly passed through several editions, entitled, "Considerations on the Causes, Objects, and Consequences of the present War, and on the Expediency or the Danger of Peace with France."

With the assumptions, the reasonings, and the design of this publication Mr. Watson held no sympathy; and as he thought its tendency to be mischievous, he entered the lists against this popular and accomplished writer, and produced "A Letter to William Roscoe, Esq., containing Strictures on his late Publication." This production, which is written with great force of argument, and in a strain of powerful and commanding eloquence, made a considerable impression upon the public mind. The author has decidedly the advantage over his antagonist throughout the discussion, and shows a deep concern for the honour and interest of his country.

"Thank God," he says, "if we be true to ourselves, we can support the contest. While our navy stands unshaken amidst the wreck of nations, our trade will not only be protected, but enlarged. Difficulties only call forth the resources of a great people; and the resources of England are not exhausted. She still possesses an extensive commerce; and her capital, her industry, and her enterprise must finally break down the barriers which are opposed to her prosperity. Bonaparte knows this, and he fears it; and if he cannot succeed in enervating us by disunion, he is evidently prepared to acknowledge those rights, against which he so loudly declaims, and which we, for that reason, ought as strenuously to defend. This, Sir, is the glorious *object* of the present struggle; it is the object we are called upon, by every consideration of justice, honour, and interest, to defend. It is dear to us as the soil on which we tread, as the constitution under which we live.

It is the only guarantee of our independence, and the only sure pledge of our future commercial prosperity. If the sea cannot be our empire, let it be our grave. 'This is the true position, this is the high destiny, of our country; and nothing but a political suicide, a total incapacity to meet the bounties of Providence, and to improve its blessings, can induce us to hesitate, for a moment, as to the course we ought to pursue.' "

The generality of pious people are apt to consider political discussions absolutely incompatible with the sacred office; and therefore regard with suspicion every Minister of Christ who devotes any portion of his time to writing on subjects of this nature, as if he either neglected his proper duties, or indulged a secular spirit. To a considerable extent, this prejudice is well founded; yet there are cases in which Christian Ministers may interpose their opinions on measures adopted by the civil power without any dereliction of duty. Many acts both of legislation and government are intimately connected with questions of morality and religion; and the public conscience looks for advice and guidance of the men whose office it is to interpret the will of the Almighty. When the Ministers of religion set themselves in opposition to legitimate and constitutional governments, and engage in plans of civil disorganization and strife, they merit the severest reprehension; but when they lend their aid in support of just authority and social order, they act in perfect accordance with the example of their Lord and of his inspired servants. Mr. Wesley published several pamphlets on political affairs, especially during the American

war; and his friend Mr. Fletcher followed his example: but who regards the Founder of Methodism as having neglected the spiritual interests of mankind; or thinks that the devout Vicar of Madeley lost any of his spirituality of mind by writing his "Vindication of Mr. Wesley's Calm Address," "American Patriotism," and the "Bible and the Sword?" When these distinguished Ministers wrote in support of the measures of Government, during the war of American independence, the object proposed in the struggle was merely the preservation of a part of our colonies; whereas the war with France was designed to preserve nothing less than our national existence and independence. The tyrant of the Continent was said to have offered to a licentious soldiery the plunder of England as the reward of its subjugation. Against the combined power of Europe, however, this country successfully maintained the contest, fierce and tremendous as it was; until at length the menaces of the enemy abroad, and the predictions which were so loudly uttered by the prophets of evil at home, were alike falsified; and not only was Great Britain with her colonies preserved, but the war ended in such a manner as to leave the national honour unstained. On the retrospect of the part which he had taken at the period in question, Mr. Watson could cherish no feelings but those of satisfaction; for his was a heart at once loyal and patriotic. In reference to his political writings his general remark was,—and it was often repeated to his friend Mr. Kaye,—“I wish to assist in bearing up the heart of the nation under the pressure of its burdens and dangers.”

## CHAPTER V.

At the Conference held in May, 1809, Mr. Watson was returned to Liverpool as a supernumerary Preacher. Three years before he had complained, in one of his letters, that his lungs were affected; and that the manner in which they laboured appeared to him "prophetic of their end." The painful symptoms, however, at that time subsided, and he continued his public labours, though with many intervals of serious indisposition; but now the symptoms returned, and presented a more alarming appearance. It seemed indeed as if his days were numbered, and his life and labours were hastening to a close. The blood oozed from his lungs, and he was compelled for some time almost entirely to suspend the work of preaching. The following letter, which was written at the commencement of the winter, describes the state of his health, and gives an interesting view of the religious principles upon which his mind rested in the time of affliction, and which afforded him consolation and support. The religion which was his strength and portion he earnestly recommends to his young friend.

TO MR. JOHN FAULKNER, OF MANCHESTER.

LIVERPOOL, *Nov. 23d*, 1809.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WITH respect to my health, I continue in a very precarious state. I am not wholly free from the spitting of blood, and have almost constant pain in my breast. I at present preach little; and with

difficulty perform that share of duty. But I feel that all things are most wisely ordered by a kind and gracious Providence ; and rest, with full confidence, upon this great truth, that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

To the great Source of all good let me recommend you. What is the world without God ? What are even its highest pleasures ? And what, then, its frowns ? True, vital religion has always been regarded by me as equally essential to the happiness of this life, as to that of the next ; and therefore we much injure ourselves when we would put off its enjoyments to some future period of life, or perhaps to its last gasping moments. For why should we be unhappy so long, when happiness is now within our reach ? What is religion, but love to the best of beings ; confidence in the most faithful of beings ; and friendship with the greatest of beings ?—to meditate with pleasure on his infinite wonders of nature and of operation ; to have liberty to approach that throne of glory before which angels bow with reverence and rapture ; to be under the eye and guidance of his superintending wisdom ; and to be filled with the spirit of light, peace, and sanctity ? Our noblest employment, the best plan of spending life, is to do all with a view to his glory ; to rise in the morning, and direct our voice to Him, and look up ; to lie down with thanksgiving ; to perform the duties of life as the assignments of his providence ; and to embrace opportunities to consult his holy word, and think of his goodness.

Present my affectionate remembrance to Mrs. Faulkner. May you walk together in all the



statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Consecrate your house to God in prayer, and the blessing of God will light upon your tabernacle.

The same grateful and happy spirit which breathes through this beautiful letter, Mr. Watson expressed in the following poem, which he wrote a few weeks afterwards. It is a parody upon some querulous verses, entitled, "Such Things Were," and beginning,

"Scenes of my youth, ye once were dear."

They were repeated to him by Mrs. Kaye's sister, in one of their social interviews; when he acknowledged the elegance and spirit with which they were spoken, and said he would endeavour to produce something, in point of sentiment at least, more worthy of her powers of recital. The result was the composition of these stanzas:—

ENJOYMENTS; OR, SUCH THINGS ARE.

WHILE o'er the various scenes of joy  
 I gaze with ever-raptured eye,  
 What though my bliss has felt alloy,  
 And oft I've seen my pleasure die;  
 No chilling look pale sorrow flings  
 On what kind Heaven doth still bestow,  
 My moments fly on downy wings,  
 My joys in even current flow:  
 Grateful to Heaven, I banish care,  
 While I remember SUCH THINGS ARE.

What though I hear no father speak,  
 Nor set before me wisdom's prize;  
 What though no tear bedews my cheek,  
 Warm from a mother's beaming eyes;

Firm in Affection's primal ties,  
 Their lessons to my soul I bind :  
 Their bright example never dies,  
 Their mantle they have left behind :  
 From heaven they smile away my care,  
 While I remember SUCH THINGS ARE.

'Tis here in calm and tranquil rest,  
 Far from the world's contempt and guile,  
 Up to my highest wishes blest  
 With glowing Friendship's open smile ;  
 While others, hapless, doom'd to roam,  
 And brave the fury of the seas,  
 Mine are the pleasures of a home,  
 Domestic joys, and heart at ease,  
 With friends my joys and griefs to share,  
 While I remember SUCH THINGS ARE.

'T was here, e'en in this bloomy grove,  
 I first met Laura's tender eye ;  
 That eye which speaks the soul of love ;  
 That heart where all the virtues lie :  
 But now I call the fair one mine,  
 My friend, companion, and my wife ;  
 While all Affection's arts combine,  
 Each to support and bless through life :  
 Partner in every joy and care,  
 I must remember SUCH THINGS ARE.

Smiling my morn of life arose,  
 Gay, guiltless pleasure led the hours ;  
 Sudden behold the prospect close,  
 On all the cloud of sickness lowers ;  
 But from the skies a streaming light  
 In brightness breaks above the sun ;  
 Rises gay Hope to meet the sight,  
 And sorrow's sable night is gone :  
 A smiling God my griefs to bear,  
 To whom I owe that SUCH THINGS ARE.

*Liverpool, Jan. 6th, 1810.*

W.

Mr. Watson's next literary performance was a short biographical account of the Rev. James Parry, a Minister in the Methodist New Connexion, and a young man of superior talents and piety. It was inserted in the Magazine of that body, in the months of July and August, 1810; and consists mostly of letters written by the deceased. The following remarks on the subject of a divine call to the Christian ministry, which Mr. Watson has introduced into this memoir, are equally just and striking:—"I am not in possession of the exact time when Mr. Parry began to preach; but in the year 1803 he was engaged as a temporary supply in Chester. A strong desire to be engaged in the greatest and most noble work on earth, the administration of the word of life to a guilty world, appears to have been operated in his heart from a very early period of his Christian life. This might arise from a warm benevolence of soul, a sympathy for the misery of man, a disposition which is both the foundation and the top-stone of ministerial qualifications, and which afterwards shone conspicuously in his character. But it would be too cold, it would lean too much to those systems of modern divinity, half philosophized into Deism, and disgustingly protruded into the world under the appellation of rational Christianity, to trace the feeling to no higher a source than native benevolence. He who assigns the bounds of his habitation to every individual by the dispositions of a universal providence, cannot be supposed to have no concern or part in the appointment of his own Ministers. A bent, a disposition of mind to those serious engagements is often felt long before the

future ambassador of God possesses full qualifications for the office: and these may be wisely designed to turn the attention to the contemplation of its duties, and its awful responsibility; and to induce to a preparatory course of devotion and study, calculated to ensure the sanction of the church, and to promote future stability and usefulness. In this manner did our young friend, like Samuel, receive some early intimations of his future designation by God; and, like him, he felt the willing mind which answered the intimation by a ready and humble acquiescence."

During the year which Mr. Watson spent as a Supernumerary in Liverpool, the Rev. Robert Nicholson was his colleague, and lived in his family. His kindness and generosity to this excellent young man were unbounded. He assisted him in his studies; preached for him when he was able; allowed him the use of his library, and of his manuscripts, and gave him permission to copy what he pleased from them; and at the same time he admitted him to his personal confidence. He gave Mr. Nicholson an account of his early life; and declared his deep regret that he had ever left the Wesleyan Connexion. The concessions which were made by the Conference in the year 1797 he thought had removed all ground of just complaint, with regard to the administration of discipline; and that, therefore, the division which was made in the following year, when the New Connexion was formed, was unnecessary, and consequently unjustifiable. The practical workings of the two systems of ecclesiastical order he had now witnessed; and he gave a decided preference to that

of the Wesleyan body, as being in his judgment attended with more beneficial results, and as coming nearer to the New-Testament plan. In these views Mr. Nicholson concurred; and two years after he left the New Connexion, and offered himself to the Wesleyan Conference, by whom he was received as a fellow-labourer. When he was stationed with Mr. Watson, and they ingenuously disclosed to each other their opinions and feelings, he suggested to his gifted colleague that he should offer himself again to his old friends; but Mr. Watson replied that his infirm state of health, the circumstances connected with his former retirement, and the fact of his having a family, all rendered it improbable that such an offer would be accepted; he thought it better, therefore, for the present at least, to remain in the New Connexion, and to wait till the providence of God should more distinctly point out to him the path of duty. In the mean time he made no attempts to disturb the peace of the societies by any disclosure to them of his private sentiments, but did every thing in his power to promote their edification and prosperity. In the Conference, however, and in his intercourse with his brethren the Preachers, he did what he could to promote a spirit of moderation, and to neutralize the unhallowed effects of the division.

Comparative cessation from the labours of the pulpit was greatly beneficial to his health; and at length he was able to resume his ministry. He preached a course of sermons on the attributes of God, and a series of lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews; both of which were highly admired,

and rendered very profitable to his hearers. According to Mr. Nicholson's account, Mr. Watson was not accustomed, at this period, to write largely with a reference to the pulpit. He seldom committed to paper more than a concise outline of his discourses before their delivery, and often nothing at all. Yet his sermons were never rhapsodical and incoherent; but were well studied and arranged in his own mind. He generally prepared for the pulpit while pacing backwards and forwards in his room; and in this manner he was often employed for several hours together, absorbed in intense thought, his intelligent and expressive countenance varying with the deeply interesting subjects which passed successively through his mind. On one occasion especially, during this year, he gave a striking proof of his powers as a Preacher, and of the readiness with which he could meet any emergency in the course of his ministrations. While he was in the chapel, attending the worship of God on a Sunday morning, the steeple of a neighbouring church fell with a tremendous crash upon the congregation, and many lives were lost. He was deeply affected with this catastrophe; and his impressions were strengthened by the circumstance, that, not many minutes before it fell, he had walked close by this building on his way to the chapel, unconscious of danger. Believing, on the testimony of his Saviour, that the very hairs of his head were all numbered, he had not learned to inquire, in the language of infidel philosophy,

“ When the loose mountain trembles from on high,  
Shall gravitation cease if you go by ?

Or some old temple, nodding to its fall,  
For Chartres' head reserve the hanging wall?"

He felt that divine wisdom could form a thousand means of preserving human life in the circumstances referred to by the poet, even though gravitation should not be suspended. The man whose way lies in the direction of "the loose mountain," or of the "nodding temple," may be providentially led to hasten or delay his journey, or to travel in another direction, and thus escape the impending calamity. Had Mr. Watson's visit to the chapel been deferred only a few minutes, he would probably have shared the fate of the people who on that awful day were crushed to death. He therefore attributed his preservation to that divine interference without which not even a sparrow falls to the ground. As the time of the evening service advanced, Mr. Nicholson expressed a wish that Mr. Watson would address the congregation; and remarked that Luke xiii. 4, 5, would form a very appropriate subject of discourse: "Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Mr. Watson acceded to the proposal; and, with scarcely any time for premeditation, delivered to a crowded assembly one of the most impressive sermons ever heard from his lips. The fact is, that he possessed such a fulness of information on every subject connected with divinity, his thoughts flowed in such exact order, and he could command such a copiousness and power of expression, that he was almost constantly

prepared to preach on any occasion, however peculiar and difficult.

As the spring and summer advanced Mr. Watson's health continued to improve ; so that he was enabled with tolerable frequency to resume his labours in the pulpit ; and at the Conference which was held in June, he was appointed again to the Manchester Circuit, after an interval of four years. In the mean while the Circuit had been divided, so as to be confined within narrower limits, and to be more suited to the strength of a comparative invalid, than when he was last stationed there. In Manchester he was cordially received by his former friends, who were strongly attached to him because of his sociable qualities, and extraordinary abilities as a Preacher, now greatly improved by increased knowledge and piety. Here, as well as in Liverpool, several individuals belonging to the Wesleyan Connexion often availed themselves of his ministry. It was marked by such intelligence and originality, such a grasp of thought, such power of argument and persuasion, and was so evangelical and devotional, as to render it exceedingly attractive and edifying to such pious persons as were distinguished by taste and knowledge ; yet his congregations in general were not large, nor was he remarkably successful in the conversion of sinners to God. To him this was often a ground of painful discouragement. He cherished an intense desire to be useful ; he prayed without ceasing, and laboured with all his might to turn men from the power of Satan to God ; and often expressed his strong regret, in conversation with his intimate friends,



that he saw so little fruit of his ministry. Some, however, were brought by his instrumentality to a serious concern for their spiritual interests; and were led anxiously to inquire, "What must we do to be saved?" Yet he often remarked, in reference to himself and his brethren of the same community, that, whatever might be the cause, "a blight seemed to attend their labours."

A friend who regularly attended Mr. Watson's ministry at this period says, "His preaching was grand and prophetic. He seemed to look forward to the future success of the Gospel with the most triumphant confidence. There was something eminently panoramic and military in the scenes which he drew, and the figures which he employed to illustrate the events that should hereafter occur, with regard to the destruction of Christ's enemies, and the spread and influence of his truth. I well recollect his delivering a series of discourses from Hebrews xii. 18—24, which were highly interesting to me at the time. I believe the course consisted of seven or eight sermons. His stated congregation was small, and did not generally appear duly to appreciate the unparalleled excellence of his discourses. His appearance was sallow and unhealthy."

Mr. Watson was not satisfied with delivering the stated number of sermons required of him; though those sermons were such as few men beside himself could preach. He was anxious that the people to whom he ministered should understand the Scriptures; and as he had addressed a course of lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews to his congregation at Liverpool, so he delivered a

similar course, on the week-day evenings, upon the Epistle to the Ephesians, in a small chapel at Pendleton, near Manchester, to the great pleasure and edification of his hearers. His capacious mind delighted to contemplate the truths of divine revelation, in all their richness and amplitude. The doctrinal Epistles of St. Paul were exactly suited to his genius, and afforded full scope for the exercise of his judgment and imagination.

Reference has already been made to Mr. Watson's loyalty, and his confidence in the existing administration, to which he was very sincerely attached; but his regard for the person and government of the Sovereign, strong and decided as it was, did not render him indifferent to the liberty and rights of the subject. When these were endangered, he was among the first to raise the warning voice. Under the laws of religious toleration, passed in the reign of William and Mary, the persecuting propensities of violent men were restrained, the public tranquillity was secured, and religion had taken a firmer hold upon the lower and middling classes of society than at any former period of the national existence: In the year 1811 an attempt was made to innovate upon the toleration laws, and seriously to abridge the religious liberty of a large portion of the community. The plan was laid with consummate art; and for a season no serious evil was suspected, even by the men from whom it was intended to wrest their best and dearest rights. By the Act of William and Mary all Protestant teachers of religion who took the prescribed oaths were placed under the protection of law in their public minis-

trations ; and it was rendered imperative upon the Magistrate to administer the oaths whenever the parties made application for that purpose. The alteration intended was that of demanding, from every one who required a licence to preach, a certificate signed by "six substantial and reputable householders," specifying his competency and character. The ostensible reasons for this change were, that the ignorant and unwary might be guarded against the arts of designing men, and that the Dissenting ministry might be rendered more respectable ; but the real design was, to invest the Magistracy with the power of refusing licences at their option : for the terms "reputable" and "substantial," applied to the "householders" by whom all applicants for licences were to be recommended, were so vague and indefinite, that such Magistrates as were unfriendly to Dissenters could never be at a loss for a pretext to justify their refusal to administer the oaths whenever they pleased. The Magistrate was not made the direct judge of the Minister who appeared before him ; but he was made the judge of the property and character of the certifying "householders ;" and this circumstance gave him the power to harass and annoy, to an unlimited extent, all the Ministers who wished to enjoy the benefit of the Act of Toleration. At the same time, such persons as were not "householders,"—those who were poor, and therefore not "substantial,"—and all who had formerly been immoral in their lives, or who might be deemed fanatical, and therefore not "reputable,"—were to be at once cut off from all hope of obtaining such a ministry as they con-

scientifically preferred, unless it were in accordance with the views of the Magistrate, or secured to them by persons placed in more favourable circumstances than their own.

This measure was brought into Parliament by Lord Viscount Sidmouth, and in the first instance met with encouragement. It does not appear that his Lordship had any evil design in this procedure, or fully perceived its practical bearing. He seems rather to have been urged on by others, and to have been deceived by some Dissenters with whom he conversed, and who, like himself, did not see the real character and design of the project.

While this matter was pending, Mr. Watson's acquaintance with the Rev. Jabez Bunting commenced. They had both been preaching at Stockport one Sunday, and met on their way to Manchester in the evening; when Lord Sidmouth's Bill became the principal subject of conversation. They acknowledged that, if this Bill were to pass into a law, it would be ruinous to the Methodists, whose ministry is itinerant; and that it would be very injurious in its operation upon the Dissenters generally. The meeting of these two eminent men appeared to be casual; but subsequent events proved it to be one of those providential arrangements which forcibly impress every devout and observant mind. Their interview led to a pure and lasting friendship, from which great advantage was derived, both to themselves, and the cause of religion. Little did they then imagine that, in future years, they should be successfully associated together in plans of extensive usefulness, and especially in the furtherance of the Missionary cause.

At Mr. Bunting's request, Mr. Watson immediately wrote an able and stirring letter, which appeared in the "Manchester Exchange Herald," of May 23d, 1811, on the subject of Lord Sidmouth's Bill. At that time the Dissenters were not duly alive to the evils with which this measure was fraught; and a strong statement of the case was deemed necessary to rouse their opposition.

What effect this letter produced upon the persons to whom it was addressed, we know not; but the sound and practical view of the subject which Mr. Watson entertained was taken by the leading members of the Methodist and Dissenting bodies, who called upon their respective communities throughout the kingdom to petition the Legislature against this injurious project. In a few days the nation was in a ferment. Petitions in unexampled numbers were poured into Parliament; and the authors of the measure were glad to withdraw it, alleging that their designs were misunderstood. Some eminent personages in the established Church, with a most honourable liberality, expressed their disapprobation of the measure, when its real character was ascertained; and the Archbishop of Canterbury delivered an admirable speech in the House of Lords in favour of religious toleration, in which he also advised Lord Sidmouth to withdraw the obnoxious Bill then before Parliament. It is a natural consequence of such injudicious attempts at legislation, that they promote the cause which they are meant to suppress. The attention of those classes of His Majesty's subjects who enjoyed the benefit of the Act of Toleration was directed to that important statute; and it was

found to be inadequate to meet the exigencies of the times. Application was therefore made to the Legislature for another Act, more specific and comprehensive in its provisions, which was readily conceded ; so that the attempt to narrow the religious liberty which the Dissenters and Methodists enjoyed led to its greater extension ; and the rights of conscience claimed by these people were more distinctly recognised by the Legislature, and more effectually secured, than they had ever previously been. The excellent men who were concerned in drawing up the new Toleration Law contemplated its ultimate application to the various colonies of the empire ; and the Act of Parliament by which colonial slavery is abolished extends the benefits of this law to all the colonies where persecuting enactments had previously existed, and leaves nothing more to be desired with regard to liberty of conscience. Few things would have afforded Mr. Watson a richer gratification than to see religious liberty, in connexion with civil freedom, secured by law to the negroes in the West India islands ; called as he often was to sympathize with that degraded people under their persecutions and wrongs. But he finished his course before this glorious consummation was achieved by British justice and mercy.

At the Conference which was held in June, 1811, Mr. Watson was again appointed to the office of Secretary, and was returned a second year to the Manchester Circuit. He had not spent many months in the second year of his appointment to Manchester before his health again failed him. The bleeding of his lungs returned ; he was

unable to discharge the full duties of his office ; there was little probability that he would ever be able permanently to endure the labours of an itinerant ministry ; and as he had long been dissatisfied with the discipline of the Methodist New Connexion, and therefore unhappy in his union with that body, he tendered his resignation to the authorities in the Circuit, and removed to Liverpool ; where, after the lapse of a few months, he offered himself as a private member of society in the Wesleyan Connexion. Being providentially laid aside from his public ministry, and scarcely able to preach at all, he engaged himself at an annual salary to his friend Mr. Kaye, as the editor of the Liverpool Courier, and for other literary services. In retiring from the New Connexion Mr. Watson acted in accordance with the advice of some of his most intelligent and confidential friends belonging to that body, who thought that, with his views, he was likely to be both more happy and useful among his old associates, from whom he had formerly departed under the pressure of unkind treatment, and of strong temptation.

Mr. Watson's retirement from the Methodist New Connexion excited no surprise among those of his brethren who were intimate with him ; for they knew that it was the result of a serious and long-cherished conviction : and the manner in which he retired was every way worthy of his honourable mind. He had accepted an invitation to become a Preacher in that Connexion when he was exceedingly anxious to enter again upon the regular duties of the Christian ministry, when

every other door appeared to be closed against him, and when he had formed no settled opinions concerning church government. The discipline of the New Connexion, when he was first made acquainted with it, appears to have commanded his approbation; but when he saw the practical workings of the system, his views were changed, and it became in an increasing degree an object of his conscientious dislike. When he was unable to fulfil the duties of his ministry, he availed himself of the opportunity to retire from the body; but he made no attempt to disturb the tranquillity of the societies with which he was connected, or to influence any individual to follow his example. It was not with his brethren that he was dissatisfied, but with the system; and hence, after his secession, his affection for them suffered no abatement. This, indeed, might be expected from a man of his generous and upright character. They had received him into their body when he was in a great measure friendless and an outcast; they proposed to him on his admission no questions respecting his views of church government,—a subject to which his attention had never been seriously directed; and through the entire period of his union with them they had treated him with kindness and respect. They had placed him in almost every office of trust and honour, except that of President of the Conference; appointments had been selected for him adapted to his delicate health; and he had never been forced into the more extensive and laborious Circuits in which many of his brethren toiled in the midst of great hardships and privations. It would be easy to



enter into detail on the subject of Mr. Watson's dissatisfaction with the plan and order of the Methodist New Connexion; but this, it is conceived, is not necessary. He felt that the discipline of that body interferes with the rights and duties of the pastoral office. While he was under its power he said to his friend Mr. Burdsall, "It is a great evil to be Priest-ridden; but a still greater to be ridden by the people. When they get upon a Preacher's back, they ride him to death." Yet after his return to the Wesleyan body he rarely adverted to this subject in his intercourse even with his most intimate friends; and he never mentioned it in the spirit of angry vituperation.

When Mr. Watson left the New Connexion, so far was he from "seeking great things" of a worldly nature for "himself," that he was thrown entirely upon the care of divine Providence; for he had made no arrangements whatever for admission into the Wesleyan itinerancy. Had his health been good, it was uncertain whether the Wesleyan Conference would receive him; and there was little probability that a sickly man, with a wife and two children,—a man bearing marks of consumption and decay,—could be so admitted as to have for himself and his family a permanent claim upon the funds of the Connexion. In taking this important step, therefore, secular motives were out of the question. He resigned a certain income for that which was contingent. His prospects in regard of temporal things were dark and unpromising; but a wise and merciful Providence was guiding him into paths of usefulness of which neither he nor his friends had any conception.

He obeyed the dictates of his understanding and conscience, in the simplicity and integrity of his heart, trusting in God; and in the subsequent years of his life the immensely important services which he was called to render the cause of Christianity both at home and abroad, and the wonderful success with which it pleased the Head of the church to crown his pious exertions, demonstrate that he followed the right course. In reference to his intended return to the Wesleyan body, he was often heard to say, "If I have once done wrong, I ought fearlessly, as to the opinions of others, to do that which I now believe to be right."

The following extracts of letters, which he addressed to one of his friends in Manchester, who still remained in the Methodist New Connexion, will show the kind and affectionate spirit which he continued to cherish towards individuals belonging to that body, and the Christian temper in which he had resigned his office among them. The first is not dated; but both were written within a few months of his removal to Liverpool.

TO MR. ABSALOM WATKIN, MANCHESTER.

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

To be useful, we must be faithful. If we give, we must receive. From an empty vessel none can drink; and a full one would soon become empty without supplies. "I will bless thee," said Jehovah to Abraham, "and thou shalt be a blessing." Let us, then, attend to personal piety, as the rock of our own souls, and active agents in promoting the good of others; and let studies, friendships, books, and pleasures, be all

regulated by this end. "Let us," says good Mr. Baxter, "esteem the creature only as it comes from God, or brings some report of his love."

I have been greatly pleased in reading Dr. Isaac Barrow's theological works. He writes philosophy like a Divine; and divinity like a philosopher. He paints morality with as elegant a pencil as Blair, allowing for the style of the age; and he has yet the evangelical views of Baxter; but he is not so practical, nor so hortatory.

TO THE SAME.

LIVERPOOL, *July 3d*, 1812.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

HAD you favoured me with a statement of the doubts of which you complain, I might have attempted to remove them; though the attempt would have had in it more of friendship than ability. As you have not, I can only glance at the subject generally. I will, however, notice first your query as to the writers mentioned by Paley. The paraphrase of Clarke has, doubtless, some of the peculiar excellencies of that great man; but to me a paraphrase is the most unsatisfactory mode of exposition. You have much sacrificed to the rhythm of the sentence; and words of no very definite meaning are often resorted to, to fill up the measure. A text has not unaptly been compared to milk; a paraphrase, to milk and water. Clarke, however, gives the narrative in neat language, has some happy expositions of passages; but loses, as I think, the true spirit of many more; and cannot be greatly desirable to a person who

possesses Campbell and Macknight. With Collier I am unacquainted; but Taylor's "Key" opens the wrong door. You may conceive how an Arian, of a confirmed class, would explain the doctrine of justification by faith in a vicarious sacrifice, which is the subject of the Apostle Paul's discussion in the Epistle to the Romans. That there are many useful things in that work, cannot but be the case; for Taylor had both a vigorous and a cultivated mind; but he puzzles what is sufficiently difficult. I despair of meeting with a solution of every difficult passage in that Epistle; but should I be so fortunate, it will not, I am persuaded, be from lights obtained from the author of the "Key to the Romans."

"He that never doubted never believed," says one; and if previous doubts give an energy to faith, you, I trust, will be a strong believer. Doubts on the doctrines of our religion are of two kinds: doubts which respect the doctrines themselves; and doubts which relate to their minuter details; or, as you study logic, doubts either as to the substance, or the mode; speaking in some sense figuratively. For instance: A person may admit the doctrine of atonement; and doubt as to the quality of the sacrifice, or the extent of its benefits, or the conditions of its application. With doubts of the first kind you have happily little to do; perhaps not much with those of the second; and your doubts may rather be an indistinctness of conception, than a refusal of assent. That it is infinitely desirable to possess a luminous conception of the dictates of eternal truth, is indisputable. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," is the injunction of an Apostle. Two considerations ought, however, to prevent such an indistinctness of conception from distressing us, though none are to be assigned why it should not humble us. The first is, that clearness beyond the fact that such is the mind of the Holy Spirit, in many of his revealed doctrines, is not to be expected. We see them but as the sun through a mist. We doubt not the fact of his appearance, though we cannot define the object. It is radiance mixed and muddy; but it is still a glory above that of the moon and stars,—the lesser luminaries of human science. The fog is not around the luminary, except in our eye; he shines bright and unclouded in his native heaven. So it is not the doctrines of Christ which are dim, but the atmosphere of our understandings. That a human mind should labour when the "judgments," the thoughts of an infinite mind are revealed, is not surprising: they are subjects which "angels desire to look into," and which are to exercise the faculties of glorified humanity forever. If that be to doubt, we doubt as angels do. But, to pursue my figure,—what benighted traveller is there who would not rejoice in the return of day, though it should not bring "a morning without clouds?"

The second consideration is, that much of our present confusion of apprehension will give way before investigation, provided it be conducted in prayer, and with a disposition to do the will of God. "If any man do his will," says our Lord, "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." How incom-

plete were your views, some time ago, of the economy of the human frame! But the lectures you have heard have taken you, step by step, into all the arcana of anatomy. Let us begin any science whatever, and insuperable difficulties seem to start up to forbid a future approach; but they are overcome by patient labour. Let not the Undergraduate grieve that he has not the knowledge of the Doctor;—the Doctor was once an Undergraduate;—and let him rather believe his improvement possible, and ply his task, than throw away his books in pettishness, dissatisfied that he knows not that by intuition which God hath made to depend upon comparison and induction.

Suffer me, however, a little further. We venerate Bacon and Boyle, the fathers of the experimental philosophy; we are disciples of Newton and of Davy, because they are experimentalists; we give up the system-builders, who form the foundation and the superstructure both out of the figments of their own fancy. Let us not be less philosophers in religion. Take the test of experiment here. What doctrines or interpretations bring us nearest to God, satisfy the cravings of sanctified desire most fully, ameliorate the heart, inspire devotion, and amend the life, in the highest degree? Here is the true rule of interpretation: and its application operates in two ways; and each in our favour. It is satisfactory, as the proof of all we know; for that only we know in religion which we prove in application: and it strengthens the intellectual powers, wings them for new flights, and directs the flight itself. In proportion as we are renewed in the image of God, we are “renewed

in knowledge,"—one part of the image of "the only wise God."

While these letters display an affectionate interest in the mental and spiritual improvement of his correspondents, they demonstrate that Mr. Watson had not separated from his friends with any hostile feelings; and that they still regarded him with affection and confidence. The same kind and improving correspondence he carried on after his appointment to a Circuit as an Itinerant Wesleyan Minister. For these letters, and some other documents illustrative of this period of Mr. Watson's life, the reader is indebted to the Rev. William Shuttleworth, of the Methodist New Connexion, who enjoyed Mr. Watson's friendship, and still cherishes his memory. Many years after he had left that body, Mr. Watson showed his regard for this excellent man by presenting to him some of his publications; and Mr. Shuttleworth, with a promptitude and zeal which cannot be too strongly commended, at the request of the writer of these memoirs, obtained from Mr. Watson's correspondents, and other persons, much valuable information concerning his deceased friend, by which the narrative is greatly enriched. It is gratifying to see Christian men, while they differ from each other in opinion, cherishing that charity which is the soul of all true religion.

The specimens of Mr. Watson's correspondence, with the short extracts from his other literary compositions, now before the reader, show that at this period of his life he had acquired a style at once easy, elegant, and forcible; and a considerable

acquaintance with various branches of knowledge, philosophic and political, as well as with the science of divinity, to the study of which he was more especially devoted.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Mr. Watson became a private member of the Wesleyan society in Liverpool, he attended the weekly meetings of his class with exemplary diligence, and was a pattern of piety, and of conformity to rule. On his admission into the society he remarked, with deep feeling, that for the first time during the last eleven years his mind was then fully at rest. He had never been truly happy during the period of his alienation from the Wesleyan body. He was soon accepted as a Local Preacher; and, as his general health improved, and the bleeding of his lungs subsided, he occasionally occupied the Wesleyan pulpits, both in Liverpool and the surrounding country; and his preaching was universally admired. With the Ministers then stationed in Liverpool,—the Rev. Messrs. Entwisle, West, Gaulter, and Buckley,—he had frequent intercourse: they heard him preach; and were compelled to admire the strength and elegance of his mind, his devotional spirit, and sound theological principles. He had little hope of ever being able again to resume his itinerant labours, when he settled in Liverpool; but those who knew him best were assured that if his health should in any competent degree be restored



he would again fully devote himself to the Christian ministry. This he felt to be his especial calling; and no pleasure was equal to that which he experienced in preaching Christ, and him crucified. Perceiving that he was eminently qualified for extensive usefulness, the Ministers just mentioned united in requesting him to offer himself to the Conference, and again to take his place in the Wesleyan itinerancy. Mr. Bunting, who had been previously acquainted with him, and well knew his worth, visited Liverpool at the time, and earnestly joined in the solicitation. Mr. Watson at length consented, and was recommended to the District-Meeting, and afterwards to the Conference, by whom he was very cordially received. The errors of his youth were buried in oblivion; the men who had formerly taken part against him, and had been a means of separating him from the Connexion, uttered not a word against his re-admission; for his character, both as a man of God, and a good Minister of Jesus Christ, was established; and without subjecting him to any further probation, he was placed in the circumstances in which he stood, when, eleven years before, he left his work in the Hinckley Circuit. In surrendering himself to the disposal of the Conference, Mr. Watson greatly disappointed the hopes of his friend Mr. Kaye, who calculated upon his valuable literary labours; and he was far from consulting his own secular advantage. Considering his powers as a writer, he might, according to all human probability, have realized property to a considerable amount, had he devoted his exclusive attention to literature. Overtures of a very flat-

tering nature were made to him at this crisis by persons in authority, if he would remove to London, and employ his pen in the public service: but his Lord called him to labour in the word and doctrine; and he had felt too severely the consequences of disobedience to that voice in his earlier years, to hesitate for one moment whether he should devote his life to the Christian ministry, or to any other pursuit, when his strength was adequate to the task. Never did the Wesleyan Conference receive into its communion a Minister of greater and more useful talents, or of more sound and enlightened piety; and never was a Methodist Preacher more ardently attached to his brethren, and to the doctrines and order of the body, than Mr. Watson, from the time of his re-admission in the year 1812, to the end of his days.

The following notices concerning his re-union with the Wesleyan body are supplied by the Rev. Messrs. Entwisle and Buckley. The former of these esteemed Ministers says, "Soon after his re-admission into our society, I prevailed on him to preach in my stead at Mount-Pleasant chapel, Liverpool. His text was Psalm xii. 6: 'The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.' The depth and originality of thought displayed in this sermon, combined with an elevated style, Christian simplicity, and perspicuity, accompanied by his usual solemnity of manner and divine unction, deeply impressed my mind; while I was favoured with such views of 'the words of the Lord' as I never had before. Perceiving that his health improved, and persuaded that his weigh of talent

and deep piety would render him an acquisition to our Connexion, and a blessing to the world, I proposed to him to allow me to recommend him to the ensuing Conference, my worthy colleagues concurring with me in judgment. After due deliberation and prayer he consented to my proposal. I reflect on this event with pleasure; and thank God that I was in any degree instrumental in restoring to our body one who has been so eminently useful."

"Of the purity of his motives, and the integrity of his heart, in the arrangements connected with his return to our itinerancy," says Mr. Buckley, "perhaps no one could have a more perfect knowledge, or be a more impartial judge, than myself; the event passing under my immediate and minute observation, and being not unfrequently the subject of the most unreserved conversation."

When Mr. Watson was received by the Conference, he was appointed to the Wakefield Circuit, under the superintendency of his friend Mr. Buckley, who had moved his acceptance in the Conference. With as little delay as possible he repaired to his appointment, and entered upon his labours. The situation in which he was now placed was in perfect accordance with his conscientious convictions, and his youthful habits. The recollection of his early and joyous labours as an Itinerant Preacher occurred to his mind with a delightful freshness and power to which he had long been a stranger; and he discharged his official duties with superior fidelity and affection; while his intelligence and social temper endeared him to all who enjoyed his friendship. He was especially

intimate with some families in Wakefield: and their admiration of his virtues and attachment to his person were unbounded, and continued without any abatement to the end of his life.

What he was as a colleague and a Preacher at this period, the following statements by Mr. Buckley declare:—"We entered upon our work with much cordiality and affection; and met together every Saturday, to review the occurrences of the past week, and devise measures with relation to the future; uniting in prayer for divine direction, and the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, that the word of the Lord might have free course and be glorified. These meetings were attended with many advantages; affording assistance in the choice of subjects, and in our preparations for the pulpit; in carrying plans of discipline into practical effect; and greatly tending to promote the unity of the Spirit. I had occasionally an opportunity of hearing my friend preach. His sermons were not always what are called great; greatness appeared to bend to the profit of a particular class of his hearers; yet that might be said of every one of his sermons which a Scottish Professor once said of a discourse delivered by Mr. Wesley: 'If it was not a masterly sermon, none but a master could have preached it.' There appeared in him occasionally an energy which was capable of the most lofty flights. His style appeared to me to be correct, energetic, chaste, and harmonious; his manner was grave and solemn, such as becomes the pulpit; his subjects were well chosen, being generally the great doctrines of the Gospel, which he supported by cogent and irrefragable arguments,

and adorned and illustrated by elegant and choice metaphors ; the whole flowing from a heart sanctified by the grace and truth of God. His ministry, however, did not at first attract that attention in the Wakefield Circuit which might have been expected, and which it so justly deserved, except among the more discerning and intelligent persons belonging to the several congregations."

It was in the autumn of the year 1812, and soon after Mr. Watson's arrival in the Wakefield Circuit, that the writer of this narrative became acquainted with him. He came to Halifax, to preach at the re-opening of the Methodist chapel in that town, after it had undergone considerable enlargement, which had been rendered necessary principally in consequence of the very efficient ministry of Mr. Bunting, then stationed there. The writer had often heard Mr. Watson mentioned, as a man of extraordinary talents, but he had no adequate conception of his powers as a Christian Preacher. He went to hear him at Halifax on the Sunday evening : and the impression made upon his mind by that sermon will never be effaced. More than twenty years have elapsed since its delivery ; but the recollection of it is as distinct and vivid as ever. It displayed such a grasp of thought, a force of reasoning, and splendour of illustration, and at the same time was so rich in Christian sentiment and pious feeling, as to produce an almost overwhelming sensation of wonder and delight. With the truths which were then inculcated he had long been familiar ; but they were placed by Mr. Watson in a light so new and striking, and enforced by an array of argument so

powerful and convincing, and presented in a garb so beautiful and attractive, as to awaken a class of feelings of which the hearer seemed to have been previously unconscious. The sermon was the loftiest display of intellect and eloquence he had ever witnessed. The text was, "The children which thou shalt have.....shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell;" (Isaiah xlix. 20;) and the subject of the discourse was the enlargement of the Christian church. After stating the nature of that enlargement, and showing that it consists in the accession to the body of believers of individuals converted from the error of their way, saved from sin by faith in Jesus Christ, and made spiritual worshippers of God, he proceeded to speak of the enlargement of the church in three distinct views: as the fulfilment of prophecy,—a proof that there is a divine agency at work in the earth,—and a source of joy to good men. On the subject of that divine influence by which the Gospel is rendered the instrument of salvation, and men are made new creatures, his remarks were particularly valuable and striking. He combated the reasonings of Gibbon, who attempted to account for the early propagation of Christianity, independently of all divine interposition, and characterized that celebrated sceptic as "eloquent in error." In proving the reality of the influence in question, he argued from that uniformity by which all true conversions are distinguished. Under whatever circumstances men are converted to the religion of Christ, and in whatever part of the world, though their feelings may vary in intensity,

those feelings are substantially the same. In all genuine converts there is the same hatred to sin, the same penitential sorrow, the same desire after pardon and purity, the same absolute reliance upon the sacrifice of Christ, the same love to God and man, the same delight in devotion, indifference to the world, careful avoidance of sin, and hope of a blessed immortality. The perfect sameness of the work, he contended, demonstrates the oneness of the agent by whom it is accomplished; and the holy and beneficial nature of the work proves that its author is divine. He remarked, further, that the enlargement of the church always takes place in connexion with the inculcation of a certain set of doctrines; such as the fall of man, the atonement of Christ, justification by faith, regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost, and the necessity of personal holiness. When these doctrines are faithfully and prayerfully enforced in the Christian pulpit, the church is enlarged; when they are denied, or withheld from the people, by those who minister in holy things, the church is either stationary, or declines both in spirituality and number. No open sinners are brought to repentance; no broken heart is healed by the consolations of pardon; and no persons of profligate character are sanctified to God. The Holy Spirit sets his seal to "the truth as it is in Jesus," and makes it the effectual means of salvation; but he will not put the same honour upon the powerless reasonings of the mere apostles of moral virtue, with whatever elegance of diction those reasonings may be enforced. It is only the doctrine of "Christ crucified" that is "the wisdom of God, and the power

of God." "Suppose a piece of complex machinery submitted to your inspection," said Mr. Watson, "the nature and construction of which you are unable to comprehend. Should you see a certain pressure applied to a particular part, and then perceive that the whole was immediately put into beautiful and harmonious motion; when that pressure was withdrawn, were the motion instantly to cease, and were the same results invariably to take place whenever the experiments were repeated, you would, of course, infer that the motion depended upon that particular pressure." From this illustration he took occasion to show the established connexion which subsists between a truly evangelical ministry, and those spiritual and moral results which it is the great end of Christianity to produce; a connexion which is demonstrated by the entire history of the Christian church, and especially by every revival of true religion. It was manifest that a man who could deliver such a sermon as this was eminently qualified to instruct the world through the medium of the press; and, in a conversation with him after the conclusion of the service, the writer inquired of him whether he had ever turned his attention to authorship; and Mr. Watson answered, "I have never published any thing of consequence, except a political pamphlet in reply to Mr. Roscoe, of Liverpool; nor have I the slightest wish to be distinguished as an author. That is a subject to which my thoughts have never been directed."

The conclusion of this year was to Mr. Watson a season of solemn interest. His father, who then resided at Nottingham, had arrived at the age



of threescore years and ten, and was labouring under a dropsical complaint, the fatal effects of which were daily expected. Mr. Watson's own health was so extremely delicate, that he was unable to visit his dying parent; and, indeed, it appeared to be sometimes a matter of doubt whether the son would not first enter into the world of spirits. In this enfeebled state, suspended between life and death, and uncertain which scale would preponderate, he addressed the following letter to his afflicted father. It displays, in a very striking light, the strength of his filial affection, and his intense solicitude for the spiritual interests of one so nearly related to him.

WAKEFIELD, *Nov. 12th, 1812.*

MY DEAREST FATHER,

AFTER having had many anxious thoughts concerning you, I was just sitting down to write to you, when I received my sister's letter. I notice in it your desire to see me; and be assured that I am anxious also to see you; and if I can do so, I will. Our confinement in the Circuit is, however, great; and I am very unfit for a journey, owing to my remaining very poorly; being subject to sudden bilious attacks, so that sometimes I know not but I may even escape before you into the world of spirits.

For myself, afflictions have been good, very good for me; and I bless God for them. He corrects like a Father; and severe diseases require severe remedies. Happy for us, if the divine Physician does not administer in vain! I have not forgotten you at a throne of grace. Every

time I bow my knees I entreat God to bestow his supporting, saving, and comforting grace upon my dear parent; and I trust that I have not joined my feeble prayers to yours in vain. Again I would say, that God has a good purpose to accomplish in your affliction, and therefore entreat him to perform his work of salvation fully. You are in the furnace; and it afflicts me to hear that the dispensation is so severe, and the fire so hot; yet, if the stubborn dross of our sins cannot be otherwise separated from our souls, all is mercy still. "I will sit as a refiner's fire," saith the Lord; and it is comfortable to reflect that he does sit by and watch the operation. Yet, with submission to his will, it cannot be wrong to pray that he would mitigate your sufferings, make for you a smoother road to the house appointed for all living, or so increase your inward strength and comforts, that the soul may become less sensible to the pains of the body, and that you, like dying martyrs, may shout and triumph in the flame itself.

I trust that you are satisfied, as to your acceptance with God; nay, that you can rejoice in the full assurance of his love revealed to you by his Holy Spirit. Be determined to obtain this; for there is no other ground of safety and happiness than an application of the blood of atonement to our consciences, taking away the guilt of sin, and the condemning power of the law. It is to be received by an act of faith. Be persuaded that Christ is able to bless you with this full and glorious comfort *now*, and venture your whole upon him: wait every moment for the evidence that the work is done, till faith, and joy, and praise

spring up in your heart. This would be necessary, were you in health ; but now the time is short, and more than commonly uncertain. O wrestle like Jacob, till you obtain the blessing!

In like manner proceed to obtain the full sanctification of your nature. It is not death, but grace, that must destroy our sins, and make us meet for heaven. Have faith in the promise of the Father to send the Holy Spirit in all the power he exerted in the day of Pentecost, to burn up the very root of corruption, and fill you in a moment with all the love and power of God, making you one with Christ, and an entirely new creature.

By the same acts of praying faith expect perfect patience, peace, and love to be wrought in your mind, that you may come up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and spring up a mature Christian, saying, "Not my will, but thine be done."

The language of Mr. Charles Wesley on his death-bed may be suitable to your case :—

"In age and feebleness extreme,  
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?  
Jesus, my all in all thou art,  
Strength of my failing flesh and heart;  
O might I catch a smile from thee,  
And drop into eternity!"

You are indeed in affliction, as a "leaf before the wind;" but there is a merciful and compassionate High Priest, who knows how to succour you, being tempted and tried like unto you. O cast yourself at his feet! Tell him you have heard of his compassions, and wait to prove them. Tell him that you are nothing, can do nothing, and

wait to prove him to be your all in all. Have large and high thoughts of the boundless mercy of God ; for though we have sinned grievously, and awfully neglected his salvation, he is the Saviour still. He hateth putting away, and delighteth in mercy. He still spreads, to receive us, arms of mercy ; and his voice is, "Come unto me ; for I came to seek and save that which was lost." O may you and I, and all of us,

" To his arms of mercy fly,  
Find our lasting quiet there."

I sympathize with my mother. The Lord support and bless her with his favour and strength !

I am your affectionate son,  
R. WATSON.

The venerable sufferer, to whom this pious letter was addressed, died on the 27th of November.

After Mr. Watson's appointment to the Wakefield Circuit, he continued his kind and improving correspondence with two of his friends in Manchester, belonging to the Methodist New Connexion. The following extracts from his letters are worth preserving, for the light which they cast upon his character and history, and the valuable sentiments which they contain. A considerable part of the first letter was written in Latin, and relates to certain peculiarities of expression in that language, in the study of which he was actively engaged.

TO MR. MAKINSON, OF MANCHESTER.

SINCE virtue operates as a preservative of friendship, it is a rational act in each of us to promote our mutual piety. Permit me, therefore, to com-

mend to your serious attention something which I have lately found to be useful to myself. The Apostle Paul delineates the perfect image of a Christian in these words: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." I take this as my standard of examination every night; and try myself as to the fervour of my "love" to God and man; the "peace" and tranquillity of my passions; the spirituality of my "joys;" my "long-suffering" and long forbearance with untoward persons, as God has long borne with me; my "gentleness," courtesy of spirit and behaviour;—for the Gospel does that as to the manners which all the maxims of Lord Chesterfield cannot effect; as the Apostle in another place also says, "Be courteous," I find courtesy to be a part of the religion of Christ;—my "goodness," active benevolence, in what I have imitated the unwearied goodness of Him who is ever giving; recollecting, too, that we then become most like Him when we impart much and want little;—"faith," fidelity, or trust; for this I take to be the meaning of the word here, though I would not confine it to this explication;—"meekness," freedom from unlawful anger;—"temperance," the government of the senses and of the imagination. In applying this standard, ah! how low have I sunk! and when brought to this touchstone, how base and alloyed the metal! Yet is it infinitely better to know our defects, though the discovery be painful, than to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. Let God be praised that, by his grace, we approach at all to this description; and may He who can

fulfil in us all the good pleasure of his will answer our prayers to this effect, and answer them speedily!

I should have finished my letter in Latin, however bald, but that I had delayed so long, and was afraid you should have the shadow of a cause to charge me with neglect: but let your reply be all Roman. I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you in a few weeks, but cannot fix the time; probably at Easter, as I shall, God willing, assist in opening a new chapel at Armley, near Leeds, on Easter Monday. I have done very little in Hebrew, but have not wholly neglected it. I find, upon summoning up what I learned, that I can translate with tolerable facility by the help of the lexicon.

The opening of the new chapel at Armley, here anticipated by Mr. Watson, was a memorable occasion. The village was large and populous; the chapel spacious; the Methodist society in the place numerous and spirited; and the religious services, which were well attended, were exceedingly interesting and impressive. Mr. Bunting preached in the afternoon, on the apostolical commission, Mark xvi. 15, 16; and Mr. Watson, in the morning and evening. In the morning his text was, "Ye are come unto mount Sion;" (Heb. xii. 22;) from which he gave a most edifying and instructive description of the Christian dispensation, typified by the services of the Jewish sanctuary; and in the evening he preached on, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth."

(Psalm cx. 3.) After a concise introduction, in which he showed that these words have no reference to the doctrine of irresistible grace, in support of which they have so often been quoted, he proceeded to speak of converts to the faith in Christ, whom he described as numerous as dew-drops in the morning,—clad in the beautiful armour of holiness,—marshalled by the great Captain of their salvation,—and led forth by him to glorious war against the ignorance, superstition, and wickedness of the world. That world he represented as “in the wicked one;” and gave a most appalling view of the influence and dominion of Satan over the unenlightened and unregenerate part of mankind. Among them education, commerce, legislation, literature, and even religion, are impregnated with evil. All this evil was to be counteracted and overthrown by the Christian church, acting under the direction of the Lord, and in the power of his might. Upon the mind of every serious and attentive hearer the entire discourse left a deep and permanent impression of the power of Satan, the wretched and perilous state of unholy men, and the obligations of Christians to use every exertion, both unitedly and in their individual capacity, to promote the interests of true religion. The sermon was calculated to excite the highest admiration of the Preacher’s abilities; but that feeling was lost in commiseration for mankind, the conviction of personal duty and responsibility, regrets for past neglect, and the desire to do something for the advancement of the Christian cause.

The following is an extract from a letter, addressed to the same friend, and, like the former, written

partly in Latin. It is highly characteristic of Mr. Watson's views of the comparative value of Christianity and philosophy.

“My letter was interrupted by my being called to visit an old follower of Jesus Christ ; but, being returned, I resume my pen. I have been much profited by the interview. I have been not to instruct, but to be instructed. For some years I have not seen the dying hours of even a good man so much honoured. One of his expressions was, ‘Days, weeks, and months have rolled round during my affliction ; and I have scarcely known the night from the day, nor the day from the night : so rapidly and joyfully have the hours escaped me. I have felt nothing but joy and love. Not for a moment have I been impatient, nor weary, nor wished it otherwise with me ; so marvellously has God wrought in me. This is the hand of God. This never grew in nature’s soil. Glory, glory be to God ! Not unto me, but to his name be the glory.’ On my saying that the reasons for his heavy afflictions being permitted would be fully explained hereafter, he said, eagerly, ‘God is explaining them to me now. I do not wait for light. All is clear. Wondrously does he work in me every moment ; and make every thought praise and prayer.’ Now, what would an infidel say to this ? Lord, give me this religion, and let the world have its philosophy.”

The probability is, that the afflicted person here referred to was Matthew Shackleton, who is well known to have been a favourite character with Mr. Watson. This poor man, who was a Local Preacher, and lived in the neighbourhood of



Wakefield, was a weaver, far advanced in life, and had been sickly from his boyhood. He was diminutive in size; his labour was often interrupted by illness; his earnings were therefore small and uncertain; and had it not been for the kindness of his friends, his privations and sufferings would have been severe. His spirit was naturally buoyant, his understanding vigorous and acute, and his piety deep and cheerful. Mr. Watson delighted much in the society and conversation of this good man; and often remarked, that, had he been favoured with a regular education, and been placed in other circumstances, he would, in all probability, have been one of the first metaphysicians of the age. With him it was an admitted principle, which he frequently repeated, especially in reference to his own afflictions, that "God is doing the best he can for every body:" regarding, of course, the operations of omnipotent goodness and mercy as always under the restraint and direction of infinite holiness, justice, and truth. Mr. Watson often ministered to the necessities of this intelligent and holy man, admiring in him the power and excellence of vital godliness. He died in the joyous faith and hope of the Gospel a few years after Mr. Watson had left the Wakefield Circuit.

TO MR. ABSALOM WATKIN, OF MANCHESTER.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I THANK you for your letter; and hope that, whatever delays may occur in my answers, they may be attributed to any thing but indifference to a friendship I shall ever value. I am happy to

find that you feel an increasing pleasure and profit in the duties of the ministry. That employment gives an object to our studies, is a guard upon our conduct ; and, by a law of grace, as necessary in its operation as any law of nature, increases grace and knowledge by communicating them, as long as it is performed in a right spirit. Go on, then, in this good work ; and may God prosper you. You seem, however, to me, to be in a kind of bondage, from the views you have of the extensive knowledge requisite for a Preacher. If you had said, "for a Divine, or for a Preacher to learned audiences," the observation would have been more just ; but for a useful Methodist Preacher extensive theological knowledge is not necessary. Good sense and piety are our grand requisites : the one to be applied to understand the fundamental doctrines of experimental godliness ; and the other, to preach them with zeal, and the demonstration of the Spirit. With these qualifications you may boldly go forth ; for with these only the most of us have gone forth, and have been successful. I do not make this remark with the intention of scouting the honourable ambition you feel to become a Divine ; but to endeavour to quicken your natural backwardness, and to induce you, by a friendly hint, to break through the temptation, that till you know more theology you are unfit to preach. It is true, if we intend publicly to enter into the difficulties of divinity, much learning will be requisite to conduct us honourably through our undertaking ; but these are subjects rather fitted for the press than the pulpit, where the plainest truths, expressed in the plainest manner, will be found most

useful. Let us, nevertheless, most deeply and extensively study the whole of revelation, but not in every particular with a view to the pulpit. We may be relatively ignorant, and yet neither unwise nor unprofitable Preachers. This distinction has often relieved my mind, and it may yours; but I never considered it as an apology for sloth. As a proof of this, I am so convinced of my ignorance, that I have begun the study of divinity with new ardour; and, if that can be a motive, with conscious shame.

Your observations upon cheerfulness and gloom demand consideration, and may form a profitable subject of conversation when we meet. At present, it strikes me as a good rule, to consider the effect of both upon our duties in the closet; and thus to judge whether in either we have gone to an extreme. To be cheerful without being light, grave and not sad, is an attainment of no ordinary value. Perhaps the best way is to "be always employed, and never triflingly employed;" and, when we meet our friends, to cultivate a disposition to converse on many different subjects, but all useful ones.

It is just three months since I had the pleasure of your company. How fleet is time!

*Truditur dies die,  
Novæque pergunt interire luna.\**

HORACE.

Well, let them wax and wane. We haste into

\* "Day presses on the heels of day,  
And moons increase to their decay."

FRANCIS.

eternity, to immortal joys ; a holy society ; to a purified, exalted, and never-ending friendship.

TO THE SAME.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR view of the office of Christ, as administering the kingdoms of nature, providence, and grace, is, in my opinion, supported by the whole of Scripture ; and though not, as you suspect, an original thought, is not much insisted upon by theologians. It has long been a favourite topic with me ; and I have occasionally expressed it incidentally in preaching. To me the second Person in the Trinity appears to be the acting God of the Old Testament, ruling over Jews and Gentiles in virtue of his anticipated passion, of which this rule was the reward as to him, and an act of mercy as to the world. The following passages, among many others, support the doctrine :—" All things were created by him, and for him ;" " All things are put under him ;" " He is appointed heir of all things ;" " The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son ;" " Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." And the sublime scenery of the Revelation represents " the Lamb " as destroying his enemies, and plaguing the nations, as well as supporting his church. These great and consolatory truths result from the doctrine. The world is governed in united mercy and

justice, being in the hands of a Mediator; the revolutions of nations have a bearing upon the spread of Gospel truth; the dispensations of Providence, both as to nations and individuals, are subservient to, or move in conjunction with, purposes of grace. The field of reflection is very wide.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

ON completing his first year in the Wakefield Circuit, Mr. Watson attended the Conference in Liverpool, which was held in July and August, 1813. This was a memorable period in the history of Methodism; and the events connected with this annual assembling of the Wesleyan Ministers gave a peculiar direction to his future character and labours. Up to that time the Methodist Missions were mostly confined to the West Indies, and the British settlements in North America; and they were carried on under the general superintendence of the Rev. Dr. Coke, by whom the requisite pecuniary supplies for their support were principally raised. After crossing the Atlantic Ocean no less than eighteen times, for objects connected with religion, that zealous Minister of Christ meditated a voyage to the east, intending to form Missions in the island of Ceylon, and in Java. Considering his advanced age,—for he was then in his sixty-seventh year,—the want of funds, and the need of his services in the management of the Missions already established, several of his brethren attempted to dissuade him from the arduous

enterprise; but his heart was set upon the work, and their reasonings and entreaties were unavailing. Perceiving that his arguments failed to convince them, he burst into tears; and exclaimed, "If you will not let me go, you will break my heart!" When they saw that, so deep was his conviction of duty, he could not be induced to alter his design, they repeated the sentiment which had been long before uttered on a somewhat similar occasion, "The will of the Lord be done." (Acts xxi. 14.)

As soon as the Conference was over, Dr. Coke began to make preparation for his voyage to India; and, having taken leave of his friends in England, he embarked in December, 1813, accompanied by the Rev. Messrs. Clough, Harvard, Ault, Erskine, Squance, Lynch, and M'Kenny. In the mean while, the friends of the Wesleyan Missions perceived that a responsibility devolved upon them which they had not previously felt; and that new and extraordinary exertions were necessary to meet this additional expense, as well as to support the Missions which had long been in useful operation. The Preachers had generally made an annual collection for Missionary purposes in their several Circuits; and Dr. Coke had been accustomed to visit the principal societies in England and Ireland, pleading the cause, with an ardour peculiar to himself, both from the pulpit, and from door to door. By these means a sum amounting to somewhat more than six thousand pounds was yearly placed at his disposal, to be applied chiefly in negro instruction; the spiritual necessities and temporal sufferings of the slaves in the West

Indies exciting in those times a deep sympathy whenever they were pressed upon the public attention. The moneys hitherto raised were scarcely sufficient to meet the expenditure; that expenditure was greatly increased by the Mission to India; a debt of six thousand pounds had been only recently liquidated by a simultaneous and extraordinary effort; and the very efficient and successful exertions of Dr. Coke, in making collections and raising subscriptions, were at an end. In this new and unexpected emergency great anxiety was felt in various quarters, and several plans were proposed as likely to meet the exigency of the case. No men were more alive to the importance of the occasion than the Wesleyan Ministers in the western part of Yorkshire; particularly the Rev. Messrs. Morley and Bunting, who were then stationed at Leeds. Mr. Morley recommended the formation of a Society, which should employ collectors in raising weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual subscriptions in aid of the Methodist Missions; and, in order to the organization of such a Society, the holding of a Public Meeting in that town. This plan had been successfully employed by some other denominations of Christians; and it was thought the more desirable in the present case, as it was known that several Methodist families in Leeds were in the habit of contributing small sums in this manner towards the support of Missions belonging to another religious community, when they would more readily give the same amount in favour of their own Missions, were the requisite facilities afforded. The project was mentioned to

several Ministers and friends in the Leeds, Wakefield, and Bramley Circuits, and met with a general and hearty approval. It was finally agreed that a Public Meeting should be held at Leeds on the 6th of October; and Messrs. Buckley and Watson were requested to preach preparatory sermons. With this request Mr. Watson was very reluctant to comply. No man cherished a more intense interest in the cause than he; but the plan was new in Methodism; he had only been recently admitted into the Connexion; and he thought that perhaps some of the senior Preachers, who were imperfectly acquainted with his principles and character, might accuse him of attempting to introduce novelties into the body. He was willing to assist at the Meeting; but he suggested that, considering the peculiarity of his case, he should take only a subordinate part in the measures which were then contemplated. This objection, however, was overruled; and he consented to take the proposed service. Mr. Buckley preached at Armley on the preceding evening; and Mr. Watson in Leeds, on the following morning. The Public Meeting was held in the afternoon; at which Thomas Thompson, Esq., M.P., presided. It was only intended in the first instance to form a Society for the Leeds Circuit; but at the earnest recommendation of Mr. Thompson, it was agreed to form a Society for the District. All the services were numerously attended; and the interest created was deep and extensive. The speeches delivered at the Meeting were published in a small pamphlet by Mr. James Nichols, then resident in Leeds; four large impressions of which were



extensively distributed, and excited great attention.

The sermon delivered by Mr. Watson on the morning of this day was admirably adapted to give a tone of hallowed seriousness to the Public Meeting; and the crowded assembly cordially united in requesting its publication. To this distinction it was justly entitled. It was delivered in a very impressive manner; and few things could be conceived better adapted to promote the cause of Missions than its extended circulation. The text was, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." (Ezek. xxxvii. 9.) The sermon possesses great merit as a literary composition; but its chief value consists in the just and striking view which it gives of the state of the Heathen, the power of the Gospel, and the obligation which rests upon the church to make provision for its universal publication. On the first of these subjects Mr. Watson remarks, in a strain of eloquence almost peculiar to himself, "The Heathen have turned 'the truth of God into a lie;' their religious opinions are absurd fables; and the principles of morality, being left without support, have been all borne down by the tide of sensual appetite and uncontrolled passion. Ignorance the most profound, imaginations the most extravagant, and crimes the most daring, have ever characterized 'the world' which lies in the power of 'the wicked one.' But though all this be awfully true, it is not on these circumstances that we would principally fix your attention. There is another and more alarming truth to be told. The heathen world is judicially

dead, under the wrath and curse of Almighty God. The law which they have violated turns the edge of the sword of justice against them; the conscience which they have abused renders them miserable in their crimes; and as death expels their myriads from this state of being, they appear before the God of judgment, who hath said, 'The abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, shall have their part in the burning lake, which is the second death.'

"Were these solemn truths well fixed in our minds, they would stand in the place of a volume of argument to induce us to support Missionary institutions. They would burst at once the bands of selfishness, and 'draw out our souls' to them who are perishing for lack of knowledge. The contemplation of the imminent danger of so great a portion of our fellow-men would melt at once the frigidness of our natures, and cause our affections to flow forth in strong prayers, and still stronger exertions, in behalf of our brethren in distant lands, who have 'forgotten the God of their salvation, and have not been mindful of the rock of their strength.'

"To counteract these generous feelings, and to stop the stream of pity in its very fountain, we are aware that the doctrine of the safety of the Heathen has been confidently affirmed; and perhaps we also have slumbered over our duty, lulled by the drone of that dotting and toothless theology which treats sin with the cruel tenderness of an Eli to his sons, and employs itself rather in drawing extravagant pictures of the mercy of God, than in supporting the just rights of his government.

Resting in plausible general principles, which are never pursued to their consequences, there are many who appear to consider the divine Being under some obligation of justice to throw open the gates of salvation to the whole world of polluted Heathens ; thus making vice a kind of passport to heaven, and ignorance a better security for the eternal happiness of men than the full display of the glorious doctrines and the impressive motives of our religion. The true question is among all such persons often mistaken. It is not, whether it is possible for Heathens to be saved,—that we grant : but that circumstance proves the actual state of the heathen world to be more dangerous than if no such possibility could be proved ; for the possibility of their salvation indisputably shows them to be the subjects of moral government, and therefore liable to an aggravated punishment in case of disobedience. The true question is, Are the Heathens, immoral and idolatrous as they are, actually safe ? On this solemn subject we are not left to the decisions of human authority. Inspiration itself has decided it ; and when human opinions and divine revelation come into opposition, you will not hesitate to say, ‘Let God be true, and every man a liar.’ The reasoning of St. Paul, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, is of universal application ; it bears no marks of particularity ; and there is nothing in the state of the Heathen of our day to render it less applicable to them than to the Heathen of his own. His conclusion is, that for all their crimes and idolatries, ‘they are without excuse.’ They are ignorant ; but it is because they ‘do not like to retain God in

their knowledge.' They have 'a law written on their hearts;' but they violate it. They have a conscience which 'accuses or excuses them;' but they disregard it; and 'therefore they are without excuse.' This is the conclusion of an infallible teacher, against which it is vain to reason; and from this it follows, that, if the fact of general and perhaps universal depravity of principle and action among the Heathens be proved, then another conclusion of the Apostle must follow of course, that 'the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against them;' that the valley is full of souls dead to God, and under the sentence of an everlasting condemnation."

These sentiments, expressed with such eloquence and pathos, Mr. Watson never had occasion either to modify or retract. For nearly twenty years of his subsequent life he was in almost constant correspondence with Missionaries in all quarters of the globe; and all his inquiries and accumulated knowledge served only to confirm the view which he has here so forcibly given. He has been often heard to say, that it was under a sermon preached many years before this period, by the venerable Andrew Fuller, that he received his first impressions of the wickedness of idolatry, and of the consequent danger and wretchedness of the Heathen. The Methodist New Connexion had no foreign Missions; and hence, during his union with that body, he had no opportunity of affording direct assistance in promoting the cause of Christ in pagan lands. But even then his attention was directed to the subject with feelings of deep interest. His pastoral addresses to the societies of the

New Connexion, and the sermons which he preached when stationed in Manchester, show that he was no indifferent spectator of the Missionary operations carried on by different sections of the church ; and that he anticipated the most glorious results from these holy and benevolent agencies. The workings of his mind in those times distinctly exhibit the elements of that Missionary zeal and enterprise which distinguished him in the latter years of his life.

The publication of this powerful sermon was not the only service which Mr. Watson rendered to the good cause. He was made one of the Secretaries of the Society then formed ; and at the request of the Public Meeting he wrote an Address to professing Christians, stating the extent and objects of the Methodist Missions, and their claims upon the countenance and support of the friends of humanity and religion, and especially upon the Methodist societies and congregations. This important document contains a just tribute to the zeal and piety of Dr. Coke, then on the point of leaving his native country for ever. The fact is, Mr. Watson greatly admired the Doctor's character. That excellent man had visited Wakefield in the course of the preceding year, and had preached and solicited subscriptions in behalf of his favourite Mission to the slaves in the West Indies. Mr. Watson, who had accompanied him to many families and individuals in that town, for the purpose of obtaining contributions, was highly delighted with the urbanity, the Christian politeness, and the quenchless ardour, of that friend of God and man.

After stating the necessity of a permanent

increase in the funds of the Methodist Missions, Mr. Watson says in this Address, "It was with this view that a Methodist Missionary Society was lately established at Leeds: a measure which appeared to be equally called for by increasing opportunities for evangelizing heathen nations; by the excellent example of other Christian Societies; and by the loss of the personal exertions of Dr. Coke, who for years has stooped to the very drudgery of charity, and gratuitously pleaded the cause of a perishing world from door to door. Whilst he leads our little band of Missionaries against the idolatry of the east, and whilst more than one hundred other Methodist Missionaries,\* in different parts of the world, are immediately engaged in the same contest with the powers of darkness, it devolves upon us who remain at home to give effect to the necessary financial arrangements, and to furnish the sinews of this holy war."

It is impossible to estimate the effect produced by this appeal. Several Societies of a kind similar to that which was formed in the Leeds District were instituted in different parts of the kingdom; and by most of them the Address was adopted, with slight modifications. In the Report which was read at the first Anniversary of the Society for the Leeds District, it was stated that the income of the Institution during a period of somewhat less than twelve months was such, that, after meeting all

\* This number includes about forty men who were employed in the Home Missions of Wales and the more neglected parts of England. About sixty Missionaries were then employed in the foreign work, and among the Roman Catholics of Ireland.

the incidental expenses, the sum of £1000 had been transmitted to the Treasurer in London ; and it was added, "For the very liberal contributions thus enumerated, the Committee consider the Society to be deeply indebted, under the divine blessing, to the free circulation of an 'Address to the Public,' drawn up at the request of the General Meeting, by the Rev. Richard Watson, in which the extent and importance of the Methodist Missions were briefly stated, and their claims on the support of the friends of religion were ably and energetically enforced. Of this Address many thousands have been distributed, under the direction of the Local Committees."

It was to be expected that the noble example of Missionary zeal and liberality, set by the Preachers and friends of Leeds and its vicinity, would provoke others to emulation. A Public Meeting was accordingly held at Halifax on the 10th of November following, for the purpose of forming a Methodist Missionary Society for that District, which was also numerously attended, and was followed by results similar to those which had characterized the proceedings at Leeds. Sermons were preached by the Rev. Messrs. Reece and Bunting ; and Mr. Watson attended the Meeting, where he delivered a powerful and effective speech. It was the first speech in behalf of Christian Missions ever uttered by him at a public Meeting, and formed an admirable commencement of that successful advocacy of the cause by which he was distinguished through a series of years.

The example of the Methodists at Leeds and Halifax was quickly followed by their brethren at

Hull, Sheffield, and Wakefield, where Missionary Meetings were held, and Societies regularly organized, for the purpose of raising pecuniary supplies to send the Gospel of God to heathen nations. Mr. Watson lent his assistance at each of these places; and his sermons and speeches produced an indelible impression. The following notices concerning his sermon and the Meeting at Hull have been kindly supplied by the Rev. John Beecham:—

“I heard Mr. Watson on that occasion for the first time. He preached on the forenoon of the day of the Meeting, in George-yard chapel, from, ‘And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.’ (Rev. xiv. 6.) This subject afforded full scope for his powers. The dignity of his person and manner bespoke attention; and he unfolded the design of prophecy, established the necessity of a human ministry of the Gospel, of which he regarded the flying angel as an emblem, and enlarged on the universality of the Gospel scheme, in a strain of sublime eloquence, which produced in me such feelings of awe and hallowed delight, as I can never forget. On glancing at the congregation, all appeared to sit with their eyes riveted on the speaker, and listening with almost breathless attention. It was in this sermon that Mr. Watson delivered the fine passage which was so frequently quoted afterwards on similar occasions: ‘The Bible Society has rolled a noble stream of truth through the earth; but that is not enough.



We must send Missionaries to stand upon its banks, and cry, Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters?' Many were present at that time, who, like myself, had gone from a considerable distance for the purpose of attending the Meeting. These, on their return, spread abroad the fame of the Preacher; and when Mr. Watson was stationed in Hull the following year, it was not uncommon for persons to visit that town from distant places in Lincolnshire, in order to have the gratification of hearing him preach."

On the 26th of November, this year, a Missionary Meeting was held in Sheffield, and a Society organized. Mr. Watson was present, and related an anecdote of a poor woman who had distinguished herself by her pious zeal in the good work. "A woman at Wakefield," said he, "well known to be in rather needy circumstances, came to a lady, one of the collectors, and offered to subscribe a penny per week in aid of the Methodist Missionary Society. It was immediately said to her, 'Surely *you* are too poor to afford it.' She replied, 'I spin so many hanks of yarn every week for a maintenance. I will spin *one more*; and that will be a penny for the Society.' I would rather see that hank suspended in the poor woman's cottage, a token of her zeal for the Gospel, than military trophies in the halls of heroes. In them I should only see the proud memorials of victories obtained over the physical strength of man; but in the other I behold the triumph of a generous religion over the natural selfishness of a human heart."

In the year 1833, at the anniversary of the

Missionary Society for the Sheffield District, Mr. Montgomery gave the following account of this occasion, and of the impression made upon his mind by Mr. Watson's eloquence:—"I am reminded by the presence of an honoured Minister and friend, the Rev. Jabez Bunting, that it is nearly twenty years since, on a dreary, chill November day, in an assembly far thinner than the present, and less animated, the Missionary Society for this District was established. I had the privilege to take a share in the proceedings, and to assist with my feebleness in laying the foundation of this evangelical institution. On that occasion Mr. Bunting and Mr. Watson were deputed from the zealous band of innovators, who had ventured, in the provinces, to project, and to advocate from town to town, before it had obtained metropolitan sanction, the comprehensive plan of supplying funds for the support and extension of Wesleyan Missionary labours, upon a scale far more magnificent than it had been possible to conduct them while their maintenance depended principally upon the personal exertions of Dr. Coke. I then first saw and heard Mr. Watson. But while my expectations, from reported speeches in the newspapers, had been highly raised, they were not entirely met; there was so much temperance in the tone, and so little ardour in the delivery of his sentiments; yet even then they made a deeper impression than I was aware of at the time. They recurred to me again and again in solitude. Mr. Watson, in fact, wore so well on acquaintance, that neither a first nor a second sight or hearing of him gave half the idea of his peculiar powers; which

seemed to enlarge and improve with every fresh trial of their influence upon our understanding and affections. However, the occasion alluded to left an indelible memorial of his person, his manner, and the fact which he described. He mentioned, that an aged matron, having heard of the new thing in Methodism which was then so much talked of in the West Riding of Yorkshire, grew anxious to have a hand in it herself, and to contribute out of her deep poverty something towards sending the religion of Jesus Christ to the Heathen. Through hard and slow labour, indifferently paid, she earned a scanty subsistence by worsted spinning. She resolved to spin an extra hank a week, and throw the two mites which she should receive for it into the Missionary funds. What she so generously resolved, she painfully accomplished, by sacrificing no inconsiderable portion of her brief leisure and her spare strength, in this work of faith and labour of love. I have Mr. Watson in my eye at this moment. The picture is perfect in my remembrance, as he stood on the bench before me. While realizing the scene, as though we had all been with him in the widow's cottage, he pointed to the single hank, suspended from a rafter of the ceiling. I can never forget his attitude nor his look. 'She hath done what she could,' was the feeling of every one of his audience; and while the eloquent advocate expatiated on the value of such an offering, made in singleness of heart to the Lord, neither he nor his hearers, nor the humble contributor herself, were at that time aware of its value in influence as an example of what others in imitation would be stirred up to do in the same

way; for I believe this was the first precedent of innumerable instances in which the poorest, the weakest, and the meanest in outward respects, have taxed their ingenuity as well as their industry to find out means whereby they could aid the same blessed cause. Indeed, these devices have been so frequently and so successfully practised,—each in turn operating as an incentive and an encouragement to others,—that, even in a pecuniary sense, the poor widow's two mites may have produced a talent of gold to the Missionary funds."

At the Meeting which was held in Wakefield in the course of the following winter, thanks were voted to Mr. Watson for the Address to the public which he had drawn up, on the subject of the Wesleyan Missions, and which was then in extensive and beneficial circulation. In acknowledging this vote he delivered an eloquent address, concluding with the following impressive paragraph:—

"I conclude with expressing my confidence, that when the veil of mortality is withdrawn, and the value of immortal souls shall be more clearly demonstrated than can be done in this present state, when the realities of heaven and hell shall appear unshaded before us, not the most zealous among us, no, not the Missionary himself, who wears out health and life in his work, will think he has done too much to promote the salvation of the souls of men."

While Mr. Watson was attentive to the official duties connected with his Circuit, and ready to afford assistance in forming Missionary Societies, he was also mindful of the claims of private friendship. The following letters, which he wrote dur-

ing his residence in the Wakefield Circuit, contain some important sentiments, and serve to illustrate his personal history. The former of them shows that his health was still delicate, and that he was subject to serious attacks of illness.

TO MESSRS. MAKINSON AND WATKIN, OF  
MANCHESTER.

MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS MAKINSON AND WATKIN,

IF you have not received an epistle from me, it was not because I was inattentive to my engagement, or insensible to the pleasure of corresponding with friends so highly regarded ; but because I have not been able, after repeated efforts, to turn logic into a subject of correspondence in the mode we devised. I have two unfinished letters by me, on different plans ; and one contains no less than three folio pages, of demy size, of illustrations, chemical and botanical, where I could find them, of being, substance, modes, ideas, &c. But, after all, though I amused myself, and perhaps impressed the distinctions of Aristotle upon my own thoughts, I could not perceive the possibility of a plan of communicating together, in our logical studies, to any valuable purpose. After we have got through logic, and enter upon metaphysics, I think we may do it to much profit, by proposing difficulties, and requiring illustrations. For perhaps it may be better to take many things for granted now, in order to get acquainted with the terms and subtleties of the art, than to stop and ~~examine~~ examine them step by step. Otherwise, many

questions arise out of every chapter in logic ; and I had, in fact, penned down some ; but I thought them premature. Having, therefore, given up my letter on logic, and yet being anxious to hear from you, and to be heard also, I purposed to write a friendly line, to say that I had not been guilty of inattention, and to express my hope that your plans had been more successful. I have been, however, for a few days prevented from this by a severe fit of sickness. To-day makes the seventh day of my absolute confinement, from a fever, the result of cold ; and logic and languages have been suspended by libations and refrigerants. I write, even now, against advice ; but the pleasure of thinking of the parties addressed will, I am sure, outweigh the inconvenience which may arise out of the act of writing.

You see how God continues to deal with me ;—graciously, if that word of his be true, “ Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth ;” and there is no truth in God’s holy book that I believe more firmly. To Him, therefore, I am laid under a new obligation ; because, in his intent at least, a good has been proposed, whatever the real effect may be upon me. With this exception, I have gone through the work of the Circuit without any omissions ; though, owing to my taking a succession of colds, with some difficulty.

Great languor obliges me to draw to a close. You have my best wishes ; and, if they can avail you, my prayers too. They may promote my union with you, if they have not much power with God. Let me share in yours. Persevere, my dear friends, in the path which the example and pre-

cepts of Christ exhibit. To improve our minds in the most excellent knowledge of Him, and thus to grow in grace, in wisdom ; to beg of him that animating Spirit, which only can give energy to knowledge, and draw forth its influence upon the will and affections ; and, in subservience to these ends, or at least not in contradiction to them, to explore, as time and talent may enable, the mysteries of human science ; and to cultivate those social tempers which stand in the next rank to religious character ;—these are some of our principal duties and best ends. He that succeeds best does best ; and in this work there is no hazard. We can command success ; for the peculiar prerogative of good men is,—and it is assigned by One who uses no unmeaning compliments,—“ Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

This letter appears to have been written in the month of November, 1813. Another epistle, which he addressed to Mr. Makinson, concludes with the following remarks :—

“The sum of the whole, I think, is, that the best authorities among our old writers support the application of ‘which’ to persons as well as things ; and though it should, in the improved state of language, be imposed upon us to discriminate in the use of ‘who’ and ‘which,’ yet that will not justify the alteration in the repetition of the Lord’s prayer, any more than it would justify it in reading it from our translation ; for if we admit of oral amendments *ad libitum*, then you may sometimes hear a Preacher in your pulpit addressing himself in his prayer to ‘the Father of lights,

in whom there is no *parallax* or *tropical shadow* ;' \* or giving out his text, 'A certain *gentleman* had a vineyard ;' or demonstrating, by the violence of his action, that the curse is fallen upon him, and that he 'eats his bread by the *perspiration* of his brow ;' or threatening that, if you are lukewarm, he will '*emit* you from his mouth.'"

---

## CHAPTER VIII.

WHILE Mr. Watson was diligent in the discharge of his ministerial and pastoral duties, alive to the spiritual necessities of the Heathen, and not forgetful of the claims of private friendship, his loyal and patriotic mind could not be indifferent to the circumstances of the nation. The times were eventful. The war which arose out of the French Revolution seemed to be hastening to a crisis, and the resources of this country were in a great measure exhausted. This fierce and tremendous conflict had been maintained for many years, at an immense expense, both of treasure and blood ; and almost every continental nation had been a scene of devastation and carnage. But a brighter day was beginning to dawn upon Europe ; and the man who had long been a terror and a scourge was about to become an object of pity, and, after the example of the Macedonian madman and the Swede, to

\* This translation, it will be recollected, by the biblical student, was proposed by Gilbert Wakefield.



“Leave a name at which the world grew pale,  
To point a moral, or adorn a tale.”

In the spring of the year 1814 the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia entered Paris, at the head of their victorious armies; while Wellington, who had annihilated the French power in Portugal and Spain, was approaching the same capital in an opposite direction. Napoleon, who had been completely vanquished in the field, was sent into exile; the Bourbon dynasty was recalled to the throne of France; and the peace of Europe was restored. The general joy which these events occasioned was indescribable; the interposition of Providence was almost every where acknowledged; and a day of public thanksgiving to Almighty God was appointed by the Government of England. As Bonaparte was dethroned, there appeared no probability of the renewal of hostilities; and hence a peace, at once profound and permanent, was anticipated. Mr. Watson preached on this joyful occasion, both at Leeds and Wakefield; a service for which he was well qualified, by his sound political principles, his accurate knowledge of public affairs, and his habits of discriminating and philosophic thought. In compliance with the wishes of his friends, he committed his discourse to the press, under the title of, “A Sermon, preached at the Methodist Chapel, Wakefield, and at the Old Chapel, Leeds, on Thursday, the seventh day of July, being the day appointed for a General Thanksgiving to Almighty God, for the Restoration of Peace. Published by Request. 1814.” This discourse is every way worthy of the author. It contains many just and striking sentiments;

and not a few passages which are remarkable for their powerful and commanding eloquence.

In the conclusion of this discourse, Mr. Watson adverts to his favourite subject,—the spread of Christianity in pagan lands. “Do we shudder at the idea of the rekindling of the torch of discord, and the renewal of the devastations of war? Is it the earnest wish of our souls that the peace may be eternal; that the sword may gleam in the eyes of men no more; and that the earth may never more be moistened except by the dews of heaven; that the final reign of the Prince of Peace may commence, and ‘quietness and assurance for ever’ become the lot of man? We all can contribute something to these glorious results; and it is our duty to contribute all we can towards them. Let us first support the influence of religion in our own hearts, and light up a brighter lustre of truth and holiness in our example. Let us endeavour zealously and in the spirit of meekness to counteract all immorality in our respective neighbourhoods; and to promote the salvation of others by our advice, our influence, and our prayers. Let us become the fervent advocates and active supporters of all such institutions among us as are directed to the reformation and instruction of our country; of schools, of Bible and Tract Societies, and of Home Missions. Let us go farther: let us be unwearied in carrying into effect the great plan of evangelizing the world, which the charity inspired by the Gospel has dictated to the minds of British Christians. By this means we shall best promote universal peace; the peace of nations, the peace of families, the peace of individuals

peace with each other, peace with ourselves, peace with God. For purposes of this kind we can depend but little upon political arrangements. The world can only be made happy by the diffusion of moral principles; and the Gospel only can effectually diffuse them. Go, then, System of Mercy! Take to thyself the wings of our beneficence, and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth. Go on thy errand of love, sped by our bounty and our prayers. Confront the misleading errors of false religion, and banish them from human minds. Go, testify to every fallen child of Adam, that God is love. Bear thy message of mercy every where, and say, 'Whosoever will, let him come and take of the waters of life freely.' We have 'peace on earth;' but go and breathe thy soft and peaceful spirit into men's hearts. Teach Kings moderation, and their subjects order; destroy the causes of war in their fountain, the human heart; and bring the desolations of the world to a perpetual end! Go, from conquest to conquest; and may thy triumphs never end while there is a nation on the globe to bless, or a soul among its countless myriads to save! To God, the author of peace, be ascribed glory and dominion for ever. Amen."

In the cultivation of this spirit of universal charity Mr. Watson was not peculiar. Many months were not suffered to elapse, after Missionary Societies had been formed in the Leeds, Halifax, Hull, and Sheffield Districts, before similar institutions were organized in York, Beverley, Bridlington, Patrington, Bingley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Cornwall. The people were impatient to unite

their energies for the furtherance of the cause of Christ in heathen countries ; and were unwilling to wait till the judgment of Conference should be ascertained respecting this new mode of raising pecuniary supplies. Mr. Watson lent his very efficient aid at several of these places, in conjunction with his friend Mr. Bunting, whose zeal and energy were equal to those of his distinguished associate. At Newcastle Mr. Watson's sermon was thought to surpass that which he had delivered at Leeds ; and many persons united in requesting its publication. This, however, he peremptorily refused : and at the same time he stated to a friend, that he repented of having published the sermon just mentioned ; as he had been heartily ashamed of it ever since it had appeared in print. So humble were the views which he entertained of his own abilities, that while every one wondered at his powers, and hung upon his lips with silent admiration, he seemed to be unconscious of any thing peculiar in himself ; and his mind was entirely absorbed in the great work of extending the knowledge of Christ to the ends of the earth. His conviction of the perilous state of the Heathen, of the obligation of Christians to attempt their conversion, and of the certain success of the measures then in operation, was deep and practical. The cries of the Heathen seemed to be perpetually sounding in his ears ; his heart yearned over the millions of souls perishing in ignorance and sin ; it seemed to be one great business of his life to rouse the Christian community with which he was united to a sense of their duty with regard to the unenlightened part of mankind ;

and in these truly Christian labours he every where met with a willing people,—a people in this respect prepared of the Lord, and ready, both of their abundance and penury, to cast into the offerings of God. All that seemed to be generally necessary was, to call their attention to the subject, and to make arrangements for receiving their pecuniary contributions with frequency and regularity.

The cordiality with which many of the Preachers lent their assistance at that time reflected the highest honour upon their piety and benevolence. The Rev. Messrs. James Wood, Reece, Atmore, Warrener, Brownell, Highfield, Morley, Naylor, Isaac, Buckley, Burdsall, Waddy, Everett, Pilter, and others, were particularly distinguished in this labour of love; and several excellent laymen were equally active in the good cause. Of these Messrs. Thompson of Hull, Holy of Sheffield, Dawson of Barnbow, and Scarth of Leeds, were among the foremost to advocate and support the blessed work. Some of these friends of the Methodist Missions are fallen asleep; but the greater part remain to this day; and their zeal has suffered no abatement.

In the mean while, these proceedings, so novel in Methodism, excited in some quarters much conversation, and great searchings of heart. Every one applauded the object, and acknowledged the necessity of increased exertions for the support of the old established Missions, and the desirableness of commencing similar operations of mercy in other countries; but several, even of the Preachers, entertained serious doubts respecting the means which were employed in the present case. Some

thought that Missionary Meetings were more calculated for display, than utility and godly edifying ; and that they would generate a sort of religious dissipation, and a spirit of unhallowed levity. Others thought that by giving such pre-eminence to the Missionary cause, the resources of the Connexion would be almost entirely directed to that one object ; and that the several departments of the work of God at home would languish for want of the requisite support. The Preachers, therefore, who lent their assistance in forming Societies, and took a prominent part in holding public Meetings, were regarded with suspicion. The chief responsibility rested upon Mr. Bunting, who was then a comparatively young man, and was the Chairman of the Leeds District, where these proceedings had commenced. He and his brethren were conscious of the purity of their motives ; the facts which they witnessed in every place where Missionary Societies were formed, only served to convince them that they were acting under the direction of divine Providence ; and they waited with no painful alarm for the assembling of the Conference, when the opinions of their brethren would be declared. The urgency of the case they deemed a full justification of the measures which they had adopted ; and the encouragement which they received in various quarters inspired them with confidence. Dr. Coke received intelligence of the Meeting at Leeds before his final embarkation ; and addressed a letter of acknowledgment to his friend Mr. Bunting, in which he expressed the highest satisfaction with the course which had been pursued. The Rev. Walter Griffith, who

was then the President of the Conference, and Mr. Benson and Dr. Adam Clarke, men of leading influence in the body, declared their cordial approbation of these pious exertions.

The Conference met at the end of July; and the Missionary Meetings which had been held in the course of the year became a subject of discussion. After an explanation of their character was given, and the arguments for and against them were heard, the Conference adopted the following Resolutions:—

“We strongly recommend the immediate establishment of a Methodist Missionary Society in every District in the kingdom, (in which it has not been already accomplished,) on the general plan of those Societies which have been formed in Yorkshire and elsewhere during the past year.

“The thanks of the Conference are given to those of our Preachers in the Leeds, Halifax, York, Sheffield, Cornwall, and Newcastle Districts, who have been concerned in the formation of Methodist Missionary Societies; and to all the members and friends of the said Societies, for the very liberal and zealous support which they have afforded us in this important department of the work of God.”

In consequence of these seasonable Resolutions, Missionary Societies were progressively formed in all the Districts in the kingdom; these were followed by Branch Societies in the several Circuits, by Associations in connexion with the different chapels; by Juvenile Societies and Ladies' Associations; and the formation of these institutions, and their Anniversaries from year to year, brought into

full exercise Mr. Watson's talents as a Preacher and an advocate of Missions. They presented to him such a career of useful and honourable toil as few men besides himself have ever been called to run, and which ended only with his life. This was a kind of labour which he had not previously anticipated; and his readiness in obeying the voice of Providence and of the church, which so often severed him from his family and his studies, affords a striking illustration of his self-denial and holy zeal. When Missionary Meetings became general among the Methodists, the great body of the Preachers were expected to take a part in them; and the men who had formerly contemplated them with disapprobation soon acknowledged their utility. It was interesting in many places to hear aged and venerable men publicly retract their former opinions. One of these is remembered to have said, before a vast assembly, in his curt and emphatic manner, "God was in these Meetings, and I knew it not."

The establishment of Missionary Societies, and the holding of public Meetings in connexion with them, formed the commencement of a new era among the Wesleyan Methodists; and the full benefit resulting from them it would be impossible to estimate. By these means authentic information respecting the state and character of heathen nations, and the progress of the Gospel in the world, has been widely extended; in the minds of thousands the conviction of the truth and value of Christianity has been deepened; the sympathies and prayers of multitudes have been called forth; the blessedness of giving to pious and benevolent



objects has been very extensively realized; the pecuniary contributions have been greatly augmented, in consequence of which new Missions have been formed, old establishments reinforced, tens of thousands of heathen children instructed in the truths of Christianity, and many wretched savages and idolaters civilized, converted, and saved. The leaven of truth has been deposited in various places, where it did not before exist; and there is every reason to hope that it will ferment and spread to the latest generations. Missionary intelligence is extensively circulated by the agency of Collectors; and even peasants, and children belonging to Sunday-schools, have become acquainted with the religious and moral history of the most distant tribes and nations, and talk about them with perfect familiarity. The generality of the Methodist societies, in all parts of the united kingdom, feel themselves allied to converted Negroes in the West Indies, to the pious Hottentots and Caffers in South Africa, the Hindoos and Ceylonese, and the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands. During the lapse of twenty years these Meetings have lost none of their interest; and they are still generally regarded as seasons of holy joy; for they call into exercise the best feelings of the human heart,—the love of God and the love of man. From the time at which Missionary Societies and Meetings were sanctioned by the Conference, the Wesleyan Connexion has assumed a character more decidedly Missionary than it had previously done; and from year to year the work of God abroad has fully kept pace with the progress of that work at home.

No individual Minister in the Methodist body, nor perhaps in any denomination of professing Christians, has been more distinguished by laborious and successful zeal in the cause of Missions, and of Christianity generally, than the Rev. Robert Newton. The probability is, that he has at least taken twice as many journeys, and collected twice as much money, for pious purposes, as any other Minister of the age. Often was he associated with Mr. Watson in these benevolent and useful labours.

Mr. Watson's preaching became increasingly acceptable in the Wakefield Circuit to the time of his removal. Almost every sermon that he delivered contained some profound and original views of divine truth; and the ability with which he was accustomed to defend the doctrines of Christianity, and the power, fidelity, and affection with which he pressed them upon the belief and practical attention of his hearers, all tended to strengthen their attachment to his ministry, and augment his congregations. Nor did he labour in vain. Many believers, by his instrumentality, were edified in faith and love; and several individuals were converted from the error of their way, saved from sin, and brought into the church. Some of the most pious and exemplary members of the Methodist society in Wakefield acknowledge him as their father in the Lord. To young people of education, belonging to religious families, he was rendered especially useful. He conversed with them respecting their reading; and introduced them to different branches of study and knowledge, particularly the study of astronomy and botany. He

showed them the traces of wisdom and design which are observable in all the arrangements of the vegetable kingdom; and he taught them to sanctify every pursuit and employment by the word of God and prayer. To many families he was a frequent and a welcome visitant. He sympathized with them in their afflictions; and his cheerful spirit and intelligent conversation were to them a perpetual source of hallowed joy and instruction. It is needless to add, that a man so esteemed and beloved was sincerely and generally regretted, when, in the course of his itinerancy, he was removed from the Circuit. The writer of this narrative succeeded Mr. Watson in Wakefield; and during the two happy years which he spent in that place, he found the people continually referring in their conversation to Mr. Watson's character and ministry. These were topics of which they seemed never to be weary; and the emotion with which they often spoke showed the depth of the impression which his sermons and conduct had made upon their minds. During his stay in Wakefield he formed a very cordial friendship with Mr. William Walton; a man whom he found every way worthy of his fraternal love. Several valuable letters addressed to this excellent man will be found in the subsequent parts of this narrative.

The following incident, which occurred in Wakefield, will show the readiness and effect with which Mr. Watson could administer reproof when it was deemed necessary. One Sunday morning he had not proceeded far in his discourse, when he observed a man in a pew just before him rise from

his seat, and turn round to look at the clock in the front of the gallery, as if the service were a weariness to him, and he wished to give the Preacher a hint that he should speedily bring it to a conclusion. Mr. Watson observed the unseemly act; and said, in a very significant manner, "A remarkable change has taken place among the people of this country with regard to the public services of religion. Our forefathers put their clocks on the outside of their places of worship, that they might not be too late in their attendance. We have transferred them to the inside of the house of God, lest we should stay too long in his service. A sad and an ominous change!" And then, addressing the man whose rude behaviour had called forth the remark, he said, "You need be under no alarm this morning: I shall not keep you beyond the usual time."

At the Conference of 1814 Mr. Watson removed from Wakefield to Hull; a town endeared to him by early and interesting recollections. To this place he had been accustomed, in his boyhood, to accompany his father on the Sabbath, for the purpose of attending the worship of God, and the ministry of his word; and here religious impressions had often been made upon his youthful mind. His father, who used then to lead him by the hand, and at whose side he walked to the house of prayer, was now no more. Mr. Milner had also gone the way of all the earth, and his pulpit was occupied by other men; but here he found Mr. Lambert, the Dissenting Minister, from whose lips he had formerly heard the truth. He cultivated the friendship of that excellent servant of Christ,

and acknowledged his obligations to him for his faithful instructions and admonitions. It is not often that such impressions, made before the world engages the attention, and the heart is hardened through a course of sinning, are entirely obliterated; and when they lead to a state of established piety, the remembrance of them is salutary and refreshing. During Mr. Watson's stay in Hull Mr. Lambert died; and Mr. Watson preached a sermon on the occasion in the Methodist chapel. After paying a just tribute of respect to the memory of the pious dead, he spoke of the spiritual benefit which he, in common with many others, had derived from a ministry at once evangelical, devout, and saving.

Mr. Watson's colleagues in his new appointment were Messrs. Jonathan Barker, Henry S. Hopwood, and John Scott; men who enjoyed both his confidence and affection. For many years the duties of the Christian ministry have been discharged in Hull, in some of the churches and the Dissenting chapels, with a power and efficiency seldom surpassed; and hence a general respect is paid to practical godliness by all classes of the community. Mr. Benson had been twice stationed in Hull; and his preaching was signally owned of God, in the conversion of men from sin to holiness. During the time of his first appointment he was a means of the erection of the spacious chapel in George-yard; and till a very late period, many exemplary Christians in that town acknowledged him as their spiritual father. When Mr. Watson was appointed to that station, the Methodist ministry had been regularly exercised there upwards of

half a century, and the society had become numerous and effective. It contained many families of respectability, and individuals of property and character; among whom was the late Thomas Thompson, Esq., at that time a member of the Senate, and an example of primitive piety, simplicity, and zeal. In the year 1814 the Methodists had three moderately-sized chapels in the town; but these were insufficient to contain the congregations already formed; and hence, a fourth chapel, of much larger dimensions, and of elegant architecture, had been begun during the preceding year, and was then in a course of erection. Some persons censured the undertaking, as too bold and costly; but the parties engaged had formed their calculations upon correct principles, and proceeded in the execution of their plans in the spirit of pure benevolence, and in reliance upon the blessing of God. The event amply justified their previous conclusions. Few chapels of equal elegance and magnitude have, in so short a time, so fully realized the hopes of their projectors, either in regard of pecuniary returns, or the attainment of spiritual good.

This noble edifice, which was erected in Waltham-street, was opened for the public worship of God, on Friday and Sunday, October 7th and 9th; when sermons were preached on the occasion by the Rev. Messrs. Bunting, Watson, Newton, and Burdsall. The chapel is ninety-four feet in length, and eighty-four feet six inches in width, including the wings, in which are the gallery stairs. It is calculated to seat upwards of two thousand people; and when the pews and aisles are crowded, to con-

tain more than three thousand. Seven hundred free sittings were left for the poor. In its external appearance this chapel is highly ornamental to the town; and at the time of its erection it was not excelled in the Methodist Connexion for size, the symmetry of its parts, or the beauty and simplicity of its decorations. It was equally creditable to the taste and science of the architect, Mr. Jenkins, of London; and to the society by whose zeal and liberality the requisite funds were supplied. The interest excited in the town on this occasion was deep and extensive, especially on the Sunday evening, when it was thought upwards of four thousand persons crowded into the new chapel. Many hundreds were unable to obtain admission; and these, with the congregations in the other chapels, which were open at the same time, amounted, it was believed, to upwards of eight thousand people, who on that memorable evening left their homes to attend the worship of God among the Methodists in Hull. Immediately after the opening of this house of prayer, every sitting was let; and a large and respectable congregation regularly attended its religious services, both on the Sunday, and the week-day evenings. To this result the ministry of Mr. Watson mainly contributed; and many families previously unacquainted with Methodism, principally through his instrumentality, were permanently attached to this place of worship. At no period of his life does his preaching appear to have been more powerful, or to have exerted a stronger and more extensive influence upon the public mind. His sermons, marked by a force of reasoning and a persuasive-

ness almost peculiar to himself, embodying the great and vital truths of Christianity, and delivered with earnestness and pathos, were a means of reclaiming many a wanderer from God, of conveying strength and comfort to many a broken heart, and of stimulating believers to "go on unto perfection."

As the house in which he resided was contiguous to the chapel in Waltham-street, he considered the congregation and society connected with that place as his especial charge; and, though his labours were not successful to the extent of his wishes, he had the high gratification to witness the prosperity and spread of true religion. One Monday evening, when he was preaching in this chapel, an unusual power attended the word; and several persons wept aloud. At the close of the public service he retired into the vestry, where many of the congregation followed him, inquiring, "What must we do to be saved?" The cries of those who were convinced of sin were loud and piercing. For a moment he seemed to be stunned, and asked one of the Class-Leaders, who was standing by, "What shall we do, brother?" "Let us pray to Him who can save," was the answer. Without uttering another word, he kneeled down by the side of the penitents, and continued to intercede with God in their behalf, pointing them at intervals to the sacrifice of Christ, and encouraging them to put their trust in him, till three of them obtained the inward witness of their acceptance in the Beloved, and were enabled to rejoice in the pardoning mercy of God. Several whole families, by means of his preaching, were brought under



religious impressions ; and many individuals were induced to become regular hearers at the different chapels, who were previously accustomed to spend the Sabbath in worldliness and folly. He greatly rejoiced in distinct instances of ministerial usefulness ; and when they were withheld for any length of time, he mourned, and subjected himself to severe searchings of heart. Christ crucified was eminently the theme of his ministry during his residence in Hull ; and while he expatiated on the wisdom of the redeeming scheme, the glory of Christ's person, the infinite merit of his atonement, and his willingness to save a world of ruined sinners, a stillness like that of death usually pervaded the congregations ; and each would have said to his neighbour, had he given utterance to the feelings of his heart, "How dreadful is this place !" Were we to estimate the sum of his usefulness in Hull, solely by the number of actual conversions which were known to be effected through his instrumentality, we should greatly err. The influence of his ministry was felt in many quarters where it was never acknowledged ; and it operated in a thousand ways which cannot now be traced. Almost every person in the town, who made any profession of religion, heard him, at one time or another. Even his week-night congregations in the principal chapels were unusually large ; frequently amounting to eight hundred or a thousand people. Infidels were held at bay by his forcible argumentation in defence of Christianity ; and they were forced to confess, from what they saw in him, that the most vigorous understanding, and a conscientious belief of revealed religion, are per-

fectly consistent with each other. Socinians often quailed before him, while he declared the sceptre to be in the hand of the Son of God, and the crown upon his head, and, with all the energy that truth inspires, called upon every knee to bow before him, and every tongue to confess his eternal power and Godhead. The divinity and atonement of Christ were subjects on which he delighted to expatiate ; and the manner in which he applied these vital doctrines of Christianity conveyed conviction, and comfort, and purity, to the minds of many of his hearers.

He had a high sense of the solemnity and decorum with which the public worship of God ought always to be conducted. Of choirs of singers in different chapels he deliberately, and on principle, disapproved ; and he was of opinion that they had greatly injured the psalmody and devotion of the Methodist congregations. He thought that an organ, properly managed, was preferable to a number of small instruments : but his desire was, that musical instruments in general should be superseded, and the congregations surrendered to the guidance of a pious and judicious leading singer. That the singing department of the worship of God should be governed by the whim, and desecrated by the pride, of vain and worldly men, he deemed impious ; and as a means of neutralizing an evil which he could not effectually cure, he frequently dictated the tunes that he wished to be sung to the particular hymns which he had selected. For this he was well qualified by his fine taste in music, and his acquaintance with the principles of the science. To this day, in the remembrance of his

friends in Hull, his favourite hymns are associated with his favourite tunes. "Our people," he would sometimes say, "are a devotional people. They love psalmody; and were they not hindered by the trifling of the choir, they would produce the finest congregational singing in the world."

The following extracts from a letter which Mr. Watson wrote after he had been a few months in Hull, will show the strength of his affection for an excellent family in Wakefield, whose friendship he had cultivated. The letter contains painful notices of the delicacy of his health, and of the consequent pain and languor with which he prosecuted those labours by which multitudes of people were greatly benefited.

TO MR. WILLIAM WALTON, OF WAKEFIELD.

HULL, *Dec. 6th*, 1814.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I OUGHT to beg pardon for not acknowledging sooner the receipt of a parcel, containing a present of excellent cloth. Accept my best thanks. As I wear it I shall be reminded of my old and favourite friends, with whom I feel a union, not to be broken off, I hope, in this life; but which, I trust, will be renewed and continued in the kingdom of our common Lord for ever.

I am concerned to hear that Miss Ann is indisposed. I hope the indisposition will prove only transient; and that the whole of her heavenly Father's dispensations will be abundantly sanctified. Present her with my kind regards, and best wishes that she may feel an increasing union with

the divine and inexhaustible Fountain of all our light, and comfort, and salvation. How great is the mercy, that he is ever nigh to them that fear him; and that, in sickness and health, joy and sorrow, life and death, he is all and in all to his people!

A letter from London gives an account of the Missionary Meeting held on Thursday. It seems, they began at six o'clock at night; thus putting that off to the shades of the evening, which ought to have been done in broad day, and proclaimed on the house-tops.

I hope to see you at the time proposed; and, in the mean time, I can only pray that the best blessings of heaven above, and of earth beneath, may rest upon you and your respected family.

The Missionary Meeting here referred to was held in the City-road chapel, December 1st, 1814, for the purpose of forming a Society for the London District, agreeably to the direction of Conference. It was the first Missionary Meeting ever held by the Methodists in the metropolis; and it is probable that doubts were entertained as to the possibility of securing a sufficient attendance, if it were held in the course of the day. The evening was therefore chosen, that the Meeting might not interfere with the claims of business. Subsequent events, however, have amply demonstrated, that the Methodists of London are as ready to devote their time and property to the cause of Missions as their brethren in the country; and that the estimate which was then formed of their zeal had its origin in misconception.

Towards the end of the year 1814 the melancholy tidings of Dr. Coke's death reached England, and created very painful feelings in the minds of the friends who were then exerting themselves in the length and breadth of the land to support the Missions of which he had long been the patron and director. He died suddenly at sea, on the 3d of May, it is supposed in a fit of apoplexy; and the Missionaries whom he was conducting to India, and who placed an entire reliance upon him as their counsellor and guide, were thrown absolutely upon the care of divine Providence. On their arrival in India they obtained the requisite pecuniary supplies from W. T. Money, Esq., of Bombay, who kindly met their wants on the faith of the Methodist Connexion in England; and they entered upon their work in Ceylon in the true spirit of Christian Missionaries, and with encouraging prospects of success. Their case excited a powerful sympathy in India, and among the friends at home; and the death of Dr. Coke caused a deep and general sorrow. It was felt that both the church and the world had lost a tried and an efficient friend. Mr. Watson shared in the common feeling; and rendered justice to Dr. Coke's character in a funeral sermon which he preached at Hull on the mournful occasion. In Missionary zeal and enterprise Dr. Coke had long been far in advance upon the Connexion to which he belonged, and upon the generality of British Christians; and this part of his character Mr. Watson was specially qualified to hold up to public view in a manner the most advantageous.

At this period Mr. Watson's extraordinary

talents as a Preacher were extensively known and appreciated; and numberless applications were made to him to assist at Missionary Meetings, to open new chapels, and to plead the cause of schools, and of various local charities. He engaged to preach at the re-opening of the Methodist chapel in Newark, after it had undergone considerable enlargement. This visit to the scene of his early labours, after a lapse of nearly twenty years, he greatly enjoyed. In reference to this journey, and his subsequent visits to that neighbourhood, Mr. Eggleston of Newark says, "The high respect entertained for Mr. Watson, by the friends in Newark, induced them to invite him to preach at the opening of their enlarged chapel; and he most cheerfully complied with their request. His preaching was eminently acceptable and useful; and his kind, sensible, social, and pious conversation; his affability towards those who were not connected with Methodism, but who attended the Missionary Meetings, and partook of a friendly meal with him, at the house of his host; rendered his visits a blessing to all who were favoured with his company. From a conversation I had with him, when attending one of our Missionary Meetings, he appeared very anxious to pay a visit to some of the villages where he had laboured when he was a Local Preacher; and promised, if I would accompany him, to take a circuit through those interesting fields of his early ministry. At the same time he inquired after several of his associates, the Local Preachers who had shared with him in the honourable toil."

While Mr. Watson was absent from home in

the winter of 1815, a base attack was made upon him, in one of the Hull newspapers. On the Sunday evening before his departure, he had preached a very impressive sermon on Belshazzar's feast, in which he described the wretched situation of an epicure, who might, like the Babylonian Monarch, be arrested by death in the midst of his pleasures. The sermon was one of a series of discourses which he was then preaching in the Waltham-street chapel. It happened that a gentleman in Hull had recently died under painful circumstances; and some person in the congregation, who had not the honour to give his name, nor the candour to make any inquiries on the subject, assuming that the sermon had a reference to that deceased individual, censured Mr. Watson in terms the most harsh and insulting, and held him up to public reprobation, for making the pulpit a vehicle of calumny, and availing himself of his office as a Christian Minister to wound the feelings of bereaved families and friends. A person under the signature of "Justitia" defended him in his absence; and on his return to Hull he addressed the following letter to the Editor of the "Rockingham" newspaper:—

HULL, *Feb. 28th*, 1815.

SIR,

I WAS not a little surprised, on the appearance of your last week's paper, to find myself very unhandsomely and rudely charged with having, in a sermon lately preached at Waltham-street chapel, "made very unseemly allusions to the character of a gentleman lately deceased;" in a word, with

having represented him in life as an epicure, and at death "taking a leap in the dark." Had your correspondent, Sir, asked me for an explanation, I could have satisfied him ; but he appears to be one of

" Those whose fancies skip  
From the head unto the lip ;  
And, scarcely resting, skip again  
From the lip unto the pen ; "

and that without much intervening labour of thinking. I owe your correspondent nothing but the feeling which folly excites ; but I think I owe it to the public, and to the friends of the deceased, to say, that, when I preached that sermon, I knew no more of the deceased than his name, and the fact of his death : nothing of his character, good or bad. If your correspondent chose to misunderstand me, I am not surely responsible for his mistakes. Though I engaged to preach, I did not engage to give him understanding. I have not, Sir, I hope, to learn from him the proprieties which become the pulpit ; and my own heart, I flatter myself, is a sufficient guard against offending those proprieties in the manner charged upon me. Sacred be the charities which hover over the memory of departed friends ! In the contest which the moral teacher wages against the vices of men, it is not necessary to strew the arena with the ashes of the dead.

I might, in justice, expect from your correspondent an apology for this uncharitable attack upon me ; were not his censure and apology alike indifferent to,

Sir, your most obedient servant.



After reading this rebuke, the officious correspondent of the "Rockingham" perceived that he had mistaken both his own character and that of Mr. Watson; and if ever he again strayed on a Sunday evening into the Waltham-street chapel, and heard things which were above his comprehension, whatever his surmisings might be, he confined them to his own breast, and suffered no more of his lucubrations to appear in print.

Early in the spring of this year the anxieties of Mr. Walton were excited in behalf of a young man who was under sentence of death for felony in one of the southern counties of England. He had known and esteemed some branches of the family to which this unhappy youth belonged, and was very desirous of saving his life; and for this purpose used every means in his power to obtain for him a commutation of punishment. Mr. Watson, it seems, applied to Mr. Thompson, of Hull, who interceded with Government, and besought them to spare the unhappy youth. Every application, however, proved unavailing, and the culprit endured the extreme penalty of the law. Before his execution he addressed a letter to his kind friend at Wakefield, in which he gave every sign of genuine penitence; and there was hope in his death. A copy of this letter Mr. Walton forwarded to Mr. Watson, accompanied by one of his own, in which he gave further information respecting the person whom he had endeavoured in vain to save. To the letter of his friend, Mr. Watson returned the following answer:—

TO MR. WILLIAM WALTON, WAKEFIELD.

HULL, *April 29th*, 1815.

DEAR SIR,

YOURS I received with pleasure. I perused the copy of poor ——'s letter with thankful feelings to that God who willeth not the death of a sinner. There seems no doubt of his having died as we could wish him to die. How mysterious are the ways of Him who cannot err! Your anxieties and kind endeavours to save his life were frustrated;—perhaps mercifully frustrated; for had he lived, he might have gone on still in his trespasses. The body was given to death, that the spirit might be quickened and saved. You have nevertheless the pleasure of reflecting that you "did what you could." The event was the Lord's; and he, in this, as in every case, "hath done all things well." Mr. Thompson has been and still remains ill. When he is better, I will show him the letter, and he will rejoice with us.

It is Saturday night; and to-morrow is the Sabbath of the Lord. I must therefore apply to my preparations; not forgetting, however, when I bow before the throne, old friends and old enjoyments. I often think with pleasure on our Saturday-night prayer-meetings at Wakefield. To-morrow morning early I perform the melancholy duty of laying the first corpse in the vaults of our new chapel; a respectable member of our society, who was with us at the Missionary Meeting, and all the services connected with it, in the same chapel. So precarious is life; so soon may our Master call! May

we be found ready, at our post, and in our work ;  
and what then is death ?

“ ———. ’Tis life’s last shore,  
Where vanities are vain no more ;  
Where all pursuits their goal obtain,  
And life is *all retouch’d again* ;  
Where in their bright *results* shall rise,  
Thoughts, virtues, friendships, griefs, and joys.”

At the Conference of 1815 Mr. Watson was returned a second year to Hull ; and his colleagues were the Rev. Messrs. Isaac Turton, William Naylor, and Henry S. Hopwood. They laboured together in harmony and love, and had the high gratification of seeing the work of God in a state of growing prosperity through the Circuit. The following account of this part of Mr. Watson’s life has been kindly supplied by Mr. Naylor :—

“I had the honour and happiness of being appointed to labour with him in the Hull Circuit, and, as our residences were near each other, our intercourse was frequent and free ; and, in regard of myself, it was truly profitable. It was our custom, with our colleagues, to spend one forenoon in the week in discussing some selected subject in divinity, when his richly-stored mind would unfold and illustrate the important doctrines of the Gospel to our edification : and frequently we knew not which to admire most, the luminous statements which he made, or the humility with which they were given : the teacher generally personating the earnest inquirer.

“In Hull he was greatly esteemed by the pious of all denominations, who availed themselves of

the opportunity of attending his ministry; and his powerful and evangelical discourses were not merely admired, but felt, and rendered especially useful. I have frequently thought that, as a Preacher, he never surpassed what he was in those days. His sermons were closely studied; and, having then greater bodily vigour than he possessed in the latter years of his life, they were delivered with an energy which increased the interest they were so well calculated to produce. His labours were not in vain in the Lord. Not only were believers comforted and edified, but sinners were convinced of their guilty, depraved, and miserable condition and effectually turned to God, under his ministry. My surprise was, that their number was not greater. When I have heard his convincing statements concerning the evil and fearful consequences of sin; his powerful appeals to the conscience; and his encouraging addresses to the penitent, to draw near to God through the mediation of Jesus Christ; I have thought that we should surely hear of many conversions.

“There is reason to believe that the disease which terminated his life existed, if it had not its commencement, during his residence in the Hull Circuit. He complained of a pain in his side. This was so severe, that he could not bear the exercise of riding on horseback, which was our usual mode of conveyance to the distant places in the Circuit. He was exceedingly punctual in attending his appointments; and therefore performed many long journeys on foot, even in the middle of winter, and upon very indifferent roads;

for he could not endure the thought of neglecting a congregation, when he was expected; and he felt very keenly, if any one supposed him capable of doing so from indifference."

While in the Hull Circuit Mr. Watson narrowly escaped with his life in one of his journeys into the country. For several years the Preachers had been in the habit of visiting Marfleet on the week-day evenings: a small village in Holderness, on the banks of the Humber, where they had a society and congregation. The road to this place being then circuitous, foot-passengers were accustomed to shorten the distance, by walking across the fields, which are surrounded by deep drains; and over these some narrow planks formed the only bridges. When returning from this place one stormy winter's night, Mr. Watson missed the path, and wandered about for some hours, exposed to the storm, and in no small danger of perishing in the drains, which were then filled with water. As the night advanced his family and friends became alarmed; and Mr. John Thompson, at whose house he was expected to sup on his way home, set out with a lantern in quest of him. Mr. Watson, in a state of great exhaustion, saw the light approach; and believing it to be the sign of deliverance, sent in answer to his prayer, stood still till he was able to hail its friendly bearer, who was overjoyed to find that he was the honoured means of saving so valuable a life. Mr. Watson, who was completely bewildered when Mr. Thompson appeared, always regarded this deliverance as the result of a providential interposition.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE friends in London applied for Mr. Watson's assistance at the Anniversary of their District Missionary Society in the spring of 1816; and, in compliance with their request, he preached in the City-road chapel on the morning of the 25th of April. The Rev. William Jones, the Editor of the New Evangelical Magazine, who had been acquainted with Mr. Watson in Liverpool, had given so high a character of him, as to induce the attendance of a large number of Dissenting Ministers; and as the Missionary Anniversary was held during the sitting of the Annual District-Meeting, when the Methodist Preachers belonging to all the neighbouring Circuits were present, nearly the whole of the front gallery was occupied by Ministers. Mr. Watson felt the importance of the occasion, and experienced no ordinary degree of trepidation in contemplating the task which was allotted him. He paced the vestry of the chapel in a state of considerable agitation; and when he was informed that the time for commencing the service had arrived, he said, with an expression of strong emotion, "Seasons of this kind require strong nerves, and great assistance from above." That assistance he received in an eminent degree; although he was so affected that he partly lost the recollection of the topics which he intended to serve as an introduction to his discourse. The sermon was founded upon 1 Cor. xv. 25: "He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." The subject was the mediatorial government of Christ,

viewed especially in connexion with the universal spread and establishment of Christianity in the world ; and the sermon altogether was one of his happiest and most successful efforts. It is scarcely possible to conceive of argumentation more lucid and powerful, sentiments more sublime and impressive, imagery more beautiful and varied, and diction more rich and appropriate, than those which characterized this wonderful discourse. As he overcame his embarrassment, and entered into the subject, his own heart became deeply impressed with its truth and momentous results ; his countenance expanded ; and the effect upon the congregation was irresistible. Much had been expected from him :

“ Yet when at length the clear and mellow bass  
Of his deep voice brake forth, and he let fall  
His chosen words like flakes of feather'd snow ;”

and when every successive topic which he introduced rose in interest and grandeur ; a breathless silence pervaded the whole assembly ; the people seemed to be all but their attention dead ; the powers of the Preacher were forgotten in the magnitude and sublimity of the theme ; and when the protracted service concluded, every one seemed to feel as the parent of mankind felt when he had been listening with amazed and delighted attention to the strains of angelic eloquence, describing the creation of the universe by the almighty Son of God :—

“ The angel ended, and in Adam's ear  
So charming left his voice, that he awhile  
Thought him still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear.”

One peculiarity attended all Mr. Watson's occasional sermons, as well as his ordinary ministry,—admiration of the Preacher was only a very subordinate feeling among his hearers. Every one, of course, was impressed with the greatness of his talents and genius; but, excepting the merely sentimental hearers, who were equally deficient in piety and in sound judgment, and whose attention was directed to nothing but figures of speech, the congregations were so much affected with the subjects which he brought before them, as to be almost incapable of thinking of any thing else. These were exhibited in a light so impressive, and their practical bearing was so distinctly and forcibly urged, that the devout part of his hearers especially were deeply humbled under a sense of their deficiencies and neglects, and retired from the house of God lamenting their past indifference, resolving to be more faithful for the time to come, and retiring into secret to ask pardoning mercy from God, and grace to enable them to fulfil their obligations.

Mr. Watson declined to publish the sermon which he preached in the City-road chapel; and no outline of it was found among his papers after his decease. The following account of it, and of the occasion on which it was delivered, was given by Mr. Jones in the periodical work which has just been mentioned:—"The whole of the discourse was strikingly appropriate to the cause of Missions; and the Preacher never for a moment lost sight of the important object of the meeting. As this sermon, according to our judgment, possessed no ordinary degree of excellence, it would



afford us pleasure to present our readers with something like an epitome of it, but the very attempt disheartens us. We feel how much injustice we should unavoidably do to the Preacher, while we should be as far from satisfying ourselves. Those who would form any just estimate of Mr. Watson's pulpit talents must hear him for themselves. His popularity, unlike that of many of the present day, is not founded upon the ignorance of his followers. It is not the gracefulness of his action, the modulations of his voice, nor the harmony of his periods alone, that arrest the attention of his hearers, and make them listen to him with delight. In none of these, indeed, is Mr. Watson deficient; but he possesses other pulpit excellences of a still higher order, which may be truly said to lay the basis of a solid popularity, and which confer upon the former a kind of crowning effect. These are a discriminating judgment, an understanding highly cultivated, an intimate acquaintance with the sacred writings, enlarged and liberal views of things, and a happy facility of communicating his ideas to others. Mr. Watson is not a dull declaimer; there is nothing of pedantry about him. He can, it is true, be plain and familiar, where plainness and familiarity are proper; but he can also soar to the heights of sublimity. His mind is richly stored with sentiment; and few men possess a happier talent at conveying that sentiment to others. It is some years since we had heard Mr. Watson preach; but though we looked for great things from him, we frankly own that he has surpassed our expectations. We were glad to find that the interval of half-a-dozen years

had contributed towards maturing his judgment, and perfecting his qualifications as a Preacher. We observed several of the London Ministers, of different denominations, present on this occasion ; and, if we might be allowed to draw any conclusion from the expressions of marked satisfaction which they evinced in their whole behaviour, we should say that they were not disappointed. It may gratify the curiosity of some of our readers to be furnished with the mere outline of this admirable sermon. Some pertinent and striking observations on the nature of the Christian dispensation,—its prophetic character, and the profound and intimate acquaintance which the Apostle Paul had with it in all its ramifications, introduced the discussion of the text ; to illustrate which the Preacher proposed the consideration of three particulars ;—the ‘enemies’ which Christ will ultimately subdue,—the nature of that dispensation which is termed his ‘reign,’—and the certainty of his eventual success.

“The enemies of Christ, Mr. Watson justly remarked, are all of them the enemies of the happiness of man ; and these he classed under the following subdivisions :—Satan and his angels,—sin,—false religions, under every form and shape,—and all civil governments that set themselves in opposition to the interests of his kingdom, by persecuting his people, and endeavouring to check the progress of his Gospel in the world. After illustrating each of these particulars, he proceeded to delineate the characteristic properties of Christ’s reign, which he judiciously distinguished from his providential government of the world ; remarking,

that it was an administration conferred upon him by God the Father, in consequence of his having finished the work of redemption, and in virtue of which 'all power is given unto him, both in heaven and on earth.' He therefore considered it under the threefold view of a reign of mercy,—a reign of vengeance,—and a reign which does not supersede the freedom of the human will.\* The discussion of these topics brought the Preacher to the last head of his discourse,—the grounds of the assurance which we have that Christ will ultimately triumph over his and over all his people's enemies. This certainty of success he was proceeding to argue from the numerous prophecies contained in Scripture, concerning the extension of his kingdom, and the promises made to him of having the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. But waving a particular detail of the prophecies concerning the reign of the Messiah, and the universal extension of his kingdom, the consideration of which would occupy more time than could be allowed, he confined himself to the argument arising from the Deity of Christ, as involving in itself an assured ground of confidence to us, that he will finally subdue all his enemies; and that his kingdom shall come with power, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In this part of his sermon Mr. Watson took occasion to advert to the

\* The expression used by Mr. Jones is, "a reign of moral suasion;" but Mr. Watson remarked to the writer of this narrative, when he read this account of his sermon, that "moral suasion" was a phrase which he had never used in the pulpit in the whole course of his life.

conduct of the Socinians, who are unwearied in their efforts to 'rob the Saviour of the brightest diadem in his crown;' at the mention of which the soul of the Preacher seemed to take fire; and, rising into the boldest strain of animation, he reprobated their sentiments, with merited indignation, in a fine tone of impassioned eloquence. This brought him to the winding up of his discourse, in which he displayed the full force of his genius, and gave ample proof of transcendent talent. He collected into one general view the happy results of the Messiah's reign, which believers anticipate as shortly to be accomplished.—The infernal powers shall be restrained from deceiving the nations. They have had their hour and the power of darkness; but the time is at hand when they are to be shut up in the bottomless pit. The Gospel shall spread throughout the nations, enlightening those that now sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Millions of the human race, now enslaved in sin, and sunk in vice, shall shake off their fetters, and rise to righteousness and life. Persecutors shall every where cease out of the land; false religions be for ever exterminated; and Christ shall universally reign, from the rising to the setting sun.

“ But delightful and animating as these prospects are, they do not bound our hopes and expectations. The reign of Christ includes in it more than has yet been mentioned. 'The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;' and even that will be finally vanquished by the Redeemer: for 'he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.' When he hath perfected his work

of grace and mercy on earth, he will come again the second time, without a sin-offering, unto the salvation of all that look for him. 'The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.' Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'

"These few imperfect hints may serve to give our readers some faint idea of Mr. Watson's sermon; but in justice to himself we must say, that it is a very inadequate notion which can be formed of it from any description that could be given of it, even by a much abler pen than ours. We have not the pleasure of any acquaintance with him, or we would entreat its publication, as being calculated, in no ordinary degree, to subserve the cause of Missions; and though we did not perceive that Mr. Watson availed himself of any notes in delivering it, we are confident that he is sufficiently in the habit of committing his thoughts to paper, to render it no difficult task for him to prepare it for the press; since such accuracy in the structure of sentences, as that which uniformly marks his preaching, is only to be attained by the practice of writing."

The venerable Joseph Benson, who was a profound Divine, and one of the best Preachers of either that or any other age, was unbounded in his admiration of Mr. Watson's sermon; and, in his intercourse with his friends, spoke of it in terms of the highest commendation.

The public Missionary Meeting commenced at five o'clock in the evening of the day in which Mr. Watson preached at the City-road chapel. Thomas Thompson, Esq., M.P., was expected to preside; but,

in consequence of unavoidable absence, his place was supplied by Dr. Adam Clarke. In an excellent letter of apology, Mr. Thompson stated, "It has been said, by an enemy to the British and Foreign Bible Society, that a *Bible fever* has spread through the kingdom; and it is more than probable that it will soon be said, that a *Missionary fever* is following it." The Rev. Walter Griffith, whose zeal in the sacred cause was most exemplary, in seconding the first Resolution, in allusion to these words, acknowledged that he had "caught the Missionary fever. The important work of Missions occupied his whole frame, and thoughts, and prayers, and the disease which had thus affected him was a pleasant and blessed one." Mr. Watson delivered an admirable speech, in which he introduced a reference to the same subject. He hoped that the Mission fever would not be intermittent, nor Satan invent a cure.

During his residence in Hull, Mr. Watson was one of the Secretaries to the Auxiliary Missionary Society for that District. On his return from London he attended the Anniversary of this Society in Hull, and read a Report which he had prepared. The following is the conclusion of this beautiful composition:—"The fire which Heaven has kindled must be kept burning by human diligence; the hand which has been stretched out to relieve the spiritual necessities of dying men must be unwearied in its employ; and the Committee have confidence that the efforts of the Hull District Society will, under these impressions, be exerted with increasing zeal. All the motives which can press upon humane and upon Christian feeling

remain in full force. Little, indeed, has been done, in comparison of what remains to be done, for the salvation of the world. The light spreads ; but it is only as the morning on the tops of the mountains. Immense shades of darkness still remain, unpierced by the heavenly light. Large and populous empires still support the throne of Satan. The fanes of idolatry still defy the heavens ; the worship of idols and devils still debases myriads of redeemed men ; and desolation and misery still follow in the train of superstition, and curse the fairest portions of the globe. As inquiry more fully exposes the state of the heathen world, the scenes it displays are still such as fill the heart of the Christian with a deep and sorrowing sympathy. The honour of God, the disenthralment of man, still call for prayer and for exertion ; and the success which has crowned the recent attempts of the Christian church ought to be considered as the voice of God, sanctioning the work, and rousing to redoubled efforts. On this success, granted not only to the Methodist Missions, but to those of every other denomination, the Committee congratulate the Society ; persuaded that they have a common cause with Christ, and his servants of every name. Every where the Lord is making his 'work appear unto his servants, and his glory unto their children ;' the Gospel is preached with 'signs following ;' the 'Gentiles come to its light, and Kings to the brightness of its rising ;' the prelusive drops of that shower fall, which shall quench the thirst of every unwatered desert ; the cloud is but 'as a man's hand ;' but it is the cloud of promise, the pledge of 'abundance of rain.' It must

fill the ample concave of the heavens, and pour its blessings upon all the earth. 'I the Lord will hasten it in its time.' "

London was not the only place which Mr. Watson visited in the spring and summer of 1816, to assist at the formation and Anniversaries of Missionary Societies. He received pressing invitations from several other parts of the kingdom; and such was the interest which he felt in the good cause, that, as far as his health and the claims of his Circuit would allow, he never hesitated to meet the wishes of the zealous men who were like-minded with himself on the subject of Missions. Wherever he went his sermons and speeches left a salutary impression upon the multitudes who were drawn together by the attraction of his name. He taught them the value of Christianity, as the medicine of life, and the sovereign remedy of human misery; and at the same time he so forcibly stated the obligations of the church to send the Gospel to the Heathen, as to awaken in many persons an increased attention to their own spiritual interests; while the Mission funds were augmented in every place where he pleaded the cause of the Heathen. In the midst of all this popularity, his temper was devout and spiritual; he was often deeply humbled before God; and his mind was not unfrequently exercised by painful temptations. Sometimes it was with him a matter of extreme difficulty to find suitable subjects upon which to preach in the course of his ordinary ministry; and he was often considerably agitated, even before the congregations which he was accustomed to address. Once, in the Waltham-street chapel



in Hull, his feelings were so excited, that he could not recollect the place where his text was to be found; and he was compelled to repeat the words without being able to specify the chapter and verse. At another time, before the same congregation, he pronounced the benediction when he should have repeated the Lord's prayer.

At the Conference of 1816 Mr. Watson was appointed to the London East Circuit, with the Rev. Messrs. Joseph Entwisle, Thomas Wood, John Riles, and George Marsden. His removal from his friends in Hull was a matter of mutual regret. By them he was highly esteemed; and to some of them he had formed a very cordial attachment; particularly to Mr. Garbutt and Mr. Ellis, with their families. His frequent intercourse with Germans in that sea-port led him to study the German language, with reference to the biblical treasures which it contains; but it is probable that the number of his official duties, and the calls made upon him by friends in distant places, prevented him from bringing this branch of his studies to any very successful issue. On his arrival in the Hull Circuit in the year 1814, he found one thousand seven hundred and eighty members in the different societies; and, by the blessing of God upon his labours, and those of his esteemed colleagues, he left two thousand. He found a commodious and expensive chapel in Hull nearly ready for opening, and considerable anxiety in some quarters as to the consequences of this erection; and he left a large and respectable congregation regular in their attendance upon the religious services which were conducted there.

With a heart, therefore, thankful for past mercies and success, and painfully affected by separation from an affectionate people, many of whom were his children in the Lord, he repaired to the metropolis, where his duties were onerous, especially considering the delicacy of his health and constitution. The Circuit was extensive and laborious, comprehending what are now the Circuits of City-road, Spitalfields, and Southwark; and he was also appointed Secretary to the Methodist Missions; his zeal in the Mission cause, his commanding talents, and the well-known fact, that he was an elegant and "a ready scribe," having pointed him out as eminently qualified for that very responsible office. Mr. Marsden, who was his colleague in the Circuit, and in the Missionary Secretaryship, gives the following account of him at this period:—

“When we entered upon our work as Missionary Secretaries, it was agreed that I should conduct the foreign correspondence, and that Mr. Watson should undertake the home department. It devolved upon him to prepare the Annual Report of the state of the Missions, all the periodical publications, the official correspondence with Government, and every thing that it might be requisite for us to publish in relation to the Missions. He entered on the work with ardour; and as that blessed cause, the conversion of the Heathen, continued to extend, his views of its importance became more enlarged, and all his powers appeared to be engaged in its prosperity. Through the blessing of God, the Missions prospered abroad, and the pecuniary supplies for their support and

enlargement, raised by the pious liberality of the friends at home, continued to increase. During the two years in which we acted together as Secretaries, and the three following years, in which he continued in the same office, and I had to act as one of the General Treasurers, I had frequent opportunities of witnessing his earnest desire to promote the interests of the Redeemer in the heathen world. Whenever the question of the establishment of a new Mission, or the enlargement of one of our old stations, came before the Committee, he was always ready to advocate the further extension of the work, whenever there appeared a providential opening, and a probability of success. Though our funds were frequently exhausted, he relied confidently upon the providence of God for those supplies which would be rendered necessary.

“Frequently have I admired the accuracy of his judgment in suggesting the stations to which the temper, habits, talents, and acquirements of Missionary candidates were adapted. When six or eight young men have been examined and approved by the Committee, after being duly recommended by their respective Circuits and District-Meetings, it has been a question of no ordinary moment, both with regard to themselves, and the work in which they were to be employed, in what particular parts of the Mission-field they should be respectively appointed to labour. In such cases I have almost invariably found that we might safely rely upon Mr. Watson’s judgment.

“During the five years in which we were associated together in the Mission work, and

which frequently required much time and exertion, he never relaxed in regular ministerial labours. He generally attended his appointments in the Circuit, both on the Lord's day, and the week-day evenings. All his powers, mental and bodily, were consecrated to the service of God.

“ Connected with the duties of the ministry is the visitation of the sick ; and even in those seasons of peculiar toil Mr. Watson was not inattentive to this part of his charge. With pleasure have I frequently heard of the very affectionate and useful manner in which he discharged this duty of the pastoral office. He spent sufficient time in his visits to enter into conversation with the afflicted ; endeavouring to gain a knowledge of the spiritual state of each person, that he might give suitable consolation and advice, and unite with them in appropriate acts of confession, supplication, and thanksgiving. To those who were in distress he was particularly kind and soothing ; opening to their views the promises of God, the perfect atonement of Christ, the tenderness of the divine mercy, and encouraging them to place an absolute reliance upon the divine faithfulness and love. He led the sufferer to the foot of the cross, and taught him to rest fully and constantly upon the sacrifice and intercession of the Redeemer.

“ When we were stationed together I also often heard of the very profitable and edifying manner in which he met the classes, at the quarterly renewal of the society tickets. He endeavoured in those meetings to get a knowledge of the spiritual state of each member ; and with all fidelity and affection he gave to each his portion of admonition,

counsel, or encouragement. In the various employments and duties connected with the work of the ministry he proved himself to be a man of God."

Mr. Watson's residence was in the parish of St. George's in the East, near Wapping; and a small room was then rented in the City-road, for the transaction of the Mission business. Thither he resorted daily for the discharge of his duties as Secretary to the Missions.

The following extracts of letters, which he addressed to his friends in Hull, will show the peculiarities of his situation; as well as his views of Methodism in London at that particular period. The state of society in the metropolis is such as to prevent that free and constant intercourse among religious people, which is so common in many country places. This circumstance arrested the attention of Mr. Watson, as it does that of almost every other man when he first becomes acquainted with the London Methodists.

TO W. C. ELLIS, ESQ., SURGEON, HULL.

MY DEAR FRIENDS, MR. AND MRS. ELLIS,

To be silent is not to forget. Even the bustle of London, its novelties, its fatigues, and its distracting whirl, have not so absorbed or diverted my thoughts, as to prevent me from indulging many musings on the past, as the luxury of those soft regrets which are felt by minds that can feel when the thoughts and friendships of other days return.

I am here a very insulated being, and am likely to remain so. You know there is no individuality

in London. If there be kindred minds, they meet too seldom to become one. It requires many strokes from the smith to weld his iron, though both pieces may be of a proper heat. However, we almost always find things balanced by Providence. I have indeed no time for friendships here. From morning till night I am in duty; and at night am sometimes so weary, that they would be most interesting friends indeed (some such as I *have* known) who would keep me awake. If you ask me how I like London, I can only say that, as a place, I had rather be elsewhere, surrounded by the works of God, rather than those of man; where I could apostrophize with Virgil,—

*Muscosi fontes, et somno mollior herba,  
Et quæ vos rarâ viridis tegit arbutus umbrâ ;\**

but as the centre of every kind of intelligence, it has its interest. As a Methodist, I know all that passes in the Connexion, as an Englishman, all that is transacted in the empire, much sooner than I could know it elsewhere: and yet perhaps this pleasure is ideal; for news is news, though it be much "older than our ale," or porter either. I have had, upon the whole, pleasure in my public labours; and much of the peace of God which passeth all understanding, along with active engagements. This is the best of all, to feel ourselves ever with God; and to pass through things temporal with the things eternal fully and constantly in view. For what is life? How unsubstantial till filled with those feelings and acts

\* "Ye mossy springs, inviting easy sleep,  
Ye trees, whose leafy shades those mossy fountains keep."

DRYDEN.

which connect it with the perfection of eternity, and turn it into the vestibule of the future spacious temple of being, through which we cannot pass, and from which we can never be excluded!

TO MR. ROBERT GARBUTT, MERCHANT, HULL.

ST. GEORGE'S, EAST, *Nov. 4th*, 1816.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

As self is always so near at hand, and is a subject never difficult to speak of, I may begin by saying that, as to *myself*, I have not been upon the whole so well in health as I was at Hull; though I hope I have had my seasoning, and I begin to go through my work with more vigour. The mere Circuit labour is not, I think, more than that at Hull; but our extra work is greater, and the walking is formidable. I have, for instance, to go regularly every day to the Mission-office, in the City-road, about two miles from my house, and return to dinner. Then I have my evening walk to preach, sometimes two or three miles more. To this are to be added all the supernumerary walks which business or curiosity may call for. How much time I have for study and reading you may then guess: and indeed I have been obliged to turn the streets of London into a study; and sometimes fall into a reverie, at the hazard of being upset by a porter, or dashed on the pavement by some fiery charioteer.

Methodism in London is not what it is in Yorkshire. There wants zeal in the leading men; and their union is not so close as the communion of saints, and the prosperity of a Christian society,

demand. Our congregations are, however, usually good on the Sundays ; but on the week-evenings they are inferior to yours. However, I think the work is prospering upon the whole. I have had many seasons of enlargement and comfort in preaching.

In the midst of general distress I fear Hull still supplies its share. May all these sufferings teach us that remedies for national distress are only to be found in national amendment ; and that righteousness alone exalteth a nation. May we, my dear friend, be more intent on the prize of our high calling. There are blessings which never cheat us ; there is a good we can command ; there is a peace ever flowing, and never exhausted. We are indeed living for eternity, and that is at hand ! Let us trim our lamps anew, and pour their lustre on all around us.

The first General Report of the Methodist Missions which it fell to the lot of Mr. Watson to draw up bears the date of 1816, and was published about the end of that year. The facts which it details are of the most cheering kind ; its diction is forcible and eloquent ; and it bears throughout a character of devout exultation. The writer evidently "felt his inspiration in his theme ;" and his facts and appeals are equally stirring. The liberality with which the friends at home furnished the pecuniary supplies called for thanksgivings to God, who thus disposed them to employ their property in his service ; and the marked providential openings for Missionary efforts in the heathen world, and the success which every where attended



the dissemination of divine truth, and especially in the island of Ceylon, where the Mission had been but recently commenced, warranted the indulgence of the most sanguine hopes, and called for exertions still more strenuous and extensive.

The Report states that "not less than twelve Preachers, stationed in English Circuits, and enjoying all the comforts and advantages of the home ministry, have offered themselves as foreign Missionaries, exclusive of those who had previously acted only as Local Preachers. Of these several have already taken their departure for different stations; and the rest wait the call of God, and the direction of their brethren. Their piety, their talents, and in some cases considerable learning, give the best promise of future usefulness in all the departments of Missionary labour; and the Committee cannot refrain from calling upon the grateful acknowledgments of their friends, to 'the Lord of the harvest,' for thus 'sending forth more labourers into the harvest.' With the increase of the funds there has been also an increase of men suited to the work, and willing to embrace it. This is a coincidence which cannot fail to lead to the recognition of those evident indications of Providence, which now, more than ever, make it imperative upon us to go on in the name of the Lord.

"Increasing, however, as are our exertions, and those of almost every other religious denomination, the Committee would still keep it impressed upon the minds of all who have so willingly co-operated with them in these attempts to spread the knowledge of Christ, that little has been done by any body of Christians separately, or by all collectively,

in comparison of what remains to do. Active, united, and even formidable, as have been the movements of the Christian world, for some years past, against the kingdom of darkness and sin, only a few of its outworks have been won, and little more than mere facilities obtained for extensive conquest. Whilst more than one half of the subjects of the British empire itself are Pagans, every obligation of patriotism, policy, and religion, demands persevering exertions to circulate the vital principles of true godliness through every member of the political body, until an empire fully Christianized shall be presented to the eye of the world, exhibiting, as in the first ages of the church, the glorious triumphs of the Gospel over the vices which deform, and the miseries which desolate, the fairest portions of the globe; and displaying, for the instruction and imitation of pagan Asia in particular, the beneficial effects of Christianity on the civil and moral interests of man.

“ Were there even no other field for Missionary labours than that which is presented by the British empire, comprising so great a portion of India, and numerous Asiatic islands, a part of Africa, and the colonies of the Western Archipelago, and of North America, the united efforts of all Christians for many years to come would find a large share of occupation; but beyond the bounds of the British empire, extensive as it is, and comprehending so many large and populous pagan countries, lie scenes of affecting moral misery. Immense shades of darkness still remain unpierced by a ray of heavenly light. Empires, composed of hundreds of millions of souls, still remain under the power of

Satan ; and the worship of idols and devils still robs 'God over all, blessed for ever,' of the worship due to his holy name by his redeemed creatures. Whilst the world presents such an aspect, there is surely enough of wretchedness to keep alive our sympathies, and enough of sin to rouse into vivid operation the feelings of indignant jealousy for the honour of the Lord of Hosts. The debt of the Christian world to the Heathen remains undischarged. It has run awfully into arrears ; and the favourable opportunities of access to every part of the pagan world are infallible indications that the Governor and Judge of the world, and especially of the churches, now demands its payment. The successes of the Missions of modern times are certainly not a discharge from the service, but the strongest incitements to pledge every energy anew to its holy objects. The efficiency of the Gospel has been again demonstrated in our own day in the conversion and salvation of Heathens of every class, of every clime, and of every form of pagan superstition. Every Missionary enterprise, if prudently, and, above all, if piously, undertaken,—if it be consecrated by singleness of view, and supported by prayer,—has a moral certainty of success. Every sign of the times indicates that the period is fully come when the outcasts of men shall be remembered, and they who are ready to perish shall obtain mercy. Pressing, therefore, as the state of affairs is, the Committee are persuaded that the last retrenchment which any person alive to the glory of God, and the salvation of men, will make, whenever obliged to make retrenchment, will be the sums he has devoted, first, to the support of

religion at home, and, second, to the natural and necessary consequence of the former, the extension of religion abroad. God calls, and his people follow. He who still goes on 'from conquering to conquer,' now more evidently puts himself at the head of his sacramental host. The battle is turned to the gate; and none, it is hoped, will be found treacherous to the grand and momentous struggle; none who will not wield his weapon in the war, or stretch out his hand to replenish the treasury. 'Signs of the Son of Man,' signs of glory and conquest, transfuse a new vigour into the heart, and spread new prospects to the hopes of the righteous. 'Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth;' the light of the morning, on the tops of the mountains, catches the waiting eyes of those who sit in the shadow of death. The captive exile hastens, that he may be delivered. 'The whole creation' of rational creatures, crushed beneath the accumulated weight of the tyrannizing superstitions of ages, 'groaneth and travaileth in pain to be delivered from the bondage of corruption.' All is preparation and movement. 'The rod of his strength is gone out of Zion,' and he must 'reign in the midst of his enemies.' His 'people,' too, are 'willing in the day of his power;' and nothing remains to give them their full share in the blessing and glory of that victory, which is to re-assert the rights of God to the love and homage of a world of redeemed men, but that they be 'steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.' Their labour, directed by his word, and animated by his Spirit, cannot be in vain."

From this time to the end of his life Mr. Watson

sustained the office of Missionary Secretary; he was the writer of nearly the whole of the Reports, from year to year; and it will be seen, that his zeal for the advancement of Missions suffered no abatement; his hopes of success never flagged; and the interest of his annual Reports rather increased than diminished till his heart and hand ceased to move.

---

## CHAPTER X.

THE wisdom of the appointment of Mr. Watson to the office of Missionary Secretary was apparent to every one when his first Report was put into circulation; and it was not less manifest when he was called, through the medium of the press, to defend the West India Missions against misrepresentation and calumny. These Missions had been begun under circumstances strikingly providential; and were prosecuted under the direction of Dr. Coke with admirable zeal and effect, and at a vast expense of money and life. Several of the planters were humane men, and encouraged the instruction of their slaves in the principles of religion; for they found that the converted Negroes were honest, and from a sense of duty discharged the tasks allotted them: but others were decidedly hostile to all attempts at Negro improvement, and desired no incentive to slave-labour but that which was supplied by the cart-whip, and similar instruments of torture. The spiritual interests of the Negro were either the subjects of profane ridicule, or were

absolutely forgotten. The black man, though redeemed by the blood of the Son of God, was regarded merely as a machine for the manufacture of sugar.

Unhappily, the enemies of Missions formed the majority, and were perpetually inventing tales of insurrection, in which they were careful to implicate the Missionaries; and some of the local Legislatures embarrassed these Ministers of Christ by persecuting enactments. The object of the Missionaries was purely spiritual. They taught the Negroes Christianity, with a reference to the salvation of their souls, and had no ulterior design whatever. They saw the people perishing in ignorance and sin; and felt themselves bound to obey the command of the Saviour, who has directed, that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." When the slaves were impressed under the ministry of the word, the Missionaries united them together in Christian societies, that they might watch over one another's religious and moral conduct. The slaves were accustomed to promiscuous intercourse; and the Missionaries explained to them the necessity, sanctity, and permanence of the marriage tie, and joined them together in holy matrimony; at the same time inculcating upon them the duties of contentment, submission, and diligence.

Though the Missionaries never interfered with the civil condition of the slaves, yet it was evident to every person of discernment, who had watched the progress of events in the world, that Christianity and slavery could not finally subsist together; especially such slavery as prevailed in the

West Indies. The converted Negroes became intelligent, thoughtful, industrious, and faithful in every domestic relation. Christianity prepared them to discharge the duties and enjoy the rights of civil liberty; it even taught them, "if they might be made free, to use it rather;" and as its light and influence spread among the Negro population, slavery was seen in all its enormity. The men, therefore, who deprecated all alteration in the civil condition of the slave, and wished to rivet the chain upon his neck for ever, endeavoured to arrest the progress of evangelical instruction, and to perpetuate brutal ignorance, as best suited to a people who were treated like cattle, and as the only means of securing a permanent property in the Negro and his hapless offspring. These adversaries of the truth professed to be friendly to Negro instruction and conversion; they only wanted to get rid of the Missionaries, as being dangerous to the community, and incompetent to the task which they had undertaken; well knowing, that, in the absence of the Missionary, there was no man to care for the spiritual interests of the slave, or to teach him the way of life.

The advocates of ignorance and of slavery were at once numerous, bold, and determined; and in the Senate, in the public papers, and in pamphlets, held up the Missionaries to general reprobation. In the month of June, 1816, Mr. Barham, M.P. for Stockbridge, stated in the House of Commons, that the Methodist Missionaries in the West Indies, under a mask of religion, inculcated principles of sedition, taught disobedience to masters, and encouraged among the Negroes those delusive and per-

nicious ideas which led in one instance to open insurrection, and in others to a prevailing state of agitation and discontent. The Committee applied to him, through the medium of the Rev. James Wood, one of the General Treasurers, requesting him to supply them with the requisite names and facts, that they might call to an account the men who had so offended; declaring that such conduct was in direct opposition to the instructions which the Missionaries had received, and which they had individually pledged themselves to observe. The honourable Member refused to enter into any explanation on the subject of these grave charges, except in the House of Commons. At the request of the Committee, Mr. Butterworth brought the matter before Parliament; when Lord Castlereagh, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, bore honourable testimony to the exemplary conduct of the Methodist Missionaries in the West India colonies, and the benefits resulting from their labours; and Mr. Barham declared that it was not his intention to cast any reflection upon the Missionaries employed by the Methodist body. He acknowledged his inability, in fact, to discriminate between one religious sect and another; but stated that he had been informed that men who were called Methodist Missionaries had been guilty of the delinquencies which he had imputed to them. The names of the offenders, and the times and places at which these Missionaries had thus dishonoured their sacred office, he was not prepared to specify. Mr. Butterworth withdrew his motion, at the request of Lord Castlereagh; his Lordship declaring, in behalf of His Majesty's Government, that there lay no



charge whatever against the Missionaries who had been censured so harshly by name.

Mr. Barham had a zealous coadjutor in Mr. Marryat, himself also a member of the Senate. This gentleman attacked the character and ministrations of the Methodist Missionaries in various pamphlets, in which he was assisted by anonymous writers in different periodical journals; and so loud was the clamour, that Mr. Watson was induced to publish "A Defence of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missions in the West Indies: including a Refutation of the Charges in Mr. Marryat's 'Thoughts on the Abolition of the Slave Trade,' &c., and other Publications; with Facts and Anecdotes, illustrative of the moral State of the Slaves, and of the Operation of Missions." The publication of this pamphlet was a seasonable antidote to the unfounded calumnies against Missionaries in the West Indies, which were then urged with such frequency and vehemence, that they had already begun to make an injurious impression upon the public mind; and it afforded to the friends and supporters of the Missions to the Negroes a ground of honest triumph and congratulation. Never was the defence of a righteous cause more complete. The author's piety, eloquence, wit, philanthropy, statesmanlike views, and powers of argumentation, are all brought with admirable effect to bear upon his subject.

There were several Wesleyan Ministers stationed in different parts of Great Britain, who had formerly been Missionaries to the Negroes; and the Committee with whom Mr. Watson was connected addressed a circular letter to each of these excellent

men, and to some of their brethren in the West Indies, proposing various questions respecting the religious and moral condition of the slaves before they were brought under Missionary instruction and influence; the effect of Christianity upon their spirit and habits; the manner in which the Missionaries had been treated in the different islands; and other subjects connected with the Mission; and the assumptions and fallacious reasonings of Mr. Marryat were confronted by the separate and independent testimony of the Rev. Messrs. William Warrener, Richard Pattison, John Brownell, Joseph Taylor, William Gilgrass, Myles C. Dixon, William Fish, Daniel Campbell, Isaac Bradnack, and John Willis.

As an historical record, this pamphlet will maintain a permanent value. When every vestige of slavery shall have disappeared in the British West India colonies, when people of every colour dwelling in those beautiful islands shall live under the protection of equal laws, and the Negro shall rival the white man in intelligence, property, and every thing that can elevate and adorn human nature, this pamphlet will be referred to as supplying a specimen of the heartless calumnies heaped upon the benevolent and self-denying Missionaries, who were, under the blessing of Providence, the true authors of so happy a change. For it is to the operation of Missions, unquestionably, that the abolition of slavery is to be attributed; though nothing could be more remote from the views of the Missionaries when they first entered upon their work. The Missions have brought to light the real state of the slave; and the murderous violence

with which some of the planters assailed the men who were engaged in his instruction ultimately roused the people of England to petition Parliament for the overthrow of the system.

Having shown, by irrefragable evidence, that before the Missionaries commenced their labours in the West Indies the Negroes in general had scarcely the slightest conception of religion in any form ; that they had no Sabbath ; were almost entire strangers to the marriage relation ; that the Clergy in general, residing in the West Indies, did not consider the Negroes as any part of their charge ; and that by means of Missionary labour many thousands of these degraded people had been raised to a character of purity, loyalty, and happiness, enduring the evils of slavery "with a glad heart and free," enjoying the blessings of Christianity both in life and in death ; Mr. Watson concludes his publication in the following emphatic and impressive manner :—"If the object of this party, so zealous in the cause they have espoused, as to put every periodical work and newspaper they can influence into requisition, to convey their charges and insinuations against those who are employed in instructing and Christianizing the slave population of the colonies, be also to influence the British Parliament in favour of some restrictive measure they may intend to propose, this attempt is still bolder than the incitement of the colonists, and implies a very indecent reflection upon a Legislature which of late has been more than usually active in directing its attention to the improvement of the education and morals of the lower classes ; and which is not more distinguished for the talents

of its members, than for a general and established character of religious liberality. To suppose it even possible for the British Parliament to adopt the jealous feelings, the intolerance, and the total disregard for the religious interests of the Negro slaves by which they have distinguished themselves, can only be accounted for by the proneness of men to measure others by their own standard. The presumption, however, cannot be so high, nor the real character of Parliament so little known, as to embolden them to make this attempt directly. We shall doubtless hear again, as formerly, of their anxiety for the instruction of the Negroes, their wish that a better provision may be made for that purpose by the Church of England; and then, (which is the key to the whole,) of the necessity of discountenancing the efforts of all other Missionary Societies. But with the evidence which has already been presented of the real state of the Negroes, the acknowledged impracticability of providing adequate religious instruction for them by other means than are now in operation, the good which has already been effected, the important moral influence which is in present activity, and the extensive benefits, both civil and moral, which are every year developing themselves, the cause of the African may be left without anxiety in the hands of the British Parliament, and to the opinion of the British public, notwithstanding the active means of misrepresentation, and the calumnies which have been employed to bring into discredit Missions of the first order in point of civil importance, and of the greatest magnitude in respect of success. But there are deeper interests involved in them, and

which cannot appeal to the heart in vain whilst our Christianity is any thing more than a name, and our professed respect for religion better than a hollow pretence. Are they considerations of no weight with the public, in an age of generous philanthropy, and enlightened zeal for the progress of the truth of God, that for so many years thousands of neglected slaves have been sought out and instructed by Missionaries of different denominations, when none beside cared for them? that thousands in that period have passed into a happy immortality, having been previously prepared for it by the hallowing influence of religion? that a system of instruction has been commenced, which, if unchecked in its operation, will prepare an ignorant and abject class of men to read with advantage those holy Scriptures which it is now the noble ambition of so large and respectable a class of society at home to furnish to every nation under heaven; and which will extend all those blessings through the West Indies, which are so justly considered as attached to the preaching of the Gospel, and to the possession of the sacred oracles? Is it a powerless appeal made to humane and religious feeling, that crimes have been diminished among the slaves, wherever the influence of the Gospel has been permitted freely to exert itself? that punishments have been proportionally mitigated? that the moral standard, however low it may yet be, has been greatly raised in many of the islands? that so many cheering spectacles of happy and orderly Negro families are exhibited? that the Negro hut resounds with the praises of Christ; and the infant children of Ethiopia, under the care of

their converted mothers, are taught to stretch out their hands unto God? Such have been the effects, more or less strikingly displayed, wherever the Missionaries have laboured. 'The wilderness and the solitary place have been glad for them.' And is this fair prospect—at once the effect of moral cultivation, and the demonstration of its efficiency—to be broken in upon and trampled down at the call of men by whose exertions a ray of light was never conveyed into the mind of a slave, nor any of his vices corrected; who can survey, without a sigh, his mind in ruins, the habitation of those prowling passions which are the objects of their dread, and the instruments of his misery; content only if he continues to crouch under the whip, and to yield his appointed quantum of labour; and indignant, not at their own neglect, and his vices, but at the men who have expended health and life in *his* cause and *theirs*? A work of so much mercy cannot be placed under the protection of the public sentiment of the people of this country in vain; nor will the Parliament of Great Britain allow undertakings so dear to humanity and piety to be obstructed by calumny and clamour. The appeal which, when the bodily wrongs only of the sons of Africa were in question, roused every feeling of humane interest in the Parliament and people of Great Britain, will not be less powerful when connected with the immortal interests of the mind, and the solemnities of eternity: 'AM I NOT A MAN, AND A BROTHER?'

Mr. Watson's correspondence with the Missionaries in the West Indies, and frequent intercourse with the excellent men who had returned from that

field of labour, rendered him perfectly familiar with the state of society in those colonies, and produced in his mind a deep conviction of the essential cruelty and wickedness of Negro slavery; and this conviction at length led him to co-operate, in a manner the most cordial and efficient, with the Christian philanthropists who so long and honourably laboured to effect the extinction of that enormous evil. Nor was this at all surprising. He must have had a heart of adamant who was not moved to pity and indignation by the recital of Negro wrongs and sufferings; and especially when he saw the determined and persevering attempts which were made to deny to the oppressed the only consolation applicable to their case,—the consolation of religion. In his “Defence of the Missions” Mr. Watson partly draws aside the veil, and exhibits the miseries of slavery. The following fact, supplied by Mr. Gilgrass, speaks volumes on this subject:—“A master of slaves, who lived near us in Kingston, Jamaica, exercised his barbarities on a Sabbath morning, while we were worshipping God in the chapel; and the cries of the female sufferers have frequently interrupted us in our devotions. But there was no redress for them or for us. This man wanted money; and one of the female slaves having two fine children, he sold one of them, and the child was torn from her maternal affection. In the agony of her feelings she made a hideous howling; and for that crime was flogged. Soon after he sold her other child. This ‘turned her heart within her,’ and impelled her into a kind of madness. She howled night and day in the yard, tore her hair, ran up and down the streets

and the parade, rending the heavens with her cries, and literally watering the earth with her tears. Her constant cry was, '*Da wicked Massa Jew, he sell me children. Will no Buckra Massa pity Nega? What me do? Me no have one child.*' As she stood before my window, she said, '*My Massa,*' (lifting up her hands towards heaven,) '*do me Massa Minister, pity me! Me heart do so,*' (shaking herself violently,) '*me heart do so, because me have no child. Me go a Massa house, in Massa yard, and in me hut, and me no see em!*' and then her cry went up to God. I durst not be seen looking at her."

Mr. Watson's pamphlet was extensively read by Members of Parliament, and other public men. Mr. Wilberforce expressed his approbation of it in strong terms. It silenced Mr. Marryat; and from the time of its publication the conduct of that gentleman towards the Methodist Members of the House of Commons was courteous and respectful. The work appeared in the spring of 1817, and, in the course of the following summer, procured for the author many votes of thanks from Missionary Meetings in different parts of the country.

This publication had a far more important bearing than the author and his friends anticipated. Up to that period the Missionaries, intent only upon promoting the spiritual interests of the Negroes, had done little to show the people of England the real character of West Indian slavery. They had rather concealed the miseries of the slave, than declared his true condition; for they were afraid of disobliging the planters, and of being denied all access to the objects of their charge.



The attacks upon the Missionaries, however, ex-  
torted from them disclosures concerning the brutal  
ignorance of the Negro, and the state of oppression  
under which he groaned; and these disclosures  
were not without their effect upon the religious  
part of the community. Mr. Watson's pamphlet,  
which was wrung from him by the violence of the  
West Indian body, in a great degree prepared the  
public mind for that movement by which West  
Indian slavery has been abolished. Thus does the  
Almighty, in the wise and beneficent arrangements  
of his providence, cause even "the wrath of man  
to praise him."

While Mr. Watson stood forth as the able and  
unflinching advocate of the Missions to the  
Negroes, he was attentive to the more private  
duties of his Secretaryship, and to all his pastoral  
engagements; and at the same time was ready, as  
much as lay in his power, to assist at the Anniver-  
saries of Missionary Societies, especially in the  
northern part of the kingdom, where he had for-  
merly laboured so usefully, and had many affec-  
tionate friends. It is indeed surprising that, with  
a delicate and sickly frame, he should have been  
able to go through so much labour both of body  
and mind. But he was diligent in the improve-  
ment of his time; his heart was in his work; he  
was engaged in a service upon which he saw that  
the blessing of God evidently rested; his spirit  
was cheerful and sanguine; and he possessed a  
facility in writing for the press, of which few per-  
sons who were not intimately acquainted with him  
could have an adequate conception. He had little  
time for study; but strength proportioned to his

day was given to him ; and his public ministry was exercised through his extensive Circuit with a freshness and a power which excited general admiration. His "bow" did indeed "abide in strength ;" and his usefulness was great in every department of his work. He attended the Conference at Sheffield in July and August, 1817 ; and there he received from his brethren every mark of confidence, affection, and esteem. The following Resolution was unanimously adopted by the Conference, and published in their Minutes :—

"That the warmest thanks of this body are eminently due to Mr. Watson, for his able and triumphant 'Defence of the Wesleyan-Methodist Missions in the West Indies,' published during the past year, at the request of the Missionary Committee."

At this Conference it was found that the contributions towards the support of the Methodist Missions were rapidly on the increase ; so that the call of Providence to enlarge the sphere of their foreign operations was loud and distinct ; and the cheerfulness with which those contributions were presented in all parts of the kingdom was such as to warrant the expectation of a permanent increase in their funds. While several additional Missionaries, therefore, were accepted, and appointed to labour in various parts of the heathen world, the Conference resolved, "That suitable premises for a Methodist Missionary House and Office shall be immediately procured, in some central situation in London, affording sufficient accommodation for the orderly transaction of all our Missionary business, and for a depôt of proper articles which are wanted

in the outfit of Missionaries." It was also felt that the plan upon which the Methodist Missions were conducted was somewhat anomalous. A Missionary Society was formed in almost every District in the Connexion ; but there was no General Society, which could hold its annual Meeting, and to which the proceedings of the executive Committee could be regularly reported. The Conference, therefore, directed the Committee to arrange a plan for the formation of a "General Wesleyan Missionary Society," which should hold its Anniversary in London about the month of May, and to which all the District Societies should be considered Auxiliaries. The plan thus formed was to be laid before the Conference of 1818 for its approval.

On Mr. Watson's return from the Conference he entered upon his work with renewed ardour. He felt that he had the confidence of his brethren ; he was esteemed and beloved by the congregations to whom he ministered ; the Missions were in a state of growing prosperity ; and at no period of his life did he render more important and valuable services to the cause of Christianity, and especially to the Methodist body, than during the present year. Not long after his return from the Conference he was called to preach at the opening of the new chapel in Queen-street, near Lincoln's-Inn Fields. Mr. Benson preached in the morning, Mr. Newton in the afternoon, and Mr. Watson in the evening. The venerable man who took the lead in these services expressed in very strong terms his admiration of the sermons which were delivered by Messrs. Newton and Watson. The occasion was one of superior interest : the chapel being the largest that the

Methodists had erected in London since the year 1777, when that in the City-road was built; and it was more highly ornamented than any other place of worship then occupied by them in the metropolis. To these circumstances Mr. Watson alludes in the following letter, addressed

TO W. C. ELLIS, ESQ., HULL.

LONDON, *Oct. 1st, 1817.*

MY DEAR SIR,

LONDON still presents to my mind and feelings a contrast to the country; not at all in its favour. We may, and I hope do, live for others here, but certainly not for ourselves; if the intercourse of friends, the feeling of acquaintance, and the excitement of conversation, be personal advantages. However, it is the imperfection of this state to enjoy good only by occasional contrast; and the follower of Christ is "in all things, and every where, to be instructed."

Do you hesitate as to my opinion of St. Paul, as the greatest man that ever trod the theatre of this earth? Think of every character of moral greatness, and ask whether one be wanting in him. Recollect the degree in which he possessed them; and mark how many he had which they have not who have so often been called great. Here is a subject for discussion by the fireside for you and Mrs. Ellis, in which I should be most happy to join.

I am glad to hear that Hull feels the general impulse given to our national circulation. The patient revives without the aid either of the em

pirical skill of Major Cartwright, or the drugging of universal suffrage. With all this we have, it is true, rumours of great sickness in different places; but that is no drawback in the consideration of the *profession Esculapean*.

I have no official news, except that we are sending off about eighteen Missionaries; and that we opened the new Queen-street chapel on Thursday last. You cannot see it till you get within; but then it throws even the chapel in Waltham-street into the shade. We are generally doing well in this Circuit. Both societies and congregations are on the increase.

In the month of February, 1818, Mr. Watson preached at the opening of the new chapel in Oxford, a city which he always delighted to visit. The ancient and venerable appearance of its public buildings, sacred to learning, and the personal examples of virtue and profound scholarship connected with them in his recollections, all tended to awaken in his heart the most pleasurable emotions. Here many of those master-spirits were disciplined, by whose writings his own studies had been directed, and his mind trained to wisdom and piety. He used even to admire the dresses of that learned body, and took a lively interest in all the particulars of college life. No man was better qualified than he to estimate the benefits of sound learning, particularly in connexion with theology; and no man was ever more sincerely attached to the institutions of the country, especially those of them which bear upon its literature, religion, science, and legislation.

That great revival of religion which has taken place in modern times, and which has been denominated Methodism, had its origin in Oxford. Here the persons composing what was called the "Godly Club" used to meet together for pious conversation, to visit the sick and the prisoners; and here the two Wesleys delivered their powerful and awakening sermons, in an age of lukewarmness and formality, regardless of the gibes of profane witlings, and of the contempt of grave men. After struggling with great difficulties for many years, the Wesleyan Methodists in Oxford succeeded in the erection of a chapel, remarkable for its neatness, and in a convenient situation. It was the third that they had occupied; and was opened on Thursday, February 9th, when Dr. Adam Clarke preached in the morning, Mr. Watson in the afternoon, and Mr. Bunting in the evening. On the following Sunday, Mr. Benson preached in the morning and evening, and Mr. Jenkins in the afternoon. The collections made at the different services amounted to upwards of £200. The Undergraduates of the University were duly warned, in their several colleges, not to attend any of these services; and while Mr. Bunting was preaching in the evening, the Proctor, apprehensive that some member of that learned body might have strayed into this unhallowed place, walked with an air of authority into the chapel; took his stand in one of the aisles; deliberately surveyed the congregation; and, not observing any person there who was under his jurisdiction, retired, and left the Preacher to finish his discourse, to the edification of his hearers.

An event occurred in connexion with the opening of this chapel of a somewhat amusing kind; and as it is calculated to teach an important practical lesson to those who are often thrown into the company of strangers, it may be worth while to relate it. When Dr. Clarke was on his way to Oxford, attended by two or three friends, who were accompanying him, they met with a lady in the road, who called to the coachman, and inquired if he could take her to Oxford. As there was a vacant place in the coach, she took possession of it, and thus joined the Doctor and his party. Not suspecting who they were, she informed them that she was on her way to Oxford, to attend the religious services connected with the opening of a Methodist chapel in that city; that she was not a Methodist herself; but had heard a favourable account of the Ministers who were to officiate, and had determined to hear and judge for herself, respecting a people whose tenets and practices excited so much attention in the world. The company suffered the lady to remain in ignorance as to who her fellow-travellers were; and she, with all possible frankness, related to them what she had heard concerning the character and talents of the men whose ministry she was going to attend; stating particularly, that she understood Dr. Clarke to be a learned man, but a very plain Preacher. She perceived the company to be somewhat amused by her remarks; and, supposing that they were inclined to treat Methodist preaching with levity, pressed them to attend the services which were the object of her journey; at the same time expressing a hope that even they might hear

something which would do them no harm. On the following morning, while sitting in the chapel, waiting for the commencement of the service, she recognised the Doctor's friends in an adjoining pew; and, giving them a nod and a smile, was pleased to think that they had accepted her invitation. At length the Doctor came out of the vestry, and ascended the pulpit;—the very man whose character she had unknowingly described and criticised in his presence on the preceding day! Her feelings of surprise and mortification may be more easily conceived than expressed; and when the service was ended, she complained bitterly to the Doctor and his friends, for having suffered her to place herself in so awkward a position. The Doctor spoke to her with his characteristic benevolence and generosity, so as to remove from her mind every uneasy feeling; and, before he left Oxford, he addressed a letter to her, giving her information on some doctrinal topics, concerning which she was making anxious inquiries. In the mean while the case transpired, and was whispered in different directions; and, as the tale was new, and seemed too good to be suppressed, every one that knew it was prompt in communicating it to his neighbour. Mr. Watson was made acquainted with the particulars, and in the course of the day related the whole to a large party, unconscious that the lady was in the room, and was writhing under his playful description of her unfortunate adventure; thus, in fact, putting himself in the very situation which excited his amusement.



## CHAPTER XI.

EARLY in the year 1818 Mr. Watson published one of his most important theological works: a dissertation on the eternal Sonship of Christ, and on the use of reason in matters of revelation. As a Preacher he had attained the highest rank in the public estimation; the single sermons and the Missionary Reports which he had published showed to great advantage his abilities in that species of composition which combines argumentation with rhetorical embellishment; and his Answer to Mr. Roscoe, and Defence of the Wesleyan Missions, demonstrated that his powers in political disquisition and general controversy were of a superior order: but he was yet comparatively unknown as a Divine; and in what manner he could grapple with the more profound questions in theology, was yet to be determined. An opportunity now offered; the occasion was momentous; and the call of duty appeared to be obvious and urgent. Dr. Adam Clarke's very elaborate Commentary on the holy Scriptures was then in a course of publication; and was read very extensively, and with great avidity, especially in the Methodist Connexion, of which the author had long been a distinguished ornament. In this work the Doctor strenuously contends for the true and proper divinity of Jesus Christ; but at the same time maintains that he is the Son of God merely with regard to his human nature; and that he is so denominated because of the manner in which that nature was produced in the womb of his virgin

mother. This opinion was not new ; though it does not appear that Dr. Clarke had adopted it from any other writer. It was, however, at variance with the tenets of Mr. Wesley and of the Methodist body ; and was clearly opposed to almost every orthodox Confession of Faith, and to the general sense of the Christian church in every age. The learned Commentator does not oppose the doctrine generally held, because in his judgment it contradicts the plain and obvious meaning of holy Scripture ; but because he would not reconcile it with his philosophy : and hence the argument upon which he rests his cause, and which is contained in his note on Luke i. 35, is deduced entirely from human analogies. Having enumerated, at the conclusion of his work, the leading principles which he believed and advocated, he says, "The doctrine which cannot stand the test of rational investigation cannot be true. The doctrines or principles already enumerated have stood this test ; and those which shrink from such a test are not doctrines of divine revelation. We have gone too far when we have said, such and such doctrines should not be subjected to rational investigation, being doctrines of pure revelation. I know no such doctrine in the Bible. The doctrines of this book are doctrines of eternal reason ; and they are revealed because they are such. Human reason could not have found them out ; but, when revealed, reason can both apprehend and comprehend them."

Against these principles Mr. Watson felt it his duty to raise the warning voice. He thought that, however innoxious they might be in the mind of

Dr. Clarke, a man of established piety and orthodoxy, their influence upon young persons of limited reading, of speculative habits, and superficial religious experience, would be very injurious. At the same time, to oppose Dr. Clarke was painful and hazardous. The Doctor was venerable for his years and learning; he was one of the fathers of the Connexion to which he belonged; the deference paid to his opinions in many quarters was profound; his peculiar views were somewhat extensively entertained, and any thing published in opposition to them was likely to raise a considerable clamour. Mr. Watson was by far Dr. Clarke's junior; he had once left the Connexion, and had but recently returned; and although he had given indications of great powers, and had rendered important services to the Wesleyan body, yet at that time his character did not stand so high in the public estimation as that of the eminent man with whom he was about to enter the lists. Under all these disadvantages, and with these discouragements before him, he committed to the press a large pamphlet entitled, "Remarks on the Eternal Sonship of Christ; and the Use of Reason in Matters of Revelation: suggested by several Passages in Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament. In a Letter to a Friend."

The "friend" to whom this letter was originally addressed was the Rev. Thomas Galland, A.M., of Queen's College, Cambridge, then recently admitted into the Wesleyan itinerancy. The passages in the Doctor's Commentary just referred to had engaged the attention of this excellent man, who was startled by their boldness and pecu-

liarity; and he solicited Mr. Watson's help in solving the difficulties which were presented to his mind.

After some preliminary observations Mr. Watson enters upon his subject, stating, "The present inquiry respects, first, the eternal Sonship of Christ, which Dr. Clarke denies; secondly, the principles by which he has corroborated his negation of that doctrine."

In the former part of his work Mr. Watson shows that the title Son of God is applied to our Lord throughout the New Testament, not with reference to his miraculous conception, but as the appropriate designation of a divine person. It does not, indeed, appear that the fact of the miraculous conception was known beyond the limits of the holy family till after our Lord was raised from the dead. John the Baptist was raised by a special providence as the forerunner of our Lord; he declared him to be the Son of God; and his powerful ministry was felt in the length and breadth of Judea; yet he left the people ignorant of this fact; for when Jesus entered upon his ministry, it was the current opinion that he was "the son of Joseph." The Evangelists introduce many persons who acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God; but no intimation is given that they applied to him this title with any reference to the manner in which his human nature was produced. The title was understood by the Jews to imply an equality with the Father; and when they charged him with blasphemy, and clamoured for his crucifixion, because he said he was the Son of God, and that God was his Father,—thus, according to their

apprehensions, "making himself equal with God,"—he gave no intimation that they were in error in affixing this meaning to the terms which he used. Having adduced many passages of Scripture, and shown their bearing upon the argument, Mr. Watson contends that, whatever may be the deductions of philosophy, the legitimate inference to be drawn from the inspired records is, that the Second Person of the Godhead stands in a filial relation to the First, independently of all reference to his incarnation. To use the beautiful language of the Nicene Creed, he is "the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father." As to the manner of the Son's generation, Mr. Watson wisely forbears all attempts at explanation. The holy Scriptures are silent on the subject; and all analogies derived from created nature must for ever fail to convey adequate ideas of the mode of the divine existence. It was sufficient for him to rest in the fact, as revealed by God himself; waiting till his arrival in the world of spirits for those further discoveries which the Almighty, in the plenitude of his wisdom and love, may see good to make. The opposite theory, he perceived, when pushed to its consequences, must either lead to an acknowledgment of three co-ordinate Deities, or to a denial of all personal distinction in the Godhead.

Strong and decisive as is Mr. Watson's reasoning on the eternal Sonship of Christ, the second part of his pamphlet, in which he endeavours to ascertain the use of reason in matters of revelation,

is still more valuable and important; as it not only detects the origin of the contrary opinion, but of nearly all the doctrinal errors that have bewildered the minds of men, and afflicted the church of God. The principles laid down by the author are defended and illustrated with great eloquence and force of argument.

Having examined Dr. Clarke's analogical argument, and shown that it is irrelevant to the subject to which it is applied, inasmuch as there can be no proportion between a human being and the infinite and everlasting God; and that the First Person in the adorable Trinity may be a Father, without priority of being, and that Christians may still, in the sense in which the words have been commonly understood, join together in public worship, and say, "Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father;"—Mr. Watson adds, with a felicity of thought and expression almost peculiar to himself, and with a devotional feeling which every pious mind will appreciate, "But a truce to these reasonings! I willingly give them all up for a single word of the testimony of God. I affect them not. They seem to bring me too irreverently near to God. I would not 'break through and gaze;' and I feel, while I write, how just, and yet how reproofing, are the words of the Poet of Paradise:—

'Dark with excessive bright his skirts appear,  
Yet dazzle heaven; that brightest seraphim  
Approach not; but with both wings veil their eyes.'"

The publication of this pamphlet stamped the character of Mr. Watson as an able Divine and a profound thinker. Nothing that he had ever pub-

lished made so deep an impression. The work was extensively read; and a second edition was called for in the course of a few weeks. The greater part of his brethren in the ministry felt themselves deeply indebted to him for so effectual a defence of their doctrines; and not a few of them presented to him their cordial thanks for his services. Some other persons, however, less candid, attributed his work to unworthy motives; and charged the author with envying the honest fame which Dr. Clarke had so justly acquired by his talents and learning, and a desire to lower his public reputation. Whereas, nothing could be more unjust. Few men have possessed a mind more generous, and more free from the base passion which "pines and sickens at another's joy," than Mr. Watson. No suspicion of this kind was ever hinted by any man who knew his character. That Mr. Watson had serious objections to those parts of the Doctor's work upon which he has animadverted, is undeniable; but he speaks of the Doctor and his writings in general in terms of cordial respect. Not many weeks before his death he remarked to the writer of this narrative, in one of their free and confidential interviews, that his admiration of the devotional parts of the Doctor's Commentary continued to increase; and that he thought them the finest compositions of the kind he had ever read. Nor was the Doctor unwilling to honour Mr. Watson's abilities. Not long after the appearance of Mr. Watson's pamphlet on the Sonship of Christ, when Mr. Southey's "Life of Wesley" was published, and called for animadversion, Dr. Clarke stood up in the Conference, and

declared it as his opinion, that Mr. Watson was the fittest man to undertake that responsible task.

In consequence of their collision of sentiment on the questions just referred to, there were persons in different parts of the kingdom, who to the end of their lives would consider Dr. Clarke and Mr. Watson as rivals of each other; and injurious comparisons were often instituted between them. But the men were so perfectly dissimilar, both in their habits and mental constitution, that the very attempt at comparison was absurd. Each of them had his "proper gift from God, one after this manner, and the other after that." Dr. Clarke was blessed with a sound and vigorous constitution, and was spared to a good old age. To a mind of great energy, he added a resolution and a perseverance in the prosecution of his studies which no difficulties and discouragements could daunt; and perhaps the entire history of human nature does not present a more honourable example of successful self-tuition. For a considerable part of his life he retired from the full duties of the ministry, and devoted his whole attention to literature, making his studies to bear especially upon the elucidation of holy Scripture. He particularly excelled in oriental scholarship, and antiquarian research, as well as in his knowledge of curious books in almost all languages. Mr. Watson, through life, was a subject of languor, pain, and disease; and was cut off in the midst of his years. He was distinguished by the comprehensiveness of his views, an unbounded power of imagination, a sound and discriminating judgment, and a philosophic habit of thought; and his works were



written in fragments of time abstracted from urgent and pressing official engagements, and under great bodily suffering. Except with regard to the criticism of the New Testament, the studies and pursuits of these eminent men had little in common. To the kind of learning for which Dr. Clarke was so renowned, Mr. Watson directed little attention. They were both great and pious men, examples of holy diligence and zeal; and the services which they have rendered to the church will endear their names to posterity; but to set up one man, for the purpose of depreciating the other, is as absurd, as it is opposed to the spirit of Christianity.

As the questions discussed with such ability in Mr. Watson's pamphlet were of general interest, the work was read by persons who had no connexion with the Methodists, and was well received by orthodox Christians of every denomination. Mr. Hall, of Leicester, perused it with great avidity; and the opinion entertained of its merits by that incomparable judge of argument and literary composition will be seen by the following letter. It was addressed to Mr. Watson by a mutual friend, after an interview with that celebrated man. At that time Mr. Watson was personally unknown to Mr. Hall.

*May 19th, 1818.*

I AVAIL myself of the first moment of leisure I have had, to communicate what I can recollect of the conversation I had with Mr. Hall, on the subject of your excellent pamphlet. I wish I could convey his sentiments and remarks in his

own language ; but being under the necessity of taking a long journey immediately on my leaving him, I could not commit to paper what had passed till several days after. I will give you, as nearly as I can, what he said on the subject.

He commenced the conversation by observing how highly he had been gratified by the perusal of your work. After some general remarks on the style and execution,—which I know your modesty would not allow me to repeat,—he proceeded to observe the great importance of the subject to the general interests of Christianity ; that he had been led to pay more attention to it, than perhaps he otherwise should have done, from the circumstance, that it had been warmly agitated by the Ministers of his own denomination. “ But then,”—I use exactly his own language,—“ all our principal men, so far from giving it their sanction and support, zealously and decidedly opposed it. Andrew Fuller wrote expressly against it ; and its adoption was almost entirely confined to the young men. I am very sorry that it has received such a sanction and support in your Connexion, where I fear its influence will be injurious. At the same time I think Mr. Watson’s pamphlet admirably adapted to check its progress, and to settle the minds of those who may have been led into a train of perplexing reasoning on the point at issue.”

He said that the term “ Son of God,” which is so frequently used in Scripture as the designation of Jesus Christ, could not, by any fair interpretation, be confined to the human nature of our Lord. On the contrary, he conceived that the Godhead of the Son of God, as such, was as clearly revealed

as any truth contained in the sacred oracles ; so much so, that he considered the doctrine of the Deity of Christ as reposing principally on the divinity of the Sonship. Jesus Christ he believed to be the Son of God, not merely in reference to his incarnation, but as possessing an actual and absolute participation of the essence of the Godhead. Without the admission of this a great part of the Scriptures must absolutely mean nothing. Many passages in which Jesus Christ is spoken of as the Son of God cannot apply to his human nature only ; and if they be given up, as not applying to the Deity of Christ, we must be inevitably driven either into Tritheism or Sabellianism. He could conceive of no medium. Those passages of Scripture which must be given up, if the divine and eternal Sonship were not admitted, were to his mind the most satisfactory parts of the sacred oracles on the Deity of Christ ; and afforded, in his judgment, the clearest and fullest conviction on that important subject.

He esteemed the latter part of the pamphlet as both masterly and important ; for he apprehended that the most serious consequences would result from making the revelation of God submit to the reason of man. He spoke in terms of high commendation concerning the entire treatise ; and very cordially wished it an extensive circulation.

In writing these particulars I have been careful to adhere as closely as possible to Mr. Hall's own words, and have succeeded better than I at first expected. You may rely upon the whole as containing Mr. Hall's genuine opinion ; and his

authority on such a subject I consider of no small value. He gave me permission to make what use I pleased of these remarks ; and you are at perfect liberty to do what you please with the contents of this letter.

Dr. Clarke offered no reply to Mr. Watson's publication. He contented himself with a repetition of his former argument, taking no notice whatever of what Mr. Watson had advanced in refutation of it. One of the Doctor's friends, however, published an answer to Mr. Watson's work, and in defence of the Doctor's theory ; but he changed the ground of the argument ; insisting that the title "Son of God" was in the first instance given to our Lord because of the manner in which his human nature was produced ; but, having been thus applied to him, he was often denominated the Son of God in his complex character, as God incarnate ; although, in point of fact, his divine nature was in no sense "begotten of the Father." By this means he attempted to neutralize the argument which Mr. Watson had founded upon those texts in which the term "Son" is applied to Christ when his divine nature is unquestionably understood ; many such having been adduced. This writer introduced into his work many personal reflections upon Mr. Watson, for which no occasion whatever had been given. Throughout the whole of his pamphlet Mr. Watson had never used an unkind epithet with regard to Dr. Clarke, but had treated him with perfect courtesy and respect, confining himself, like a Christian and a gentleman, to the questions at

issue between them. When he read the work in which he was spoken of in a manner so coarse and offensive, he said to the writer of these memoirs, "How deeply it is to be regretted, that Christian men cannot engage in the discussion of a theological question, in which they have an equal interest, without indulging themselves in insults, and attempting to wound each other's feelings!" To such a work he would offer no reply. He had written on the Sonship of Christ with no unholy or sinister design; and he knew that the "deep things of God" were revealed for a purpose very different from that of stirring up the angry passions of human nature. In a later work, however, he met the opponents of the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ upon the ground which this writer had taken, and proved it to be a mere assumption, opposed to the plain and obvious import of the oracles of God.\*

Mr. Watson was not mistaken in anticipating considerable evil from the operation of those principles to which Dr. Clarke had unhappily given the sanction of his name; particularly that of submitting the most mysterious doctrines of revelation to the judgment and decision of human reason. The Doctor had himself, in part, applied that principle to the subject of God's foreknowledge;† and two individuals of speculative habits, belonging to the Wesleyan body, and profound admirers of Dr. Clarke, emboldened by his example, carried that principle to a length which he would have earnestly deprecated, and so as seriously to trench upon the divine authority of the Bible. In the prosecution

\* Theological Institutes, Vol. II., p. 48, Svo. edit.

† In his Commentary upon Acts ii.

of their studies, they found themselves unable to reconcile the certain foreknowledge of God with the freedom of the human will, and the consequent contingency of many events ; and therefore decided that future contingencies cannot be known even by the infinite and eternal God. They made their reason the judge of a doctrine of Scripture ; and, in the exercise of its high prerogatives, it set aside an attribute of Deity, which he himself expressly claims. It gave the lie to the very letter of inspiration ; and resolved prophecy, which is one of the main pillars of revelation, into probable conjectures ! By the mercy of God, the evil was arrested, and an effectual check was given to these dangerous speculations. The Conference very properly resolved to admit into its body no man who denied the divine and eternal Sonship of Christ ; aware that such a denial would in a great measure disqualify him for the use of their forms of devotion ; and that few men, with such an opinion, would long hold the true and proper Godhead of the Saviour. That Dr. Clarke held this vital article of the Christian faith, they were satisfied ; but his age, piety, and faithful services, continued for near half a century, gave him a claim upon their confidence and affection which no young man could possess.

Mr. Watson's pamphlet on the Sonship of Christ was accompanied by similar publications from the pens of the Rev. Messrs. Moore, Hare, and Robert Martin ; and by these means, and the interference of the Conference, the orthodoxy of the body was preserved. Mr. Watson went to the source of the evil, and asserted the absolute authority of the

word of God; and Dr. Clarke's theory is now generally discarded in the Wesleyan body. On none of his literary productions did Mr. Watson reflect with more sincere satisfaction through the remainder of his life, than upon his pamphlet on the Sonship of Christ. Its publication was painful to his own mind, and subjected him to harsh and unmerited censures; but advancing years, and increased knowledge, only tended to strengthen his conviction that the views which he had advocated were the truth of God; and the result even surpassed his most sanguine hopes. To have been a means of preserving inviolate the theological tenets held by the Connexion to which he was so strongly attached, could not but inspire his mind with joyous feelings. He modestly adverted to this subject oftener than once, especially when he was subjected to uncandid animadversion; and, when laid upon his death-bed, referring to this controversy, he declared that the motives by which he had been actuated were pure and upright.

Agreeably to the direction of Conference, in the year 1817, the Committee to whom the management of the Methodist Missions was confided prepared the plan of a general Wesleyan Missionary Society. It was drawn up by Mr. Watson, with the advice of his brethren, and submitted to the Conference of 1818 for approval. It has since been published in the successive Reports of the Institution. The most important feature of this plan is, that it calls into useful exercise the good sense, the practical knowledge, and the piety of respectable laymen, in connexion with the Missionary work, by making them members of the

Committee of Management from year to year ; reserving to the Preachers only the examination of Missionaries, and all cases of discipline, according to the usages of the body. As the principles of this General Missionary Society were laid down by the Conference, in its instructions to the Committee, the approbation of that body was anticipated ; and the first Meeting of the " Wesleyan-Methodist Missionary Society " was held in the City-road chapel, on Monday, the 4th of April, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, Thomas Thompson, Esq., M.P., in the chair.

This was an occasion of unusual interest. The intelligence which had just arrived from Ceylon was exceedingly cheering, as to the progress of the Mission ; Sir Alexander Johnston, the Chief Judge of Ceylon, had just arrived from that island, accompanied by two Budhist Priests, who had come to England, earnestly requesting that they might be instructed in Christianity and useful knowledge, by the same body of people who had sent the Wesleyan Missionaries to India. The chapel was crowded to excess ; and, to gratify the public desire, an adjourned Meeting was held on the Thursday evening following. To several events connected with this Meeting Mr. Watson refers in the following letter, addressed

TO MR. WILLIAM WALTON, WAKEFIELD.

LONDON, *May 11th*, 1818.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WE have just got over the bustle of our Meetings in London. I have had hard work for the



three weeks past ; but it is over, and leaves nothing but thankfulness. Our Meetings in London were never so good. We had large attendance, good speaking, good sermons, and, what some think as good as all the rest, a capital collection. This year, at our public services and Meetings, it amounted to more than £800, with a profusion of ear-rings, finger-rings, silver and gold trinkets, thrown into the boxes besides.

Sir Alexander Johnston has arrived from Ceylon, with two Budhist Priests, whom the Committee have engaged to take under their care ; and we have placed them under the instruction of Dr. Clarke. They are very interesting fellows ; but not yet fully instructed in the things of God, though a spirit of inquiry brought them to this country.

Thank God, my health continues pretty well amidst all fatigues ; and I am not weary of my work, though it is somewhat fagging.

The appearance in England of these Priests of Budhu excited great interest. They had come in pursuit of religious knowledge ; and Dr. Clarke, with his characteristic generosity, undertook their tuition, at the request of the Missionary Committee. For about two years they remained with the Doctor at Millbrook, a few miles from Liverpool, and were treated by him and his family with unbounded kindness. The Doctor taught them the principles of true religion, and of a just philosophy, in opposition to the crude notions in which they had been educated. He was greatly pleased with their docility and intelligence ; and had the

gratification of witnessing their entire renunciation of Heathenism, and acknowledgment of Christianity as a revelation from heaven. Having satisfied the Doctor, as to the reality of their conversion, he baptized them in the name of the Holy Trinity, in the Brunswick chapel, Liverpool, in the presence of a large congregation, who were deeply affected on the solemn occasion, and united in earnest prayer for these interesting strangers ; thus publicly declaring their belief in God and his Christ, and waiting for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

During their residence with Dr. Clarke, these men were greatly caressed by friends in Liverpool, and by respectable families in the surrounding country ; a natural consequence of their agreeable manners, peculiar dress, and superior shrewdness and vivacity. When the time for their departure arrived, having so long enjoyed the sweets of British hospitality, they were unwilling to leave England, and with difficulty were induced to embark for Ceylon. They had learned, too, that Churchmanship is somewhat more honourable than Methodism ; and on their return to their native land, they renounced all connexion with the people by whom they had been supported and instructed in England, and attached themselves to the Church Mission, and the Government Chaplaincy. One of them obtained the office of a subordinate teacher, and the other a situation in one of the civil establishments. They have both retained the profession of Christianity ; and since their return have used their influence in opposition to the atheistical superstitions of their countrymen. The report which they gave of themselves, on their arrival in Eng-

land, that they belonged to the highest order in the Buddhist priesthood, and which was published in the Missionary Notices of the Society, proved to be incorrect. They belonged to the order of fishermen, which is said to be the lowest grade. A strict adherence to truth, it is well known, is far from being a prominent feature in the Ceylonese character; and the deception in this case was only discovered by persons residing in Ceylon, who were surprised at what they read concerning these men in the publications which they received from England.

Mr. Watson attended the Conference of 1818, which was held in Leeds. The plan and regulations of the General Missionary Society met with the cordial sanction of that body; and he received the unanimous thanks of his brethren for his valuable services through the year.

At this Conference Mr. Watson was removed to the London West Circuit; where he had as his colleagues the Rev. Messrs. George Morley, John Riles, and George Marsden. His colleagues in the Missionary Secretaryship were Messrs. Bunting and Joseph Taylor. The latter of these esteemed men resided at the Mission-House in Hatton-Garden; and was appointed to devote his whole time to the concerns of the Missions. Such an arrangement had been rendered necessary by the increased extent of the Missions; so that the Secretaries could not possibly carry on the domestic and foreign correspondence, pay the requisite attention to the instruction and outfit of Missionaries, and at the same time discharge, with due efficiency, their pastoral duties. Though partially relieved, with

regard to the more onerous duties of the Secretaryship, Mr. Watson's zeal in the Missionary cause suffered no declension. He lent all the assistance in his power in the management of the Society's affairs; and was ready, at every opportunity, to visit the Auxiliary Societies in different parts of the kingdom at their several Anniversaries; and his speeches and sermons every where excited an unabated interest. His counsel in the formation of new Missions, and his advices to the men who were labouring in difficult and discouraging stations, were of the most valuable kind. He at once enjoyed the confidence of the Committee at home, and of the Missionaries abroad.

Mr. Watson's residence in the London West Circuit was in Margaret-street, Oxford-street, where his thoughtful habits and penetrating mind enabled him to derive instruction from almost every surrounding object. He was assiduous in the exercise of his ministry, and the visitation of the sick; and occasionally gratified his taste, and enlarged his knowledge, by a visit to the British Museum, and to those exhibitions of art with which that part of London often abounds. When he had a leisure evening, a visit to the House of Commons, or of the Lords, when any important question was debated, awakened his feelings of patriotism, and strengthened his confidence in the wisdom and integrity of the statesmen who then conducted the affairs of the empire. Sometimes, in passing, he would spend an hour in the Court of Chancery, listening to the wrangling of the lawyers; and he has been heard to say, that when he heard Lord Eldon give judgment in difficult cases, the wisdom,

sagacity, and patient thought, displayed by that eminent Judge, have even heightened his conceptions of the human intellect.

Mr. Watson had not been long in his new situation when he was requested to preach a sermon in the Great Queen-street chapel, before the members of the Sunday-School Union; a service which his friend Mr. Bunting had performed twelve or thirteen years before. With this request he complied; and, in accordance with the wishes of his hearers, published the discourse. It is not the most splendid of his sermons; but was justly deserving of publication, because of the admirable principles it contains with respect to the training of youth. Its title is, "Religious Instruction an essential Part of Education. A Sermon preached in Great Queen-street Chapel, before the Teachers of the Sunday-School Union, October, 1818, and published at the Request of the Committee of that Institution." It quickly passed through two or three editions; and has been extensively read, not only by persons engaged in the communication of Sunday-school instruction, but by parents, and those who are interested in the spiritual welfare of children and young persons. With the infidel systems of education, which assume that human nature is pure, and therefore needs no discipline but that of instruction, literary, scientific, and moral, Mr. Watson held no compromise, but waged a most determined war. The entire corruption of the heart formed an essential article in his creed; and no education could he consider otherwise than radically defective, unless it comprehended a distinct and explicit knowledge of the

nature and method of salvation through the sacrifice of Christ, as well as a competent acquaintance with Christian duty. Religious education he considered no less necessary in order to the public welfare, than to individual happiness. Speaking of the ancient heathen states, he says, "They were without perpetuity, because they were without the elements of it. The fabric of their grandeur has crumbled down, because it was not combined with the imperishable principles of virtue; and their want of virtue resulted from their want of religion. Shall examples, so frequently suggested to our recollection by the books of our boyhood, the studies of our riper years, and the very terms and allusions of our language, admonish us in vain? Yet, if reflection fail to teach us the absolute inadequacy of knowledge, however perfected, to sustain, without the basis of religion, either the virtues of private life, or the weight of national interests, let us suffer ourselves to be roused into conviction by evidences which are ocular and palpable. Go into your public libraries, enriched by the literature of the classical states of ancient times, and see them crowded also with their mutilated marbles, brought from the fallen monuments of their greatness, and saved from the final wastes of time and barbarism, to be placed in monitory collocation with the 'wisdom of this world,' mocking its imbecility; as though Providence had thereby designed to teach us, that length of days is the sole gift of that wisdom whose beginning is 'the fear of the Lord,' and whose great lesson is 'to depart from evil.' Athens mourning along the galleries of our public museums, over the frail ægis

of her Minerva, admonishes us to put our trust within the shadow of the impenetrable shield of the truth of the living God."

There were several coincidences connected with the progress of the Methodist Missions to which Mr. Watson often adverted, as striking indications of providential interference. As the funds of the Society increased, promising fields of labour presented themselves, and invited cultivation; and in no instance have willing labourers been wanting. Mr. Watson was often affected and encouraged, when he saw successive companies of young men arrive in London, burning with zeal for the salvation of the world, cheerfully resigning all the endearments of kindred and home, and departing to their several destinations, with the prayers and blessings of Christian people. So thoroughly was his mind imbued with the Missionary spirit, that he sometimes expressed an earnest wish to accompany these "messengers of the churches" to heathen countries, and share with them in the glorious toil of teaching Christianity to savage men.

Early in November, 1818, Mr. Watson, accompanied by his friend and colleague, as Missionary Secretary, Mr. Bunting, visited Bristol, whence several Missionaries were about to embark for the West Indies. Mr. Watson preached; Mr. Bunting then stated the objects and order of the solemnity, requesting the Missionaries to give an account of their religious experience, their call to the ministry, and views in undertaking the Missionary work. The Rev. Walter Griffith proceeded with the ordination service, assisted by the Missionary

Secretaries, the Rev. Messrs. Thomas Wood, Robert Smith, Dermott, Waddy, Henshaw, and others; and the brethren were set apart by imposition of hands. This was an occasion of unusual solemnity. Several Preachers from the adjoining Circuits were present; and the congregations were exceedingly large. The earnestness with which the people united in prayer for these young Ministers of Jesus Christ was very affecting; and the services left a deep and holy impression upon many minds.

Addressing the Missionaries in the course of this sermon, Mr. Watson said, "A Minister of Christ living to himself is the most pitiable object on which the eye can fall. He has assumed a profession of self-denial, and he is self-indulgent; he has entered a calling which is denominated holy, and he has been secular; he has taken the oversight of souls, and he has looked only to his own interests. He has himself slumbered, when his business was to keep the world awake. To him was committed the cause of Christ, which he was to advance; and he has been indifferent to the general movement, if his department of the machine has had activity enough to grind him his daily bread. What will that servant say when his Lord cometh? And come He will. How will he appear when confronted with Apostles and apostolic men, into whose labours he has entered, and who dropped before him a mantle of spirit and of zeal which he has been too slothful to take up? 'God shall smite thee, thou whited wall.' 'Give an account of thy stewardship,' shall, ere long, rouse thee from thy slumber. Then the warnings



thou hast softened, then the promises thou hast criminally applied, then the souls thou hast neglected, then the sick-beds thou hast forsaken, then the solemn duties thou hast slumbered over, shall all start into recollection. O terrible day, when judgment shall begin at the house of God, and unfaithful Ministers shall be singled out for eminence of shame and signal punishment!

“For you, my dear brethren, we have better hopes. At your first entrance upon the ministry of Jesus, you have given proof that the principle of the text has been planted in mighty operation within you. You go to live, not to yourselves, or the high and arduous Missionary path would not have invited you. But water the principle by your daily prayers, and your daily watchings, that though we see you not for many intervening years, and some of you, or some of us, not till the day when we shall all stand together before the judgment-seat of Christ, ‘we may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.’ Take the Apostle of the Gentiles for your model. Next to Christ, you cannot have a greater. See him live, not unto himself, but to the Lord. Have you made sacrifices? Count them all but dross, that you may win Christ. Are you anxious for knowledge? Let it be the most excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ. Have you intercourse with men? Let it be in meekness and condescension, that you may gain some. Will your lot be various? Learn how to be abased, and how to abound. Every where, and in all things, be instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both

to abound and to suffer need. Let the love of Christ constrain you; and, knowing the terrors of the Lord, persuade men. Have you the care of churches? Like him, make prayers to God for them day and night with tears. Aim at once at his lofty magnificence, and his tender condescensions; at his bold daring, and his flowing sympathies. And, finally, like him, look constantly to the day of Christ, that then it may appear you have neither run in vain, nor laboured in vain. One approving smile of your Lord then will compensate any labour, any suffering. All will be forever swallowed up in the unutterable happiness which will follow that sentence, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

---

## CHAPTER XII.

NOT long after his return to London, Mr. Watson was called to assist in a service, similar to that at Bristol, when another band of Missionaries were solemnly set apart for the work of the ministry among the Heathen. This service took place in the City-road chapel, December 29th; when Mr. Watson delivered an address to the congregation.

Speaking of the power of the Gospel, he said, "The Missionary system is that alone on which the hope of a fallen world can rest. After all the experiments which have been made, no man of reason can hope for the moral advancement of the world from any other means. The world needs

the strongest remedy. This is now confessed. The false views on this subject, which have been long cherished, are now dissipated. Once we were led up the mountain to see the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them. Natural religion exerted her benign sway; the law written on the heart commanded more authoritatively than that contained in the perfect revelation of Jesus. We were amused by Divines with the theory of various dispensations, all differing in their degrees of light, but equal in point of safety; with dissertations on pagan virtue by philosophers; with descriptions of the virtues of savage life by novelists; but we were then led up the mountain, as our Saviour was led by the deceiver. Like him, too, we now see that world lying in wickedness, which kindled his love, and led him to his cross. The gaudy vision is vanished; and all around are

‘Sights of woe,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell;’

and only differing from hell in this, that we cannot add,

‘Hope never comes.’

Yes, thank God, there is hope; but it is in the Gospel taken by Missionaries. Every means but this has been tried, and has failed. The experiment is now making by the Gospel; and if the result proposed be, to give truth to every mind of man, to destroy their superstitions, to abolish their crimes and cruelty, to bind up society by the bond of morals, to unite all in one happy family, and to

restore all to God, with what feelings ought the grand process to be watched! what eagerness of curiosity! what earnestness of wish! If this fail, the world sinks for ever; if it succeed, everlasting honour shall surround the name of your Saviour, and the triumphs of Christianity be sounded to the bounds of earth. In this process Christ interests himself; it is the travail of his soul; angels watch it from their thrones of light; and, if our hearts are right with God and his cause, we shall watch it too. Success dawns upon us already; the work is in progress; trophy after trophy is erected; and the fervent prayers and efforts of the church, perseveringly applied, shall at length effect the glorious consummation."

The whole of this address, delivered to a large assembly of Christian people, met for the purpose of commending to God in prayer a company of Missionaries, just about to sail to their several destinations, in different quarters of the globe, and not expecting all to meet again in this world, showed the depth of pious feeling which Mr. Watson cherished in connexion with the Missionary work. The Missionaries, in his estimation, were called by God; their qualifications were his gift; their success depended entirely upon his blessing; in order to their continued usefulness in their labour, deep personal piety was indispensable; and that piety was to be maintained by incessant prayer on their part, to which, also, the supplications of the church might essentially contribute. His sympathy with the Missionaries was affectionate and strong. He greatly admired their piety, zeal, and self-denial; regarding them, under God,

as the hope and salvation of heathen lands, and therefore as placed under the special care of divine Providence. The trials which awaited them in future life, and the tender recollections which would often occur to them in the midst of their solitary and discouraging labours, awakened in his generous mind the kindest emotions. It was his practice earnestly to exhort the people to sanctify their contributions by constant prayer; and to identify the Missionary work with their daily employments, and their own spiritual prosperity.

The Report of the Methodist Missions for 1818, which was published about the close of the year, represented those institutions in a state of rapid advancement. The income of the Society had risen to somewhat above £20,000; the number of Missionaries had been increased to one hundred and three; and the members in society, under the pastoral care of the Missionaries, was upwards of twenty-three thousand. After specifying the sums received from the various Districts, the writer of the Report makes the following appeal in behalf of the Missions:—

“To provide means for the supply of the Christian ministry to the destitute nations of the world is now one of the special duties which Providence, by affording so many opportunities, has devolved upon Christians of the present day. This is their vocation. The conversion of the world is the end at which they are steadily to look; and every exertion by which that great result may be forwarded is now to be regarded as entering into our imperative duties, and as the work by which we are to glorify God. The state of the world, as laid

before us by the information which is constantly accumulating, cannot be received with indifference. The spirit of every good man must be stirred within him. The facilities afforded by Providence for relieving his dark and fallen condition cannot be without meaning or intention. They are the indications of the finger of God, and they point to our work. We may not, except in a few honourable instances, be prepared to undergo Missionary labours, and make Missionary sacrifices, personally; but there are important methods in which we may serve the work abroad by our diligence at home. Our prayers will aid it; it will be aided by our contributions; but they most effectually aid it who, in addition to these means, employ their influence and counsel in bringing into one united and regular course of contribution and supply the offerings of the Christian public. Constant supply will be thus afforded for constant expenditure; and every Missionary institution will be conducted without embarrassment, and with confidence as to its support. With every accession to the church of Christ, there will, by such arrangements, be an accession to those funds by which the wants of the world are to be supplied. By such means the work will proceed, enlarging with every year, moving with accelerated force, comprehending larger spheres of usefulness, till the supplies of the church shall be commensurate with the wants of the world. Thus will Zion become the glory of all lands, and those great events be accomplished, the prospect of which is the inspiration of the co-operating zeal of Missionaries and people; and which are assured to

us as the reward of authorized and persevering efforts."

The situation of England at the beginning of the year 1819 was gloomy and discouraging. In consequence of the general depression of trade, the condition of the poor, especially in some of the manufacturing districts, was very distressing; and the spirit of infidelity and of insubordination was extensively diffused. The minds of a large proportion of the community were greatly exasperated against their rulers by democratic orators at public meetings, and by a licentious press. These things were rendered the more alarming by an unhappy quarrel between the highest personages in the state, the ground of which was afterwards made a subject of parliamentary investigation. It was impossible that Mr. Watson should be an indifferent spectator, when the institutions of the country were seriously menaced, and principles were in operation which went to subvert the frame-work of society; and, by necessary consequence, to endanger personal freedom and safety. Previously to this period he had united with several other persons, like-minded with himself, in the establishment of a weekly newspaper, partly religious, and conducted upon loyal and constitutional principles, to meet the exigency of the times; for it was felt to be a serious evil that pious families should have no means of obtaining a knowledge of public affairs, except from the perusal of papers, many parts of which were extremely objectionable in point of sentiment, and some of which were even intended to bring all authority into contempt. The property of this paper was vested in persons

of the Wesleyan denomination ; but the work was extensively patronised by Clergymen, and other individuals belonging to the established Church. The columns of this journal not unfrequently contained articles written by Mr. Watson ; in which he always appeared as the able and zealous advocate of Government and of social order. This publication was carried on for some years, and was of essential service at that juncture, in preserving the minds of religious people from the principles and schemes of men who sought to engage them in the cause of revolution. Whatever alteration time had rendered necessary in the national institutions, Mr. Watson felt ought to be made by the proper authorities, and not by clamorous demagogues, whose object was not reform, but plunder ; and whose spirit, notwithstanding their noisy professions, was not patriotism, but selfishness. Mr. Watson's loyalty, which was based upon Christian principle, and had been consistently maintained through many years, was greatly strengthened by the generous protection which the Government afforded to the Missions, in the several colonies, and especially in the West Indies, where the local authorities were often opposed to the instruction of the slave population. He found His Majesty's Government, not only accessible in all cases of persecution which were brought before them ; but always ready to interpose in behalf of the oppressed Missionary and his sable charge. As these Missions were so dear to Mr. Watson's heart, he loved the men who threw around them the shield of a generous protection ; while, as a Christian, he revered them for



their office' sake, as the "ministers of God for good."

The following letter, addressed to a pious lady, to whom his ministry appears to have been rendered a means of salvation, shows the affectionate interest which he took in the spiritual welfare of a young convert; and the wisdom with which he could build up individual believers on their most holy faith :—

TO MISS M. E. SMITH, MILBANK, RUNCORN.

LONDON, *March 23d*, 1819.

MY DEAR MISS SMITH,

THERE needed no apology on your part for writing; and when you feel disposed to write again, I beseech you use none. I shall be always happy to hear of your welfare; and if at any time any advice of mine shall be deemed by you of any importance, it shall be at your service. From the time I had the pleasure of seeing you at Bedford, I have had a pleasing recollection of your society.

The change which has passed upon your mind justly calls for your grateful acknowledgments to God, its author. The moment in which your heart was effectually turned to your heavenly Father, in full choice of his favour and salvation, was the most important in your life, and the most important you will ever experience. It introduced you to new relations, to new enjoyments, to new hopes. It enabled you to say, what you could never say before, "Now I am in a state in which I need but persevere to secure every interest of my being in time and eternity." "Behold," said your Saviour

in that moment, "I have set before thee an open door, which no man can shut."

Whilst this calls for all the love of your heart to Him, let it remind you of your renewed and enlarged obligations. A treasure so valuable ought to be well guarded; a birth-right so high is not to be bartered for Esau's mess of pottage. "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him," with the same simplicity, child-like dependence, oneness of object and motive; remembering that you have entered upon a race, and, of course, are to press forward. Allow me to suggest the following rules:—1. Rest not a moment without the *felt presence* of your God. 2. To this end, repose a full and daily confidence in the merits and intercession of your Saviour, through whom alone you can *draw near* to God. 3. Maintain the inward spirit of prayer, and grateful acknowledgment to God in all things. 4. Fill up leisure moments with useful thinking, and reading, and converse. 5. Seize opportunities of doing good. If you have time to visit the sick-bed occasionally, or to do good in any way, you will thereby gain good in return, by the excitement of your own religious affections. As to daily intercourse with others, the following rule is excellent:—

" Present with God by recollection seem,  
Yet present by your cheerfulness with men."

I am happy to have been any instrument of good to you by the blessing of God; and it will give me additional pleasure to know that you "stand fast in the Lord."

I write in the midst of a bustle; for leisure I

have little. The interlineations will show this ;  
and I have only time to add how truly  
I am yours very affectionately.

Great as was the liberality of the friends of the Methodist Missions, it was exceeded by the zeal and enterprise of the managing Committee, who were so affected by the wants of the Heathen, and the loud calls for help, that they exhausted the funds of the Society, and placed the Treasurers considerably in advance. In the month of January, therefore, it was found necessary to make an urgent appeal to the Auxiliary Societies in the country to renew their efforts in raising supplies. Another appeal was published in the beginning of May following, evidently the production of the same pen. After a summary account of the state and wants of the several stations occupied by the Wesleyan Missionaries, the writer says, "And who is there that will not give his personal aid to swell the tide of that glorious and successful agency which is now, in so many directions, transmitting blessings to the nations of the earth, which, in their influence, shall be felt through every future period of time, and reach into eternity itself?"

To promote the object for which these appeals were written, Messrs. Bunting and Watson made extensive tours in the north of England as the spring advanced. They attended the Anniversaries of Missionary Societies at Liverpool, Manchester, Derby, Macclesfield, Wakefield, Hull, Sunderland, Shields, and Newcastle ; and found that the disposition to further the good work remained

unabated. Notwithstanding the pressure of the times, the subscriptions and collections generally exceeded those of any former year. The Meetings were numerously attended ; and great interest was excited by the details which these able advocates of the cause gave concerning the work of God in foreign countries.

The Annual Meeting of the General Wesleyan Missionary Society was held in the City-road chapel on Monday, May 3d. It was excessively crowded, and Mr. Butterworth was called to the chair. The union of so many persons of different denominations, which the platform presented, pleading the cause of Missions to the pagan world, as the common cause of all Christians, was a sight most grateful to the feelings of Christian charity. Several friends from different parts of the kingdom were present, having come up to celebrate this annual festival, and kindle anew the fire of zeal at a common altar. These circumstances were important, as they showed that the cause of the evangelization of the world had acquired a growing interest, and that energies more combined and glowing than formerly were put into activity for the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ. The day was most delightful ; and zeal for the glory of God, joy in the progress of truth, and compassion for a perishing world, were called into lively exercise.

At the Conference of 1819, which was held in the city of Bristol, it was resolved to present an annual Address to the Methodist societies, relating to subjects of general interest, and containing such advices and admonitions as circumstances might

render necessary. The nation was then in an unsettled state ; political Associations of the most mischievous character were formed in various places ; and strenuous attempts were made to engage religious people in plans of insubordination and riot. Mr. Watson was requested to write the first Address ; and he executed this task in a manner worthy of himself, and of the occasion. In reference to the state of the country, and the duty of Christians in the existing state of things, the Address says, “ As many of you to whom this measure of national suffering has been appointed reside in places where attempts are making, by ‘unreasonable and wicked men,’ to render the privations of the poor the instruments of their own designs against the peace and Government of our beloved country, we are affectionately anxious to guard all of you against being led astray from your civil and religious duties by their dangerous artifices. Remember you are Christians, and are called by your profession to exemplify the power and influence of religion by your patience in suffering, and by living peaceably with all men. Remember you belong to a religious society which has, from the beginning, explicitly recognised as high and essential parts of Christian duty, to ‘fear God, and honour the King ;’ to submit to Magistrates for conscience’ sake, and not to speak evil of dignities. You are surrounded with persons to whom these duties are objects of contempt and ridicule. Show your regard for them, because they are the doctrines of your Saviour. Abhor those publications in which they are assailed, along with every other doctrine of your holy religion ; and

judge of the spirit and objects of those who would deceive you into political parties and associations, by the vices of their lives, and the infidel malignity of their words and writings. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?'

"We are about to depart to our respective scenes of labour for the ensuing year. We met in the spirit of the kindest affection, and are about to separate with increased attachment to each other, to you, and to the work of Christ. We have renewed our pledges of zeal and faithfulness in the strength of Him without whom 'nothing is strong;' and we cast ourselves on his mercy, and your prayers. Beloved brethren, join with us in this renewed dedication of ourselves to God, and to the church by the will of God. Why do we live, but to do his will, and spread his praise? Let all our thoughts rest in God. To him let us open our spirits for richer supplies of his sanctifying grace, and clearer demonstrations of his presence and love. In simplicity of heart let us follow our Lord, copy his example, walk as he walked, follow his steps of active charity, breathe his calm and loving mind, die like him to all earthly good, and hasten to the end of our course. 'The time is short.' O let us fill it with the fruits and acts of Christian love and zeal; that our last moments may be peace; and that, through the meritorious passion of our divine Saviour, we may be accounted worthy to renew our fellowship in his unsuffering kingdom; and be eternally one with Christ, as he is one with the Father!"

These extracts will serve to show the spirit in which this seasonable document was written. It

was extensively circulated by the Conference, both in the Minutes, and in a separate form; and was also reprinted in Manchester, and widely distributed in that town and neighbourhood, just after the well-known riots there. Its influence upon the minds of the Methodist societies was deep; and it contributed, in no small degree, to calm and restrain the agitated spirits of men in various places. Strong and persevering attempts were made by the agents of sedition to engage the co-operation of the Methodists in their wicked projects; but by this document, and other means, they were warned of their danger, and placed upon their guard; and not a few of them laboured with zeal and determination to resist the progress and influence of democratic politics, and to preserve the public tranquillity. The Annual Addresses of the Conference, thus favourably commenced, have been exceedingly beneficial in the Methodist Connection. They have strengthened the bond of union between the Conference and the societies; and embody important pastoral advices, both in regard of personal religion, and the various branches of Christian duty. Several of them were drawn up by Mr. Watson, who excelled in almost every species of composition; and those of them which were the product of his mind served greatly to give a character to the rest.

As the Wesleyan Missions continued rapidly to extend, and some of them were carried on under circumstances of difficulty, arising from the peculiar state of society, it was deemed requisite that a code of regulations should be prepared, to which every Missionary, on entering upon his work,

should declare his assent, and his practical attention to which should be a subject of annual inquiry at the several District-Meetings; in order that the managing Committee, and the supporters of the Missions, might be satisfied that their agents kept steadily in view the design of their appointment, and pursued their labour upon a judicious and efficient plan. As early as December 18th, 1817, the Committee passed a resolution to this effect; and Mr. Watson was requested to prepare the desired system of rules. With this request he complied; and produced a body of Missionary instructions, equally distinguished by practical sense and Christian piety. Some of them are exclusively applicable to Missionaries; but others of them are of importance to Christian Ministers generally. To the Wesleyan Missions they have been of essential benefit. It is impossible that Missions carried on in the manner which this document describes, should be unsuccessful.

---

### CHAPTER XIII.

WHILE Mr. Watson was ready for every good work, it was to the Missionary department that his attention was specially directed; and its regular advancement was to him a source of solid gratification. At the conclusion of the year 1819 he sent forth into the world his fourth Missionary Report, the details of which possessed an increased interest; and the appeals at the conclusion were equal in eloquence and power to any of his former



addresses to the subscribers. In the course of the year seventeen Missionaries were sent abroad. The total number of Missionaries actually employed under the direction of the Conference was then one hundred and twenty; and to meet so large an expenditure as these extended operations required, the sum of £22,913 had been transmitted to the Treasurers in the course of the year; exceeding the income of the Society in any preceding year by £4,479.

With respect to the obligations and prospects of the Society, the Report says, "Can we see the immortal souls of men in danger of eternal death, and not attempt their rescue? Can we contemplate regions where Christ is not named, and not attempt to make him known? Can we hear the voice of misery pleading for help, and refuse the boon? Animated by past success, and encouraged by the promises of Heaven, it is not possible, as long as pity for men, love for Christ, and jealousy for the honours of God, are the energetic principles of a heart influenced by the everlasting love of Jesus our Redeemer, to refuse any sacrifice in order to afford the aid by which a cause so glorious, so connected with the happiness of the world, and the exaltation of the church, can be promoted. The field widens before us; but, wherever it is cultivated, it yields abundant fruit, and will encourage the toil of future labour. The first-fruits are reaped; the 'wave-offering' is already presented before 'the Lord of the harvest,' in his sanctuary; but the full blessing is yet ungathered. 'The field is the world;' and already the zeal and love of Christians spread, in delightful anticipation,

into all its length and breadth. To the great and growing but encouraging work we are again summoned. It brings its present reward in the miseries it assuages or removes; in the elements of order and happiness it creates and combines; in the personal and social felicities it confers. But it runs on to a sublimer consummation. It is connected with purposes which the wisdom of God has arranged, which his goodness has nurtured and upheld, and which his power will ultimately execute to the height of the sublime idea: purposes, whose accomplishment supported the Saviour in his agony and bloody sweat, in his cross and passion; on which the eye of Prophets, ranging through the scenes of the future, fixed with greatest intensity of observation; and the prospect of which has supported the hopes of martyrs and confessors, of Ministers and Missionaries, of the wise and good in all ages. 'And the end cometh.' The astonishing operations of God, both in providence, and in the administration of the kingdom of Christ, display the signs of the glory of the latter day."

While Mr. Watson thus availed himself of the publication of the annual Missionary Report to plead the cause of the heathen world, he was equally ready to advocate the same cause both from the pulpit and the platform; and the commencement of the year 1820 found him making extensive arrangements for services of this description.

The result of a journey into Cornwall is stated in a letter written by the Rev. Richard Treffry, dated Truro, March 10th, 1820; in which it is said, "In the course of the last month, the Rev.

addresses to the subscribers. In the course of the year seventeen Missionaries were sent abroad. The total number of Missionaries actually employed under the direction of the Conference was then one hundred and twenty; and to meet so large an expenditure as these extended operations required, the sum of £22,913 had been transmitted to the Treasurers in the course of the year; exceeding the income of the Society in any preceding year by £4,479.

With respect to the obligations and prospects of the Society, the Report says, "Can we see the immortal souls of men in danger of eternal death, and not attempt their rescue? Can we contemplate regions where Christ is not named, and not attempt to make him known? Can we hear the voice of misery pleading for help, and refuse the boon? Animated by past success, and encouraged by the promises of Heaven, it is not possible, as long as pity for men, love for Christ, and jealousy for the honours of God, are the energetic principles of a heart influenced by the everlasting love of Jesus our Redeemer, to refuse any sacrifice in order to afford the aid by which a cause so glorious, so connected with the happiness of the world, and the exaltation of the church, can be promoted. The field widens before us; but, wherever it is cultivated, it yields abundant fruit, and will encourage the toil of future labour. The first-fruits are reaped; the 'wave-offering' is already presented before 'the Lord of the harvest,' in his sanctuary; but the full blessing is yet ungathered. 'The field is the world;' and already the zeal and love of Christians spread, in delightful anticipation,

into all its length and breadth. To the great and growing but encouraging work we are again summoned. It brings its present reward in the miseries it assuages or removes; in the elements of order and happiness it creates and combines; in the personal and social felicities it confers. But it runs on to a sublimer consummation. It is connected with purposes which the wisdom of God has arranged, which his goodness has nurtured and upheld, and which his power will ultimately execute to the height of the sublime idea: purposes, whose accomplishment supported the Saviour in his agony and bloody sweat, in his cross and passion; on which the eye of Prophets, ranging through the scenes of the future, fixed with greatest intensity of observation; and the prospect of which has supported the hopes of martyrs and confessors, of Ministers and Missionaries, of the wise and good in all ages. 'And the end cometh.' The astonishing operations of God, both in providence, and in the administration of the kingdom of Christ, display the signs of the glory of the latter day."

While Mr. Watson thus availed himself of the publication of the annual Missionary Report to plead the cause of the heathen world, he was equally ready to advocate the same cause both from the pulpit and the platform; and the commencement of the year 1820 found him making extensive arrangements for services of this description.

The result of a journey into Cornwall is stated in a letter written by the Rev. Richard Treffry, dated Truro, March 10th, 1820; in which it is said, "In the course of the last month, the Rev.

Messrs. Bunting and Watson, two of the General Secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, paid a visit to Cornwall; where, besides preaching in the principal places, in the different Circuits of that District, they held public Meetings in Penzance, Camborne, Helston, Falmouth, and Truro. Never was there a greater interest excited among the religious part of the inhabitants of that county, than on these occasions; and though the Meetings were continued from five to six hours, and the chapels uncommonly crowded, yet the people gladly continued to the end. Colonel Sandys, who favoured the Meetings with his presence, and ably filled the chair, gave affecting details of the superstitions of India, of which he had been an eye-witness; and the Rev. William Davies, who has been a Missionary to Sierra-Leone, arrested the attention of the people in an unusual manner with lively descriptions of the superstitions of Africa, and the dark and degraded state of its wretched inhabitants. Besides the public collections, which were more liberal than were ever remembered in Cornwall, we confidently expect, from the more regular organization of an Auxiliary Society for that District, and Branch Societies for the several Circuits, that the Missionary fund will receive considerable assistance." The Cornish Methodists exemplified the motto of their county; and came forward, "one and all," to assist in sending the Gospel to the Heathen.

At this time the Wesleyan Mission in Southern Africa began to assume an aspect and character of superior interest. A few years before, Mr. Barnabas Shaw had been sent to Cape-Town; but,

not being allowed to exercise his ministry there, he had penetrated into the interior of the country, carrying the truth of God to the savage tribes, accompanied by his excellent wife, who even rivalled her husband in zeal, self-denial, and enterprise. Messrs. Edward Edwards and James Archbell had been sent to his assistance in Little Namacqualand; and Jacob Links, an intelligent Hottentot, had been raised up, as the fruit of Missionary exertion, and exercised an efficient native ministry. He was afterwards basely murdered, with his fellow-traveller, Mr. Threlfall, when they were on their way to explore new fields of Missionary labour.

Early in the year 1820, Mr. William Shaw embarked for that colony, under the sanction of His Majesty's Government. A considerable number of emigrants were about to form a settlement in a tract of country bordering upon the Kaffer tribes; and the Government proposed to advance the sum of £75 per annum, for the support of a Minister in connexion with a given number of settlers, leaving it to the parties themselves to choose their own spiritual guide. Among the emigrants were several Methodist families, sufficiently numerous to entitle them to the allowance in question. They therefore applied to the Committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society for a suitable Minister; and Mr. William Shaw was appointed, with the understanding that if he should at any future time be removed to another station, his place should be supplied by the Committee.

This became a favourite Mission with Mr. Watson; and he lived till his anticipations concerning

it were realized to a great extent. On the 22d of March Mr. and Mrs. Kay left London for Gravesend, to embark for Little Namacqualand, where a Mission had been so auspiciously commenced. Before their departure, Mr. Watson said, with a feeling never to be forgotten, "Mr. Kay, were I as young as you, Africa should be the field of my choice." Having fulfilled his term of service, Mr. Kay has returned to England, and published a work, replete with curious and interesting information, on the rise and progress of the settlement just mentioned, the habits and manners of the Kaffers, and the progress of religion and civilization among that once barbarous and savage people. It shows in a very striking light the influence of Christianity in giving a right direction to infant colonies, and in raising the most degraded tribes to the enjoyments of civilized life, and the hope of a blessed immortality.

The Annual Meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society was held in the City-road chapel on the 1st of May; and the attendance, as usual, was very great. A remarkably fine and hallowed tone was given to this Meeting by one of the preparatory sermons, preached by the Rev. William Ward, one of the Baptist Missionaries from Serampore, on the necessity of divine influence in order to the success of Missionary operations. In acknowledging the vote of thanks to the Secretaries, which the Meeting adopted, Mr. Watson said that he had lately had the pleasure of witnessing other Meetings, some as large as that before him, animated by the same spirit of benevolence towards the heathen world, and desirous of extend-

ing the victories of the Redeemer. This was encouraging ; for why did God diffuse this spirit through the land, if he had not some mighty work to perform ? And if this feeling be of God, we may safely argue that it is the intention of the Lord to spread the knowledge of his truth, and speedily to bring the nations of the earth into his fold. He viewed the kind assistance rendered by Ministers of different denominations as very encouraging. This approximation of Christians to each other was a most hopeful circumstance ; and would give to Christianity a very decided superiority in the world. Heathens themselves must be constrained to acknowledge, when the Gospel is sent to them, "This is the result of the love of God, which is so conspicuous in all the Meetings of the Christians." It was one effect of the Bible Society, that it spread a common ground upon which all might meet without compromising their respective sentiments. Still there remained a vacancy ; for each Society carried on its Missionary Meetings with its own Ministers. But why could not the Missionary platform be the common ground ? It had been said that when they met in the Bible Society, there was no sacrificing of principle ; and he would be glad to know what principle they sacrificed there that day. Was not their common Christianity one grand and public benefit ? If they were sincere, they would be glad of all the help they could get ; and on what individual soever they saw the spirit of their Master descend, they would heartily wish the blessing of the Lord to rest upon him. Mr. Watson felt much interested in every Society. The



excellent Preacher, Dr. Adam Clarke, who preached to them on Friday morning, had told the congregation, that he should hate his scoundrel heart if he did not love all mankind. "Why, Sir," said Mr. Watson, "I, too, should hate my heart,—and I have no objection to use the expression in full, and to say, my *scoundrel* heart,—if I did not wish well to all our sister Missionary institutions. They are all employed in endeavouring to communicate to the world the benefits of Christianity. And shall we not love them, and admire their efforts?" He then took a view of the different Missionary operations throughout the world, and especially of the Board of Missions in America. "The American Christians," said he, "are coming forward in a most astonishing manner; they make the most surprising calculations; their designs are gigantic and overwhelming.\* There is a period pointed out in prophecy, when the Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh; and I doubt not that the conversion of the world will be both rapid and glorious."

In the course of this interesting Meeting Richard Rothwell, Esq., Alderman and Sheriff of London, appeared on the platform with his insignia of office. He had that morning been attending the execution of some wretched culprits, who confessed that they had been led into a career of crime by reading the infidel writings of Paine, and that the principles which they had been taught by that bad and vain man had brought them to their igno-

\* Referring to a very stirring pamphlet then just published in America, entitled, "The Claims of Eight Hundred Millions of Heathens;" and proposing the means of their conversion.

minious end. The scenes which were that day presented to the view of the Alderman formed a perfect and striking contrast. In one place he saw infidelity plunging its miserable victims into vice and infamy; and in the other, he saw a vast assembly of Christian people, under the influence of the most expansive benevolence, concerting plans for spreading truth and purity and happiness all over the world, and listening with delighted attention to the cheering instances of past success which the different speakers brought before them. The effect upon the Alderman's mind was very powerful; and he expressed his most cordial approbation of the Society, whose proceedings he said he had watched for many years.

The Conference of 1820 was held in Liverpool, at the latter end of July, and the beginning of August; and many circumstances concurred to render it a season of peculiar interest. The political agitations in the manufacturing districts were carried on, by desperate men, with undiminished violence; the commercial interests of the country were still in a state of great depression; the privations of the poor were severe and widely extended; and the spirit of disaffection to the Government was fierce and determined, so as in many places to endanger the public tranquillity. These things operated very injuriously upon the cause of religion; and the result was, a decrease in the Methodist societies in Great Britain of considerably more than four thousand members. When persons professing Christian godliness so far enter into temptation, as not to be "afraid to speak evil of dignities," ascribe to their rulers the corrective

visitations of Providence, and surrender themselves to a spirit of murmuring and discontent, the Methodist discipline and order, and especially the weekly meetings for prayer and religious conversation, are felt to be a serious grievance. The parties generally retire from a society which lays their passions and tongues under restraint, and seek more congenial companions among the disciples of infidelity and democracy. This serious defalcation in the societies produced great searchings of heart in the Conference; considerable time was occupied in conversation on the subject; and the result was, a determination on the part of the Preachers to pay increased attention to their own personal piety, and to the pastoral care of the people of their charge, to maintain the spirit of primitive simplicity and faithfulness in their public ministrations, and to extend the work of God in neglected neighbourhoods.

At this Conference the Rev. John Emory was present, as the Representative of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America; and the details which he gave respecting the progress of the work of God in that continent were cheering in the highest degree. A mutual interchange of Representatives between the two Connexions was agreed upon, and the bands of reciprocal affection were strengthened. Mr. Emory was received in a manner the most cordial and friendly; and his preaching, conversation, and Christian spirit and manners, excited a lively interest. Mr. Watson was requested to draw up an answer to the Address of the General Superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal

Church, which had been brought by Mr. Emory. In this document, which the British Conference adopted, he says, speaking of their Representative, "In him we have recognised the purity of your doctrine, and the fervour and simplicity of your piety. We have received him 'not as a stranger,' but 'as a brother beloved.' Our hearts are as his heart; and it will be remembered as one of the most pleasing circumstances connected with the Conference held in this town, that our personal intercourse with you was here restored, and that this work of love was committed to so able and excellent a brother, whose public ministrations, and addresses in our Conference, have been equally gratifying and instructive to us and to our people."

At the request of the Conference Mr. Watson also wrote the Annual Pastoral Address to the societies. The occasion was important, and the principles and admonitions which he embodied in this composition possess a more than ordinary value. The following paragraphs are selected as a specimen, and as illustrating the spirit and views of the writer:—

"As a body, we do not exist for the purpose of party. Our aim has been higher: and if ever it ought to fix itself with firmness upon elevated purposes, it is at the present moment. Large and extensive fields of usefulness lie around us; and if we keep our calling constantly in mind, if we live under the deep impression of the spiritual and moral dangers of our country, and of the worth of souls, we shall not fail to unite with our efforts to make known the name of Christ to Pagans abroad,

exertions more comprehensive and ardent for the diffusion of religious light and influence at home. We ourselves would anew impress upon our minds the admonition of our venerable Founder, 'You have nothing to do but to save souls;' and in the name of our Lord we call for your awakened and renewed co-operation. We have most solemnly given up ourselves again to this, the only true object of the Christian ministry. Let us carry along with us your heightened fervour, that, by common efforts in every place, our societies may be built up in faith, and established in holiness, and the work extended into every neighbourhood, to which a spirit like that of our great Master, who came to 'seek' that he might 'save,' can obtain access.

"With those of our dear people who still suffer in the distresses of our country, we deeply sympathize. We weep with those that weep; and we know the tears which many of you have shed, and the anxieties which have filled your hearts. We trust that these afflictive dispensations to the nation are but temporary; and that the prayers which are constantly offered to Him who 'ruleth among the nations' will finally prevail in behalf of the poor.

"To him you have looked, and found support in the present consolations and the future hopes of Christianity. May your minds be still sustained upon the immovable rock of the divine promises! Amidst every earthly change your God and Saviour is eternally the same; the sure confidence of all who flee to him for refuge, 'a very present help in trouble.' 'He knoweth how to deliver the godly

out of temptation,' and to make a temporary trial the means of spiritual and everlasting good."

At this Conference Mr. Watson was returned a third year to the London West Circuit, with the three excellent colleagues who, during the two former years, had been his fellow-labourers. He was also continued in his office as Secretary to the Missionary Society, with his esteemed friends the Rev. Messrs. Bunting and Joseph Taylor. The duties of the Secretaryship were onerous, and involved considerable responsibility; but his mental resources were equal to every emergency, and he never shrunk from his share of honourable and pious labour. The task of corresponding with the Missionaries was not the least important duty which devolved upon him. Some of the Missionaries were young men, and needed instruction; others were placed in circumstances of great and pressing difficulty, and applied for advice. Occasionally a Missionary was prodigal of life, especially in an unhealthy climate, and it was requisite to admonish him to moderate his labours, that he might not offer to God murder for sacrifice. In some of the stations much preparatory work was necessary. The Missionary laboured from year to year, and after all saw little fruit. He was therefore in danger of growing weary and faint in his mind; and his case called for affectionate sympathy and encouragement. It is difficult for people who enjoy all the advantages of the Sabbath, of the ministry of the word, of the sacraments, and of Christian fellowship, to form a just conception of the trying situation of a Missionary whose lot is cast in a purely heathen country, where the objects

and examples daily presented to his view are only calculated to deaden every spiritual affection, to blunt the feelings of conscience, and familiarize the mind with scenes of vice and crime ; while there is an absence of all the helps and stimulants to piety and devotion. And yet, if the men who are thus circumstanced suffer their love to wax cold, their hatred of idolatry and sin to abate, and their zeal to languish and decay, they are ill-qualified for the work in which they are employed. Mr. Watson's correspondence with the Missionaries was distinguished by great piety, affection, and fidelity ; admirably adapted to " stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance," and excite them to the cultivation of their talents, and to maintain the spirit of Christian godliness. A letter addressed to the Rev. William D. Goy, then stationed in the island of Grenada, in the West Indies, may serve as a specimen. Mr. Goy says, " I have at different times witnessed Mr. Watson's kindness towards the Missionaries, and his still deeper interest in the Mission work. I am satisfied that he was, in his capacity of Mission Secretary, a faithful servant of the public ; and that he entertained towards the Missionaries the most affectionate feeling." Mr. Goy had been labouring three years in the principal town of that colony ; some of the influential planters had applied to the Committee for an extension of the Mission to the eastern side of the island, where there was the largest population of slaves. He was appointed to occupy this new station, and to communicate instruction to a people who previously had no knowledge of Christianity.

TO THE REV. WILLIAM D. GOY.

LONDON, *Sept. 27th*, 1820.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

WE are happy to hear that so good a prospect presents itself to your labours in that part of the island in which you are now stationed. Much depends upon your success in improving the moral condition of the slaves by careful instruction; for the estates, so improved by the divine blessing, may then be appealed to, as proofs of the good effects of religious care; and, as you have the planters on your side, you have the best opportunity for bringing into operation the means which have always proved more or less effectual. Let it be your noble ambition to present to the island a body of well-instructed and orderly Negroes.

We approve both of your plan of careful and effectual catechisation, and of giving sufficient time to each estate. Nothing, we are persuaded, goes so directly to promote the end we all propose as the former; for without it sermons have but a very partial effect; and those Negroes who become really religious are often, for want of better instruction in the principles of religion, very unsteady.

It is also of equal importance that, whilst a Missionary most conscientiously fills up his time, and uses all diligence, he should not undertake more than he can effectually perform. When the people on an estate are well catechised, they will be prepared for preaching; and he may then give more time to the catechising of the people of another.

You know something of the system of monitors



in our schools at home; and I would suggest, whether you could not use the older children, who have been well taught, to instruct the younger, under your direction; and thus save yourself a little labour. They would prepare them for you, and sooner perhaps fit them for your public catechising, when, no doubt, you make use of the catechism as a sort of text-book, on which to found your remarks and exhortations. You who know the circumstances are, however, the best judge.

Could not the children also learn some of Dr. Watts's and Mr. Wesley's hymns for children? and if taught to sing, they would be the more interested. But probably you have adopted this also.

My dear brother, let us live near to God, and labour as those who see the end approaching. "Occupy till I come," was the injunction of our Lord. God grant that when he cometh we may be found so doing!

---

#### CHAPTER XIV.

MR. WATSON was never unemployed, and he was never employed in a trifling manner. There was an energy and vigour in his mind which seemed to bid defiance to every obstacle; and hence the extent of his labours is almost incredible, considering the weakness of his constitution, and the frequent interruption of his studies by ill health. In the autumn of 1820 he appeared as the opponent of one of the most distinguished literary men of the age. "The Life of Wesley, and the Rise and

Progress of Methodism, by Robert Southey, Esq., Poet Laureate," in two large volumes, was published in the early part of the year. In this work the theological and disciplinary principles of Methodism, and the character of its Founder, were subjects of animadversion; and a defence of both was deemed necessary. The Wesleyan Book-Committee, acting in behalf of the Conference, requested Mr. Watson to undertake this task; a request which was repeated by the Conference, in whose Minutes the following resolution was inserted:—"The Conference approve of the request of the Book-Committee to Mr. Watson, to prepare a review of the Life of the Rev. John Wesley, which has been recently published by Mr. Southey; and the Book-Committee are directed to circulate that review, when printed, as extensively as possible." Mr. Watson had a strong conviction of the mischievous tendency of the work in question; and, at the solicitation of his brethren, he undertook the defence of Mr. Wesley, and of his religious system, against their learned and eloquent assailant.

Mr. Southey's work had been long expected; and was less severe in its censures upon Mr. Wesley and the Methodists than was anticipated, considering the determined opposition to them which the Quarterly Review had assumed; a periodical with which the author was known to be intimately connected. In collecting materials for the biography of Mr. Wesley, the Poet Laureate explored every accessible source of information; he does justice to Mr. Wesley's great abilities, to his attainments as a scholar, and his fine temper as a man and a controversialist; he acknowledges the

extensive moral good effected by Mr. Wesley's instrumentality; and the narrative, which is beautifully written, is enlivened by anecdotes, and sketches of contemporary characters, so as to be rendered highly entertaining, and invite the perusal of all classes of people; especially as an air of philosophy and candour is thrown over the whole. The praise given to Mr. Wesley is occasionally very high, and was likely to gratify his friends; and the censures passed upon him are sufficiently harsh to meet the prejudices of the generality of his enemies. The work professes strong attachment to the established Church; and the partial separation of the Methodists from her pale is alternately made a matter of regret and vituperation. Several of the Methodists thought that the work, as a whole, was honourable to Mr. Wesley; that it would elevate his character in the public estimation; and therefore rather serve than injure the cause in which they were embarked. It was the only biography of Mr. Wesley that had then appeared which does full justice to his talents and scholarship. In the whole of these views Mr. Watson could not acquiesce. That the work might accidentally serve the cause of true religion, he was not inclined to deny; but he thought its direct tendency to be injurious. Individuals, by reading it, might be favourably impressed with the general character of Mr. Wesley, and thus be led to peruse his own writings, and judge for themselves concerning his religious views, and in this way the work might do good; but Mr. Watson saw that, however Mr. Wesley might be occasionally held up to admiration and respect, the religion

which it was the business of that great man's life to propagate was denied and ridiculed by his biographer. All that Mr. Wesley deemed vital and saving in Christianity, Mr. Southey coolly explains away upon philosophical principles.

The account which Mr. Wesley gives, in his Journal and other writings, of his own personal experience is deeply interesting and instructive. Long before he obtained the faith which brings salvation, he was deeply impressed with the necessity of personal holiness; and he used every means in his power to obtain that only qualification for heaven. He procured the finest hymns in all languages, and sang them with the utmost sincerity of devotion; he collected the finest prayers that the universal church could supply, and repeated them upon his knees before God, with frequency and deep seriousness; yet, after all, he found himself under the dominion of the carnal mind, and in bondage to his own evil nature, as well as to that fear which arises from conscious guilt. He studied all the arguments in favour of natural and revealed religion, and endeavoured thus to fortify his mind against scepticism and infidelity; and yet the thought would often steal upon him, that the universe has existed from eternity, and that there is no future state. So powerful were these suggestions, and his own heart so prone to yield to them, that he has frequently pursued the thought, till there was scarcely any spirit in him, and he has been ready to choose strangling rather than life.\*

\* Sermon LXX. The Case of Reason impartially Considered. Works, vol. vi., pages 356, 359. Third Edition.

His devotional exercises never produced in his heart the principle of love to God and all mankind; his reasonings never put him in possession of saving faith; and hence, notwithstanding all his sincerity and efforts, he was neither holy nor happy. His heart was the seat of various evils; and his spirit was restless and uneasy, perpetually sighing for some absent and unknown good. By that faith which is of the operation of God he obtained permanent peace in his conscience and purity of heart. Nor was he peculiar in all this. Thousands of persons, in all parts of the kingdom, of every character, and of every grade in society, were brought by the same means—faith in the blood of atonement—into the same state; and this they enjoyed and exemplified both in life and death.

The reality of all this Mr. Southey in effect denies. He makes no attempt to show that Mr. Wesley had mistaken the sense of Scripture, by which he professed in all things to be guided. The Bible is not made the standard of appeal in any part of his controversy with Mr. Wesley; but the Poet Laureate treats religion entirely as an affair of philosophy. No one, indeed, would have objected to the legitimate application of philosophy in the elucidation of Mr. Wesley's character and conduct; but the philosophy of Mr. Southey unhappily interferes with the most important verities of the Christian revelation. It, in effect, supersedes the providence and grace of God, and contradicts the obvious sense of Scripture, and of every orthodox confession of faith. According to Mr. Southey, the Founder of Methodism was not

raised up by the especial providence of God, and invested by him with suitable qualifications for calling the attention of a slumbering and ungodly nation to religion in its spirituality and power; but was made an eminent and successful Minister of the Gospel by the circumstances of the times. He was not "thrust forth" into the field by "the Lord of the harvest," in answer to the prayers of the church; but was prompted to his unparalleled labours by "the stirring of ambition." His success in the conversion of men was not effected by a divine influence, exerted in connexion with the faithful enunciation of the truth of God; but by the arts of the speaker. The sorrows of penitence, and the joys of pardon, were the effects of a "new disease;" at the "crisis" of which the sufferer was "filled with all joy and peace in believing." When sinners, abandoned to every vice and crime, became holy and upright, devout and prayerful, they were not renewed in the spirit of their minds by the power of the Holy Ghost; but "Wesley," by his simple eloquence, opened in their hearts sources of piety, of which they had previously been unconscious. All religious experience, from the first dawn of divine light upon the mind, and the first desire of the heart towards God and heaven, to the consolations of holiness, and the blessedness of dying in the Lord, were to be resolved into an indefinite something denominated "enthusiasm;" and the work of conversion and salvation, which Mr. Wesley was accustomed to call "the work of God," Mr. Southey found to be entirely of human origin, resolvable into the peculiarities of our physical constitution. If all this

were true, Mr. Watson saw that he and his brethren in the ministry might apply to themselves and the societies under their care the startling language of St. Paul, uttered on another occasion, "Our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God. Ye are yet in your sins." He also perceived that every neglecter of the Christian salvation, every trifler with religion, might find in Mr. Southey's book a justification of his impenitence and unbelief. Of the sincerity of Mr. Southey's attachment to Christianity, as a divine revelation, Mr. Watson had no doubt; but he saw that nothing was easier than the application of Mr. Southey's philosophy to the conduct of the primitive Christians, and to many parts of the New Testament, which relate to personal religion, when the whole would appear to be a delusion, an affair merely of passion and imagination.

Mr. Southey's temerity was very offensive to Mr. Watson. He professes great zeal for the interests of the Church of England; but that his attention had never been seriously directed to the vital doctrines of the Protestant Reformers, the learned and pious founders of the Establishment, was undeniable. Many of his censures upon the creed of Mr. Wesley apply with equal force to the formularies which received their sanction, and which they sealed with their blood. The philosophy of this professed Churchman, in spite of his Prayer-book, sets aside the doctrine of original sin and of satanic agency; it denies the sensible application of the benefits of redemption to individuals through faith; and it leaves all the offices of the

Christian Comforter to be contemplated and realized by dreaming fanatics. Had this popular writer confined his philosophy to literature and politics, it would never have called forth the animadversion of Mr. Watson; but when it was placed in opposition to principles which have been held sacred by the spiritual part of the church of God in all ages, and in which the eternal interests of mankind are involved, he felt that silence was a sin. For Mr. Southey, as one of the first literary men of the age, he had a high respect; and he had long been inclined to think with him on many subjects of national interest; but when, in an evil hour, this distinguished writer so far lost sight of his true calling as to tamper with "the Gospel of our salvation," and expose it to derision under the name of "Methodism," the "spirit" of Mr. Watson was "stirred in him," and he assumed a tone of authority and rebuke to which he had not been accustomed in any of his previous publications. On a somewhat similar occasion Bishop Taylor remarked, concerning that mysterious intercourse with God which is enjoyed by every spiritual worshipper, and the reality of which men of sceptical minds have so often denied, "This is a subject to be felt, and not to be talked of; and they that never touched it with their finger may secretly, perhaps, laugh at it in their heart, and be never the wiser."

The title of Mr. Watson's work is, "Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley: being a Defence of the Character, Labours, and Opinions of the Founder of Methodism against the Misrepresentations of that Publication." It is distin-



guished throughout by great force of reasoning, and contains many passages of superior beauty and eloquence. As a vindication of Mr. Wesley's views and proceedings, it was not inferior to any work that had appeared since the publication of his own incomparable "Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," about eighty years before. The writer shows that Mr. Wesley's character and tenets are to be judged of by a higher standard than that of a flippant philosophy; yet he often meets his opponent upon the ground which he himself had chosen, and "takes from him the armour in which he trusted."

Independently of the general bearing of this work, as a defence of Mr. Wesley, it contains valuable remarks and suggestions upon several collateral subjects of interest and importance. Mr. Watson's Methodism was of a purely Wesleyan character, and never rendered him hostile to the established Church; nor did he think that the spirit of intolerance was at all peculiar to her adherents. Having stated the reasons which induced, on the part of the Methodist societies, a partial separation from her pale, he says, "That a great and most gratifying alteration has taken place, within a few years, both in the doctrine and lives of the national Clergy, is certain; and by none is this circumstance more gladly hailed than by the Methodists. The statement of the facts mentioned above was necessary to explain the reasons which led to a departure from Mr. Wesley's original plan; but it is not made in a spirit of hostility to the Church of England, in so many respects; to be venerated, and for whose growing prosperity and

perpetuity the wishes of none are more sincere than my own. I would not forget that she is 'the mother of us all;' and I can never contemplate, without the deepest admiration, her noble army of confessors and martyrs, and the illustrious train of her Divines, whose writings have been, and continue to be, the light of Christendom. Bigotry in forms of church-government has a peculiar absurdity. Different opinions as to many doctrines may certainly plead the authority of the letter of Scripture with a much better grace than it can be urged when used to support the details of church-order; points which the Holy Spirit has left so much at large as to furnish us only with principles and not with forms. All beside the appointment of faithful men to minister the word and sacraments, and to bear rule in the church, so as to drive away errors and vices, is matter of pure inference. A bigot for Independency or Presbyterianism, and a bigot for diocesan Episcopacy and apostolical succession, stand upon nearly the same ground. There is little difference between the spirit of Laud, and that which burns in the unhallowed writings of Robinson of Cambridge, and a recent History of the Dissenters.\* The meekness and gentleness of Christ is as far removed from the one

\* The History here referred to is that by Doctors Bogue and Bennett. As a literary composition it is alternately flippant and dull; but its distinguishing characteristic is hostility to the established Church, and to the Wesleyan Methodists, whose tenets and character are described with little regard for either truth or charity. An abridged edition of this work has lately been published, by Dr. Bennett, in which some of the sarcasms upon Mr. Wesley and his Preachers are expunged; but their views of Christian theology are shamefully misrepresented.

as the other ; and persecution, in one form or other, must ever result from the want of charity, when that which 'letteth' is removed out of the way."

In answer to Mr. Southey's allegation, that Mr. Wesley was prompted by "ambition" to his extraordinary course of labour, Mr. Watson very forcibly remarks, "It is mere trifling to speak of 'ambition,' in the case of Mr. Wesley, in any but the best sense. Wealth, it is acknowledged, was not his object ; the only honour he met with was to be reproached and persecuted ; and the power of which we have heard so much, was the power to manage the affairs of a despised and a poor people. What was there in this to tempt that low and corrupt ambition which Mr. Southey ascribes to him ? I fear that ambitious Clergymen may now be found in the Church : let then the question of Mr. Wesley's ambition be put to the proof. Will any of them come among us to seek its gratification ? We will give them as many advantages for obtaining the 'notoriety' which Mr. Wesley possessed as possible. They shall have enough of duty, long walks, and longer rides, and fields and streets to preach in, and the darkest parts of the country, and the rudest of the people, and the hardest fare. In proportion, too, as they imitate the zeal of the Wesleys, we will show them all honour and respect on our part ; and they will not lack that reproach of which the world is not much more parsimonious in the present day, than when the names of the Wesleys were cast out as evil. It will not fail to calumniate them whilst living, if they give it too much disturbance ; and perhaps some future Poet

Laureate may lay by his birth-day and coronation odes to asperse them when dead. Will all this tempt their ambition? I suppose not. Neither in their day nor night dreams does Methodism ever occur to them as the road to honour; and yet, if it opened to Mr. Wesley so fine a field for the gratification of his ambition, why should not theirs press into the same course, in the hope of seizing the same prize? Have they learning? So had he. Have they prospects in the Church? So had he. Have they ambition? So, Mr. Southey tells us, had he. How then is it that he alone, of all the ambitious Clergymen we ever heard or read of, was impelled by it into the course he adopted; and that none besides himself ever thought that field-preaching and itinerancy opened the way to a distinction sufficient to allay the ambitious appetite of any 'conqueror,' or any 'poet?' I leave the difficulty to be explained by him who created it."

These extracts may serve as a specimen of Mr. Watson's eloquent and argumentative publication; through the whole of which he has decidedly the advantage over his antagonist; not only because of his superior theological knowledge, but in the comprehensiveness of his views, and in philosophic reasoning. The principal questions at issue between him and his opponent are not mere opinions, on which men may innocently differ, but affect the essential doctrines of human salvation. In this light they were viewed by one of the most learned Prelates of the English Church, who expressed his cordial thanks to Mr. Watson for his triumphant defence of those principles of personal

religion which were distinctly recognised by all the Protestant Reformers.

Mr. Watson's work has been very extensively read, especially in the Methodist Connexion. From the time of its first appearance it has been in regular demand. A copy of it is said to have fallen into the hands of the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV., soon after it was published; and was read by him with considerable interest and avidity. His opinion concerning it was indicated with sufficient explicitness by the remark which he made on finishing the perusal: "Mr. Watson has the advantage over my Poet Laureate." As a defence of the providence and grace of God, against the speculations of a sceptical philosophy, it is invaluable; and is well adapted, by the blessing of God, to settle the minds of young persons of education on subjects the most important that can possibly occupy their attention.

In the early part of the year 1821, Mr. Watson's sympathy was awakened, as was that of his brethren throughout the kingdom, by the sickness and death of the venerable Joseph Benson. He was a man of small stature; and his voice was weak and inharmonious; yet he was one of the most powerful and impressive Preachers that ever lived. Having passed through a course of sound classical training in his native county of Cumberland, he entered himself as a member of the University of Oxford; but, as his Methodism rendered him obnoxious to his Tutor, who was the Vice-Principal of the Hall to which he belonged, and he was given to understand that the requisite testimo-

nials both for taking his degree, and obtaining ordination, would be withheld, he followed what to him appeared to be the opening of Providence, and became an Itinerant Preacher in connexion with Mr. Wesley. His acquaintance with theology and the holy Scriptures was accurate, profound, and comprehensive; his zeal was intense; and his preaching elaborate, instructive, and awakening, almost beyond example. When stationed in the populous towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire, he was generally attended by immense congregations, who were frequently so affected under his word, as to be moved to loud wailing, and to seek relief in united prayer, in which they were joined by their faithful Minister. Often has he kneeled down in the midst of his sermons, that his hearers might give expression to their penitential sorrows, and pour out their hearts before the God of mercy. The people, therefore, who were converted from the error of their way, and brought to a saving knowledge of Christ, by his instrumentality, were exceedingly numerous. When Mr. Watson knew him, in London, he was "a very aged man," nearly worn out in the service of his Lord; but he still retained his mental vigour, and all the simplicity and fervour of his early piety. For the last twenty years of his life, he was the Editor of the Methodist Magazine; and during that period, among other useful publications, he wrote an invaluable Commentary on the holy Scriptures, in which he brought the entire course of his theological and biblical studies to bear with admirable effect. Mr. Watson highly esteemed this apostolic man. His deep and matured piety,

great usefulness, sanctified learning, and disinterested zeal in giving the whole of his literary labours to the Connexion of which he was a member, all rendered him an object of interest and cordial affection with Mr. Watson, who delighted in his company, and in the contemplation of his character. This revered Minister of Christ died in the Lord, Feb. 16th, 1821, aged seventy-four years, leaving one of the most bright and spotless examples to mankind. As in the case of the first Christian martyr, "devout men carried him" also "to his grave, and made great lamentation over him;" because in him the church and the world had sustained an irreparable loss. Mr. Bunting preached the funeral sermon at the City-road chapel; and afterwards published in the Methodist Magazine a just and beautiful character of the venerable deceased. Many other Ministers preached sermons on the same occasion in different parts of the kingdom, and particularly in London and the neighbourhood, where Mr. Benson had long been known. In this service Mr. Watson took an honourable and distinguished part; and improved the death of this great and good man, in a sermon which he delivered in the Hinde-street chapel, near Manchester-square.

The Annual Report of the Missionary Society for the year 1820 concludes in the following fine spirit:—"It is impossible to fix our attention on these astonishing operations with constancy, without catching new ardour, and feeling a vast expansion of soul, attempting to equal, but still falling short of, the immeasurable designs of redeeming love and power. In this habit of thinking and

feeling lukewarmness and selfishness can have no place ; and it will be sustained by the constant and more perfect developement of those designs which must now run on to their accomplishment, until the whole world shall be subdued to our God and Saviour. Silently, but swiftly, is the true light penetrating the long-accumulated darkness of Africa ; secretly is the influence of true religion and European science undermining the vast, the polluted, and at one time thought the immovable, bulwarks of Indian superstition. They are dis-jointing, and tremble to their fall. A spirit of inquiry is excited in some Mahomedan countries, —the first but joyful omen of the dissipation of the grand imposture ; the pagan slaves of our colonies are hastening yearly in great numbers into the church of Christ ; distant islands of the Southern Sea have cast away their idols, and others are beckoning the messengers of God to their shores. The circulation of the Scriptures in different tongues is reviving the light, and giving life to many fallen and corrupted churches in different parts of Christendom ; whilst extended school establishments, in various parts of the world, are pre-occupying the minds of many thousands of the children of Pagans with principles opposed to every form of Gentile error, and to every superstitious practice. Such are the views which are now spread before every contemplative mind, interested in observing the ‘ signs of His coming,’ to whom, finally, shall be given ‘ dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages should serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass.



away; and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.'

"For the coming of that kingdom, let us more devoutly and fervently pray; knowing that every endeavour of ours at home, and even the more important and arduous labours of our brethren abroad, can only ripen into successful issues by the special blessing of God. In a spirit of humble dependence upon Him, let all our engagements, whether of counsel or exertion, be conducted; and for those especially who are bearing 'the testimony of Jesus' in foreign lands, let us lift up our hearts, that they make full proof of their ministry, and in every place make 'manifest the savour of the knowledge of Christ,' and present the Gentiles an offering to God, 'sanctified by the Holy Ghost.'"

During the spring of 1821 Mr. Watson visited several large towns in different parts of the kingdom, for the purpose of affording assistance at the Anniversaries of Auxiliary and Branch Missionary Societies. He also prepared the Report of the General Society, for the Annual Meeting, which was held at the City-road chapel, London, on Monday, April 30th. Colonel Sandys, from India, a tried friend of the Society, occupied the chair on this occasion, in the absence of Mr. Butterworth, who was in a state of ill health. Mr. Watson read the Report, which described the prosperous state of the Society's affairs. The number of Missionaries was increased to nearly one hundred and fifty; the stations occupied were more than one hundred; and upwards of twenty-seven thousand members were united in church-fellowship, under the care of the Missionaries, and the fruit of their

labour. W. H. Trant, Esq., and Colonel Munro, both recently returned from India, bore testimony to the necessity of Missionary exertions in that benighted region, and encouraged the Society to more extended and vigorous efforts. The Rev. William Ward, of the Baptist Mission at Serampore, spoke at considerable length, and in a manner worthy of his high character, both as a man of God, and an able Missionary. He described in strong terms the difficulties with which he and his brethren had to contend when they commenced their labours in India. The Hindoos were in a wretched condition. "Such was their ignorance and hardness of heart," said Mr. Ward, in his emphatical manner, "that, before we could make any progress in our work, we had a conscience to create." It is difficult to conceive of zeal and piety more pure and elevated, and of a catholic spirit more genuine and expansive, than those which appeared in Mr. Ward upon this occasion. He declared his reliance for the success of all Missions to be upon the promised effusions of the Holy Spirit; and hence, he connected the progress of the work of God abroad with the ceaseless prayers of the churches at home. In expressing his Christian regard for the agents of the Society whose cause he was then pleading, he said, "The Wesleyan Missionaries yield to none in love to their Saviour, which is so essentially necessary to keep alive the Missionary flame. And they yield to none in another grand point, which is the freeness of their invitations. Blessed be God, they feel no hesitation in their offers of mercy. This is their darling theme; and it suits the Missionary

cause extremely well. They depend entirely upon divine influence. Their eyes are always fixed on that; and, feeling that they are but weak instruments in the hand of God, they go forward in their simple career, looking to God for his influence; and, blessed be his holy name, that influence is not withheld." In full accordance with these sentiments, Mr. Ward, a few days after this Meeting, requested as many Wesleyan Ministers, then in London, as could conveniently attend, to meet him at the Mission-house in Hatton-garden, at a given time, that they might commend him in united prayer to the divine protection during his voyage to India, where he had long laboured; and that, on resuming his ministry there, it might be rendered abundantly successful by the blessing of the Lord the Spirit. It is needless to add, that his request was complied with. The heart of Mr. Watson clave to this distinguished Missionary; and their kindred and sanctified spirits have now met in a happier region, where their former anxieties and labours in the cause of Christ are amply rewarded.

At the Anniversary just referred to, there was an unusual display of Christian liberality; the contributions amounting to upwards of one thousand pounds. A spirit of holy triumph and zeal pervaded the vast assembly at the public Meeting, which was greatly promoted by the preparatory religious services.

Scarcely had the stir and hurry of this memorable Anniversary subsided before we find Mr. Watson again itinerating through the country, as the zealous advocate of the Wesleyan Missions, and the

bearer of intelligence respecting their success and prospects. The following letter discloses a part of his plan and proceedings :—

TO MR. WILLIAM WALTON, WAKEFIELD.

LONDON, *May 4th*, 1821.

MY DEAR SIR,

In my various wanderings this spring, I have not been nearer to you than Manchester, or I should have done myself the pleasure to call upon a family for whom I feel, and shall continue to feel, an unabated respect and affection.

On Sunday, the 13th, and Monday, the 14th, I shall, God willing, be at Sheffield; and on Tuesday shall pass through Wakefield, on my way to Bradford, to attend the Missionary Meeting there at two o'clock in the afternoon, and preach in the evening. On the Sunday following I must be at Nottingham; so that I shall have to pass through Wakefield a second time.

I cannot suffer these opportunities to pass, without spending a few hours, either in going or returning, or both, if it were only to say that I have a very grateful remembrance of your past kindnesses to me; and that I shall always feel happy in a few hours of your society, and that of your excellent family. I pray that I may find you all in health and peace.

The bustle of our public Meetings in London is nearly over. Our own Meeting on Monday was a noble one. Two gentlemen from India (Mr. Trant, and Colonel Munro) attended, and gave an important testimony in favour of Missions in India; and

assured us that, from all they had observed, after a long residence in India, the superstitions of that country are giving way, and the kingdom of our Lord must be triumphant.

Want of time, and very pressing daily engagements, have prevented me from writing to you, though I have often intended it. This, however, you must impute to any thing rather than want of respect. I have availed myself of every opportunity of inquiring after your welfare.

I have been lately in various parts of the country; and find that this year is one of the most prosperous in the Connexion we have for a long time had. Many parts of Kent have had extraordinary visitations. More than two thousand souls have been added to the societies in the Potteries of Staffordshire; at Liverpool six or seven hundred have been added; and in many other places there has been great prosperity. Thus is the Lord remembering Zion, and building the wall in troublous times.

We have had much sickness in our family since I saw you. We have learned, however, I trust, that He who cannot err must do all things well. To him be praise and glory. To-morrow I leave town for Bristol; and I shall not be at home again before I see you; as I cross the country, and take Worcester and Birmingham on my way to Sheffield.

## CHAPTER XV.

MR. WATSON attended the Conference of 1821, which was held in Manchester, uncertain as to the place where his future lot would be cast. At that time London was only divided into two Circuits; and, as he had been stationed in both of them, he could not, consistently with the rules of the Connexion, be re-appointed to the metropolis as an Itinerant Preacher. The friends in Birmingham were anxious to secure his labours, and urgently solicited his appointment to their Circuit. In consequence of the growing extent and importance of the Missions, it was necessary that the Society should employ a second resident Secretary, in order to their efficient and successful management: Mr. Watson's long experience, established character as a public man, distinguished ability, and active habits, all pointed him out as eminently qualified for that very responsible situation; and the Committee pressed the Conference to fix him in that station.

After the comparative claims of the Missions, and of the Birmingham Circuit, had been fully heard and balanced in the Conference, it was determined that Mr. Watson should remain in London, as one of the resident Secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society; an office which he sustained with the highest credit to himself, and advantage to the Mission-cause, for the space of six successive years. This appointment was suited to his declining health; and it secured to him greater leisure than he had enjoyed for several years. His duties

were, indeed, numerous and urgent; but he was freed from the cares and engagements of the itinerant ministry, and generally spent his evenings in his study. The time which he could thus command, he devoted to the composition of valuable theological works, by which he rendered essential service to the cause of true religion. Higher objects were secured by this arrangement than either he or the Conference at that time anticipated. He surrendered himself in prayer to the divine guidance and direction; and his confidence was never disappointed. His way was made plain before him; and his Lord conferred great honour upon him, by the labours which were assigned him in the church.

During the sittings of this Conference Mr. Watson addressed the following letter to his daughter. It shows the tenderness of his affection as a father, and his earnest desire for her mental improvement and spiritual interests.

MANCHESTER, *July 31st*, 1821.

MY DEAR MARY,

FROM one of your uncle's letters I learn that you are still at Portsmouth; and as we are not to remove from London this year, I am not anxious about your stay being a little prolonged, as I hope it may be favourable to your health, and fit you for closer application on your return. I hope, however, to see you on my return, which I expect will be in about a week or ten days.

The kindness of friends to you I feel as an obligation to myself. Thank them for yourself and me.

I trust, my dear girl, that you have not neglected to meet in class ; nor to remember that the good desires which by the mercy of God you have received must be carefully cultivated. In order to this, spend some part of your time every day in private, in reading God's holy word, and in praying to your Father who seeth in secret. Choose the good part, which shall not be taken from you ; and live every day as a person who has chosen it. Let your intercourse with others be cheerful, but serious ; and let the fear of an all-seeing God never depart from you.

God bless you, my dearest child !

Mr. Watson's colleagues in the Missionary Secretaryship were his friends the Rev. Jabez Bunting, who was also appointed Mr. Benson's successor, as the Editor of the Methodist Magazine ; and the Rev. Joseph Taylor, who resided in the Mission-house, in Hatton-garden. On his return from the Conference Mr. Watson removed from his residence in Margaret-street, to a house in Wellington-street, Pentonville. This place was a convenient distance from the Mission-house, to which he was accustomed daily to resort, for the discharge of his official duties.

He was now freed from the cares and responsibilities connected with the pastoral office, in which he had been accustomed, as a Methodist Preacher, to take his full share, and was at liberty to direct his entire attention to the concerns of the Missions, and to literary objects ; but there was one inconvenience connected with his new situation which caused him some anxiety. He was aware of the



intimate connexion between personal religion, and his own spiritual safety and happiness; and he had long been convinced that nothing under the name of religion either corresponds with the representations of Scripture, or meets the wants of men, unless it includes the possession and exercise of holy and devout affections. One principal means of preserving such affections in a state of growing purity and vigour, his own experience and observation had shown to be "the communion of saints," maintained by united prayer, and by spiritual conversation, according to the apostolic admonition, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." As an Itinerant Preacher, Mr. Watson had enjoyed the advantages of Christian fellowship in the quarterly visitation of the classes, and other meetings of a similar kind; but in his present situation he was cut off from his former intimate connexion with the societies, and his "pure mind" was no longer "stirred up by way of remembrance," as it had formerly been, by regularly listening to recitals of religious experience. To meet this deficiency, and with a reference to his own spiritual improvement, he entered his name as a private member of a class, under the care of Mr. Wright Turnell, which held its weekly meetings at a house in Myddleton-street, Spafields. Mr. Turnell was an aged Methodist, whose religious character had been tried by great vicissitudes of life; and he had invariably maintained his integrity. That which recommended him to Mr. Watson was his deep and simple piety. The class

consisted mostly of poor people, accustomed to daily labour; but they were spiritual worshippers of God; their hearts and treasure were in heaven; and they used to meet together weekly, to declare the goodness of the Lord, and to be helpers of each other's joy. With these simple-hearted people Mr. Watson was wont to associate once a week, in the evening, when his health would permit; and their meetings, unobserved by the world, were often seasons of spiritual refreshment and edification. On his appearance in the room, among his humble friends, he was generally requested to act the part of the Class-Leader; and it was observed that the advice which he gave to each person, after inquiring into his state, was almost always expressed in the language of Scripture, in the application of which he possessed a remarkable facility. Mr. Turnell has long since been gathered to his fathers; but some members of the class survive; and they often refer, with considerable emotion, to the time when Mr. Watson belonged to their fraternity, took his seat among them as "a brother," and appeared

"An easy, free, and but more-knowing friend."

The piety of Mr. Watson's heart was observable in the whole of his conduct; and it gave a richness and force to his correspondence with the Missionaries. One specimen has been already given; and the following is of equal value. It was addressed to an excellent young Missionary, who had just entered upon his work at Kingston, in Jamaica.

TO THE REV. ROBERT YOUNG.

LONDON, *Oct. 30th*, 1821.

DEAR BROTHER,

YOUR safe arrival, and promising entrance upon your work, give us pleasure. You have entered upon a very important field of labour; and you will find the following things necessary to keep before you:—

1. To speak, preach, and labour, every day, as though it were your last on earth; as though, at the close of it, you were to give up your account to your Saviour.

2. To give part of every day to secret reading of the Scriptures, and earnest closet prayer. We must draw from the fountain, before we can fill the vessels of others.

3. To read something useful in practical and doctrinal divinity, &c., every day. Let not your books remain unused. By a right application of your time you may accomplish this.

4. To take care of your pulpit-preparations. It is no reason for carelessness, that you preach to Negroes. It requires more care and labour to prepare a plain sermon, clearly explaining important doctrine, and so illustrating it as to be beneficial to the ignorant, than to make a flashy, rhetorical, empty harangue. Let these preparations be fervently prayed over.

5. To converse much in private with your Class-Leaders, and other persons of some standing in the society, in order to promote their Christian knowledge and piety; that they may be props and stays to the society. You must, how-

ever, do this with dignity, and without foolish familiarity.

6. To visit the sick as much as possible, and catechise children and adults. These are blessed exercises, and will not fail to be profitable to your own soul, and fruitful to others.

7. To be always *at* your work, and *in* your work, public or private, leaving all common and worldly concerns and conversation to others, who have not your work to do.

8. To act in the full spirit of your instructions, whatever others may do, and endeavour in all your intercourse with your brethren to promote their spirituality and your own by holy converse. Remember to keep and send your journal.

During the autumn of this year Mr. Watson attended Missionary Meetings at Leeds, Doncaster, Alford, Wainfleet, and Retford, where he pleaded the good cause with encouraging effect, and gladdened the hearts of the people by his eloquence, and statements of past success; and his own spirit was cheered by the displays of Christian zeal and liberality which every where met his view. While he imparted pleasure to others, he suffered greatly from feebleness and disease. In what state of health he prosecuted these labours will partly appear from the following letter, which was addressed to Mrs. Watson:—

WAINFLEET, *Thursday Evening.*

MY DEAREST MARY,

THROUGH divine mercy, I have been brought on my journey to this place, and have got through

my work, though with difficulty. My lungs have been very tender, and sometimes I have been very feeble; but, upon the whole, I am not worse, and I think, a little better; and begin to hope that I shall get through all my appointments. At Raithby-Hall I have been treated with great tenderness by Mrs. Brackenbury, who has been with me in her carriage to all the Missionary Meetings in the neighbourhood; and taken me back, nursing me with great care. Thank God for these comforts, when they are so welcome. I have been a little low sometimes; but, upon the whole, I have rested on God, and felt that he was with me.

I shall write again, God willing, from Leeds; and, with care, I trust I shall get comfortably through. To-morrow I join the packet to Lincoln, and on Saturday go to Retford.

My love to the dear children, who, I hope, are diligent in their studies.

May you be kept in health and peace under the protection of our blessed Saviour! Remember me in your prayers.

From the time of his first appointment to London Mr. Watson had occasionally furnished contributions to the Methodist Magazine; and when a new series of that work was commenced, under the able editorship of Mr. Bunting, in the year 1822, his assistance became still more efficient and regular, especially in the Review department, for which he was admirably qualified. He could at once seize upon the argument of an ample volume, and appeared almost intuitively to perceive what

was erroneous in principle, or inconclusive in reasoning. The readiness with which he could always express his conceptions often rendered his services of this kind rather an amusement than a labour to himself; while the originality, the strength, the eloquence of his compositions commanded the admiration of all competent judges, and gave to that periodical a more elevated character than it had ever previously possessed. The same kind assistance he continued, as his health and other engagements would allow, to the end of his life.

For several years Mr. Watson's pen had been scarcely ever unemployed; but his publications, though valuable in their kind, were mostly single sermons, controversial pamphlets, and Missionary Reports and periodicals. He had, however, cherished the design of writing something of a more permanent character, in which his theological knowledge and reading might be brought to bear; and he thought the time for entering upon it was now come. His comparative leisure was favourable; and, having passed the age of forty years, his mental faculties were matured. He recollected the disadvantages which beset his path, when he first went into a Methodist Circuit, and entered upon the study of divinity; he was aware that many of his junior brethren were then in the same circumstances; and he expressed a wish to write something that would assist them in obtaining an accurate and comprehensive acquaintance with the entire system of evangelical truth, and with the evidence upon which every vital doctrine is grounded. After considerable deliberation, he

resolved to write a body of Christian theology ; and to this work he now devoted all the time which he could command. The success with which he executed this project will appear in the course of this narrative. The subject is mentioned here, because at this period he entered upon the arduous task which he had assigned to himself. He appears to have formed his plan, and begun to write, in the autumn of the year 1821 ; and in about eighteen months from that period the first part was published.

The Missionary Report for the year 1821 was put into circulation early in the spring of the following year. It announces the formation of a Mission to the natives of New-Holland, whose case is thus described : “ The Committee sent out a Missionary to the aboriginal natives of New-Holland, many of whom roam about in the neighbourhood of the settlements, and have acquired, though imperfectly, the English language. Such an enterprise derives a special interest from the excessive degradation of this branch of the human family. None have sunk so low ; and none, therefore, so greatly need the only power which can awaken the torpor of their minds, and conquer their savage habits,—the power of religion ; and among none, when thus elevated into men, and restored to God, will the triumphs of the Gospel be more illustrious. Infidelity may despair of raising the embruted tribes of the fallen race, because it sees not the relations in which they stand to God, their Maker and Redeemer ; but the Christian knows that they are both men, and redeemed men, and that those branches of a disobedient family which have wan-

dèred into 'a far country,' and have been reduced to the most degrading servitude, shall at length 'come to themselves,' and say, 'I will arise, and go to my Father.' It is true that, in all attempts to benefit such a people, the agents must eminently 'walk by faith, and not by sight;' yet is the one as certain as the other, when it grounds itself upon the word of God. That word has commanded the Gospel to be 'preached to every creature;' and, as the natives of New-Holland are thus included in the care of their Saviour, we doubt not this attempt to benefit them will meet with his blessing. The case of these wretched men has been laid upon the hearts of the pious in the colony, and earnest appeals have been made in their behalf, with a view of producing a systematic effort for their religious instruction; and, in consequence, some means have been adopted for that purpose. With those who have thus commenced the benevolent work, the Missionary sent out is instructed to co-operate, and to follow any plans which may appear most conducive to the end. His first effort will be among those who lie nearest the settlements, whose children especially he will endeavour to bring under a course of useful and religious instruction. As this will come in aid of the anxious and benevolent attempts of the Governor to extend to them the advantages of civilization, we doubt not but that it will receive his encouragement."

This benevolent project failed for the time, in consequence of the unfaithfulness of the Missionary to whom the work was assigned. Instead of pursuing the objects of his Mission in the spirit of



faith and prayer, and keeping steadily in view the salvation of the people for whose instruction in Christianity he had been solemnly set apart, he contracted a passion for farming; and left the people to perish in ignorance and sin, while he devoted his attention to the breeding of cattle! It is needless to add, that the noble character of a Christian Missionary was soon laid aside. The course pursued by this unhappy man gave Mr. Watson no small degree of pain and sorrow.

As the spring of this year advanced, and about the time at which this Report was published, Mr. Watson visited the principal towns in Cornwall, accompanied by the Rev. Messrs. Reece and Joseph Taylor, preaching, and addressing Missionary Meetings. He commenced his tour about the middle of February, and returned to London in March. The attendance in all places was exceedingly crowded; the collections at the public services were liberal; and the sums reported, as the contributions of each Society, exceeded those of any former year. In some instances the increase was very large. The interest manifested by the vast congregations who assembled to sympathize with the miseries of the heathen world, and to hail the multiplying triumphs of the Gospel, was deep and ardent, and gave an encouraging pledge that the cause of Missions would never want warm and liberal friends among the people of Cornwall, who had been among the first to espouse the cause, and whose numerous and spacious places of worship, and large religious societies, were proofs of the efficacy of the Gospel. Such were the sentiments with which Mr. Watson returned from this labo-

rious excursion. He found the Cornish Preachers and people of one heart in this blessed work.

On his return from Cornwall he began to prepare for a journey into the north, for the purpose of attending Missionary Anniversaries at some of the principal towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire; but he was again assailed by disease in a somewhat new form. The following letter describes his situation with a degree of playfulness, which those persons will well understand who are just recovering from the complaint which he mentions:—

TO MR. WILLIAM WALTON, WAKEFIELD.

LONDON, *April 1st*, 1822.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Two reasons have delayed an answer to your kind letter: first, it arrived when I was in Cornwall: second, that, since the day after my return, I have been laid up with the gout; and the attack has been so sharp, that for near three weeks I have been confined to the sofa, not being able to take a step. I am now, however, so rapidly improving, that I begin to feel it a matter of tolerable certainty, that I shall be able to set off on my journey to Manchester at the latter end of the week; or that, at all events, I shall reach Wakefield on the Wednesday before the Meeting.

You will probably smile at my having the gout; but so it is; and no pleasant companion, I assure you, though Kings and nobles so often make acquaintance with it. My general health, I thank God, is much better.

I shall again be most happy to see my old and

beloved friends ; and trust that we shall not meet together at the Anniversary of your Society in vain.

Our accounts from abroad are generally favourable. The work of God appears to his servants, in many parts of the heathen world ; and his glory will, we trust, descend upon their children. Sickness and death have, however, made great inroads in many of our stations. We have lost seven Missionaries in the West Indies, during the year ; and four are disabled in India.

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

WITH Mr. Watson the Anniversaries of Missionary Societies were not seasons of unhallowed levity, but were connected in his mind with deep and solemn feeling. That so large a portion of the human race remained unevangelized, and that millions of mankind, redeemed and immortal, should be hastening to their final account under all the guilt and corruption of their fallen nature, aggravated by the intellectual and sensual pollutions of idolatry, appeared to him to call for humiliation and shame on the part of the Christian church. The cheerfulness, therefore, which he felt at the sight of old friends, still engaged in the service of God ; with the grateful joy which he cherished because of past success, and the displays of Christian liberality which it was often his privilege to witness ; were chastened and tempered by the remembrance of past neglects. He was accus-

tomed to pray that those neglects might be forgiven; that God would accept the contributions and services of his people; and that success might attend their future efforts. This spirit he often succeeded in infusing among the people; so that Missionary Meetings became means of improvement in personal godliness. In announcing the Anniversary of the General Society, to be held in London in the year 1822, he inserted the following pious suggestions, which were in fact the predominating sentiments of his heart. They appeared in the Missionary Notices for April. "We beg leave to direct the attention of the friends of our Missions in general to the arrangement of the regular services connected with the approaching Anniversary of the Society. From the general aspect of the accounts received through the year, we hope to meet, to unite with our mutual congratulations our devout thanksgivings to God for the success with which the Lord of the harvest has been pleased to crown the efforts of his labourers, and for those encouragements which are offered for new enterprises for the extension of the kingdom of our Lord to yet unvisited regions of darkness and misery. In these delightful exercises we trust to be joined by many of our friends from different parts of the country. May we all meet in the deep spirit of sympathy for a world of which so great a part is still sitting in darkness, and the shadow of death; and unite in prayers more solemn, earnest, and prevailing, for the larger effusions of that divine influence which alone can render successful human efforts for the conversion and salvation of the souls of men!"

There was an incident connected with this Annual Meeting, which is worth recording, as characteristic of the kind and liberal spirit of the Rev. George Collison, of Hackney. On the morning of that day Mr. Collison called on a friend, who informed him that he had recently received property as a residuary legatee; and, in looking over the account, he found, to his great regret, that a part of it arose from the sale of slaves, in the Bay of Honduras. "He is too deeply imbued, Sir," said Mr. Collison, "with the principles of the Gospel, to receive the price of blood; and he said to me, 'I am shocked at the sight of it. What shall I do with it?' I said, 'I will tell you what you may do with part of it. I am going to the Wesleyan Missionary Meeting; their labourers are greatly occupied among the slaves.' Since I have been here I have heard with much pleasure, that you have determined on a Mission to the very spot, the Bay of Honduras; and I have now the pleasure of presenting the sum, so received from my friend, to forward that desirable purpose. It is upwards of seventeen pounds. I wish it were seventeen hundred!"

When the services connected with the Missionary Anniversary in London were over, Mr. Watson visited the west of England, where he attended public Meetings, and preached Missionary sermons, at Bristol, Tiverton, and Frome. At each of these places he was received with cordial affection; but that which afforded him the highest gratification was, the spirit of zeal and liberality with which he every where saw the Mission cause supported.

One of the important objects to which he

directed his attention, after he became one of the resident Secretaries to the Missionary Society, was the theological training of the Missionaries, preparatory to their entrance upon their foreign work. Some of them resided in his family; and the greater part of them were put upon a course of reading and study under his direction. Among his papers are copious memoranda of lectures in theology, which appear to have been addressed to those interesting young men who from time to time left their native country, that they might "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." A course of instruction in literature, and general knowledge, was provided for them by different masters, but their theological training was conducted by Mr. Watson himself; and few men were better qualified for the responsible task. The instruction of the Missionary candidates, the discharge of his official duties as Missionary Secretary, occasional attendance upon the Anniversaries of Missionary Societies in the country, and the writing of his great theological work, and supplying articles for the Wesleyan Magazine, occupied the whole of his time; and, notwithstanding the general delicacy of his health, and frequent attacks of illness, he went through his various duties and engagements in a manner which commanded the admiration of all the parties with whom he was connected. The following letters show the circumstances under which he entered upon the year 1823. They were addressed to his kind friends, Dr. and Mrs. Ellis, late of Hull, but then resident at Wakefield; the Doctor having been appointed physician to the county asylum,

recently erected near that town. They had pressed him, in his infirm state of health, to pay them a visit, and take up a temporary residence with them.

LONDON, *Jan. 4th*, 1823.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR very kind and obliging invitation of a poor invalid has greatly affected me; and I would sooner have said how much I am sensible of your and Mrs. Ellis's friendship, but that my state has been so precarious. I most sincerely thank you.

The complaint itself appears to have been subdued; but the debility which has ensued has been very great; yet I trust that I am in the course of improvement. I am too green to venture on a journey yet, had I not also another, but slight, attack of the gout in the foot. This will, I think, be very temporary; and, should it please God to raise me to a strength sufficient to travel, in a few weeks, I will accept your kindness, and give myself, by full relaxation, and your advice, and the blessing of God upon both, a chance of full restoration.

Our family afflictions have been increased by a visitation of the scarlet fever. Mary has had a very severe attack, and a little nephew. Whether Tom will escape is doubtful. Mrs. Watson is quite worn down.

In the midst of all, we know that all is right, and that all is good. Thank God for the consolation!

I will write to you a week before I set off, which I take will not be this month. The sooner

the better I believe for myself ; but I must get my gouty foot into something like coach trim.

I have long had a kind of feeling that the warm bath would, under judicious regulation, be of great service to me. Perhaps you will be kind enough to think of that against I have the pleasure to see you. Mrs. Watson unites in love and thanks.

TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *Jan. 27th*, 1823.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

THE severity of the weather would alone prevent you from expecting me to fulfil my own purpose, and to meet your friendly invitation, in visiting Wakefield. Had it been otherwise, I have not, however, been movable to so great a distance. Till the last fortnight my debility increased ; and I certainly was never brought so low in my life. Since then I have been under the tonic and restorative process ; and, with now and then a slip back, have been improving.

I trust that in this affliction I have learned something, though slow of heart to understand and to believe. The complaint, as you know, is accompanied with no small degree of pressure on the spirits. I, at least, have found it so. I have thought of dying, and leaving my family at a crisis when they seemed most to need me ; or of living a poor helpless invalid, in the poverty and neglect of a Supernumerary Preacher ; and many more of these saddening reflections have crowded in at different times. But to feel in the midst of every sinking, that you could set your foot upon a rock,



and stand secure; this is the privilege of faith; and, I thank God, I have it. However, I trust that something brighter is opening; and that, with great care, I shall be efficient, in a tolerable degree, a few years longer; and live only for what life is worth,—to acquire a deeper acquaintance with God, and to be useful to men.

I feel it a relief to be able to read and write. I am getting on with my new publication, and hope to have the first part from the press in March or April.

I thought I ought to inform you how I was going on, lest you should think I neglected your kind invitation; and this must be my apology for a letter on that very poor subject—self. I hope to be able to accomplish the journey to Wakefield when the weather becomes more mild and settled, and when I have got up the hill a little further. At present I do not go out; nor have I left the house for the last six weeks.

TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *Feb. 11th*, 1823.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WRITE in a state of mortification, at a disappointment. My medical attendants have declared against my going northward in my present state of debility, and have ordered me to Brighton, to perfect what, I thank God, is a state of slowly returning strength. The Missionary Committee took up the subject, and backed them; and in vain I urged that, though the air might be cooler, yet the friends I should visit were warmer, and

that the inward enjoyment would make up all. To Brighton, therefore, I am driven; and my place is taken for to-morrow. However, the kind invitation of my dear friends will not lose its impression upon my mind and heart; and some time in the spring I hope (less an invalid than now) to spend a week with you. This I shall make an object; as I must, if possible, go down to Nottingham on business before June.

I thank God for the *prospect* of better health than before my attack; at least there are very favourable indications of it.

Under the pressure of severe personal suffering, Mr. Watson kept up a regular correspondence with the Missionaries abroad, giving them advice and encouragement as the case of each might require. Some admirable specimens of his letters to the men who were teaching the Heathen Christianity in foreign climes have already been given. The following was written at this period, and was addressed

TO THE REV. ELIJAH HOOLE, AT MADRAS.

LONDON, *Jan. 29th*, 1823.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

WE do not hear from you as often as we could wish; but we are very happy to hear of your health, your successful study of Tamul, and your pleasure in your work.

With respect to the first of these, be careful. Some need the spur, and others the rein. You, I believe, are of the latter and more honourable class.

Mingle exercise with study; pursue nothing to great weariness; and be attentive to early rest and early rising. If you will make haste, make haste *slowly*, as ancient wisdom has taught us both in Greek and Latin. You will work better and longer.

You feel, I doubt not, the pleasure and profit of Madras; but, when Mr. England arrives, we really think you ought to lay hold fully and finally of Seringapatam; and let it no longer be trifled with. It is certainly to be preferred to Bangalore; because the Missionary may be working, while he is gaining the language; and, when Bangalore can be occupied by another, a regular exchange may take place. Suppose a good native Assistant could be got from the north of Ceylon to go with you, it might be of service; unless that kind of help can be more usefully employed at Negapatam, to push out the work into the neighbourhood. The people of the old Danish Mission, who are in some state of preparation, will, I hope, be gathered in by us: I mean, those of them who are "as sheep having no shepherd."

We have not much English news. The Connection is at peace, and generally, I think, in prosperity. To God be the praise!

It may encourage you all to learn, that not only do our funds increase, as you will see by the Report, but that we have reason to conclude that Missionaries and their work are more constantly and earnestly prayed for. Praying Missionaries abroad, and a praying people at home, this is what we want more perfectly. May God pour the Spirit of grace and supplication upon us every where!

In the month of February this year, Mr. Watson visited Brighton in the hope of deriving some benefit in regard to his health. After he had been there a few days he addressed the following letter to his son, in London :—

BRIGHTON, *Feb. 18th, 1823.*

DEAR TOM,

AFTER having been cheated by the Angel coach in the fare, and squeezed up in a six-inside old Islington stage, we arrived safely here. Through the mercy of God I feel my health improve, though the weather is cold. I got out to chapel twice yesterday, and was thankful that again I was brought by Providence into the house of God, to worship at his footstool.

Thursday was a calm day ; but Friday and Saturday brought us gales and wind, and your mother was all wonder at the waves. The roar of the sea was in our ears night and day, and filled the mind with sublime thoughts of the power of the elements, and the might of their great Ruler.

We live in a curious sort of style, having every little thing to provide. Sometimes we are without butter when the meal comes, and we have to send out ; and then we wonder whether our remaining piece of bread will serve us for breakfast or tea ; so that we need a good deal of contrivance ; and our forgetfulness is often amusing.

Save an occasional visit from the Preachers, we are not likely to be called upon by any person of intelligence or interest.

I hope you are diligent whilst at study ; and that you will leave yourself, by application, the

leisure for exercise. You are now approaching man's estate, and must "put away childish things." Be thoughtful for your future prospects in life; and above all, give your heart to God. Seek Him first; and you will not be without his providence to direct you in life; and without that you will be wretched. Make a point of reading a portion of Scripture every day, with prayer that you may obtain pardon, and experience that conversion without which you can never enter the kingdom of God. Write this upon your heart.

Mr. Watson's health continued in a very infirm state through the winter; but, as the spring approached, he speaks of himself as convalescent, and meditated a journey into Yorkshire. Thus he writes to his friend William Ellis, M.D., of Wakefield:—

LONDON, *April 1st, 1823.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

BEING, by divine mercy, so far restored, that I can do a little work, though I dare not enterprise much, I will endeavour to meet your wishes to attend the Missionary service at Wakefield, in connexion with Nottingham. I can take a Sunday evening service, if I only remain as well as I am at present; and I hope for increasing strength.

I was sorry to hear of your and Mrs. Ellis's indisposition, which I hope is but temporary; and that, among all your visitations, your *toes* may escape; for inability to walk would be as inconvenient to you as to me. Mine are very tender; and I never walked so carefully, I assure you.

In the best things we can have no let or hinderance but what is voluntary; and it is wonderful power given to man to *command* a "peace which passeth understanding;" "glory, honour, and immortality!" How much better has God dealt with us than we should have dealt with ourselves! We would have at our command health, friends, power, wealth: but God has subjected them to other laws than blind human will and desire; and has, in return, said, as to all that concerns our true happiness, glory, wealth, and pleasure, "Ask, and it *shall* be given you." May we rightly estimate and employ this great prerogative attached to redeemed human nature!

In the spring of the year 1823 the first part of the work in which Mr. Watson had for some time been engaged made its appearance, under the title of "Theological Institutes: or, a View of the Evidences, Doctrines, Morals, and Institutions of Christianity." It is appropriately inscribed to the Rev. Jabez Bunting, A.M., "as a small expression of respect for his talents and virtues, and of the value placed upon his friendship by the author." The friendship subsisting between these eminent men was deep and cordial, founded upon mutual esteem. Their views on nearly all the great questions of theology and church-order were in unison with each other; and they had long been intimately connected in the Missionary cause. The influence which they unitedly exerted upon the Methodist body was powerful and salutary; and their names will be transmitted to posterity in honourable connexion.

A modest advertisement prefixed to the work states, that its design is, "to exhibit the evidences, doctrines, morals, and institutions of Christianity, in a form adapted to the use of young Ministers, and students in divinity. It is hoped, also, that it may supply the desideratum of a body of divinity, adapted to the present state of theological literature, neither Calvinistic on the one hand, nor Pelagian on the other. The reader will perceive that the object has been to follow a course of plain and close argument on the various subjects discussed, without any attempts at embellishments of style, and without adding practical uses and reflections, which, however important, did not fall within his plan to introduce. The various controversies on fundamental and important points have been introduced; but it has been the sincere aim of the author to discuss every point with fairness and candour; honestly, but in the spirit of 'the truth,' which he more anxiously wishes to be taught than to teach, to exhibit what he believes to be the sense of the holy Scriptures, to whose authority he trusts he has unreservedly subjected all his own opinions."

This advertisement relates to the entire publication, and very correctly points out its peculiar characteristics. The principal "controversies" introduced, and of which it contains a copious discussion, are the Deistical, the Socinian, and the Calvinistic. The imagination of the author is placed under absolute control; and the rhetorical embellishment which marks his other writings is never suffered to appear, as being unsuited to the didactic and argumentative character of the work.

On all doctrinal questions an absolute deference is paid to the authority of Scripture; and, while he contends for the tenet of general redemption, and that of the unnecessitated agency of man, he maintains, as strongly as the most rigid predestinarian, the entire corruption of human nature, and the consequent necessity of divine influence. In this course he follows the path marked out by the devout and learned Arminius, from whom he selected the motto which he placed upon his title-page.

As it was the author's design to exhibit the true sense of the sacred Scriptures, on the leading topics of Christian theology, his first business is to establish the divine authority of those writings to which he makes his appeal, and to which he requires every opinion to be subordinated. To this subject he confines his attention in the first part. It is divided into twenty chapters; and treats of the moral agency of man;—the rule which determines the quality of moral actions;—presumptions of a direct revelation, from the weakness and corruption of human reason, and the want of authority in merely human opinions;—the origin of those truths which are found in the writings and religious systems of the Heathen;—the necessity of revelation, as proved by the state of religious knowledge and of morals among the Heathen;—the evidences necessary to authenticate a revelation;—the use and limitation of reason in religion;—the antiquity of the Scriptures;—their uncorrupted preservation;—the credibility of the testimony of the sacred writers;—the miracles of Scripture;—the prophecies of Scripture;—the



internal evidence of the truth of Scripture ;—and of various objections. On many of these subjects Mr. Watson, as might be expected, has availed himself of the able writings of the principal apologists of revelation ; but his work is far from being a compilation. It is distinguished throughout by great originality, and force of reasoning. A subordinate place is justly assigned to what is called the internal evidence of Christianity ; and the author rests his cause mainly upon prophecy and miracles, concerning which his thoughts are striking and profound. The historical argument, also, founded upon the state of the Heathen in all ages and nations, is well brought out and sustained ; and considerable research is displayed in its elucidation. The paragraph with which this part concludes is very characteristic ; and is fully warranted by the preceding argumentation :—

“Such are the leading evidences of the truth of the holy Scriptures, and of the religious system which they unfold, from the first promise made to the first fallen man, to its perfected exhibition in the New Testament. The Christian will review these solid and immoveable foundations of his faith with unutterable joy. They leave none of his moral interests unprovided for in time ; they set before him a certain and a felicitous immortality. The sceptic and the infidel may be entreated, by every compassionate feeling, to a more serious consideration of the evidences of this divine system, and the difficulties and hopelessness of their own ; and they ought to be reminded, in the words of a modern writer, ‘If Christianity be true, it is tremendously true.’ Let them turn to an insulted,

but yet a merciful, Saviour, who even now prays for his blasphemers, in the words he once addressed to Heaven in behalf of his murderers, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.'

This work was remarkably well received; a second edition was soon called for; and it served to establish the character which the writer had previously acquired, as an able Divine and a profound reasoner. The remainder of the work was looked for, in various quarters, with considerable eagerness. Had it been generally known, that a great part of it was written under severe bodily suffering, and in a state of extreme languor and exhaustion, the public impression of Mr. Watson's mental vigour would have been still stronger and more just.

Mr. Watson's very infirm state of health, during the spring of this year, rendered him unable to afford that assistance at the Anniversaries of the different Missionary Societies in the country, to which he had long been accustomed. His place, however, was supplied by able and faithful men, and the cause of Christ in the heathen world was supported with increased liberality. Mr. Newton made the annual tour of Cornwall; and Mr. Watson's esteemed colleagues in the Secretaryship attended several of the public Meetings in the north.

Mr. Watson attended the Conference this year, which was held in Sheffield; and from this place he addressed the following letters to his friend Mr. Walton, of Wakefield:—

SHEFFIELD, *Wednesday Morning.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I KNOW not whether you have heard of the overturn of the Huddersfield coach, with several Preachers. Mr. Sargent and Mr. Lloyd are the only persons who are seriously hurt. The Conference sent Dr. Taft to visit them. He found them in cottages by the road-side; and states that they are more likely to die than live. Mr. Sargent is suffering from concussion of the brain; and it is doubtful whether or not his spine is hurt. Lloyd is hurt in the kidneys, and inflammation has followed. Their afflicted wives are with them, and their sufferings will be assuaged by every human attention. May God preserve and raise them up! It is an awful providence. All the other Preachers have arrived safe.

I thank God, my health is much recovered; though I feel the fatigues of the confinement of the Committees we have had, penned up in a close vestry, and breathing bad air. I hoped to have left London, but they have kept me another year. My own will is not gratified in this; but I wish to be only where my brethren judge I may be the most useful.

The apprehensions respecting Messrs. Sargent and Lloyd, which are here expressed, were unhappily realized. They both expired in a few days. Mr. Sargent never recovered his recollection, his brain being injured by the fall. Mr. Lloyd, a young man of superior talents and acquirements, died in a manner the most peaceful and triumphant. Under torturing pain, and when all hope

of recovery was gone, he was so strengthened by the consolations of the Holy Spirit, as to shout aloud the praises of God, and rejoice in hope of future glory. An interesting account of him, and of his fellow-sufferer, was published in the Wesleyan Magazine in the course of the following year.

While Mr. Watson's mind was greatly affected by the sudden removal of these esteemed brethren, his sympathies were strongly excited by a letter from his friend Mr. Walton, informing him of the death of his youngest daughter. She had been happily married for a little while to a gentleman of the name of Milner, whom she had accompanied to Genoa ; and the distressing intelligence had just arrived that she was no more. She was intelligent, amiable, and pious ; and her death occasioned exquisite sorrow in the family. Mr. Watson, who had known and esteemed her, and was strongly attached to the survivors, addressed the following letters to the bereaved, in which he poured forth the most tender and generous feelings :—

TO MR. WILLIAM WALTON, WAKEFIELD.

SHEFFIELD, *Friday Morning.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I RECEIVED your affecting letter this morning ; and I again mingle my sympathies with yours, in the loss of your amiable daughter, for whom I had a very affectionate regard. I could recall to your remembrance, and to my own, her simplicity and

kindness, and excellence of character; but that would only awaken your feelings, and remind me too strongly of the many happy hours which I have spent under your roof before her removal from home. I afterwards felt much for her; and admired the calmness with which she sustained many anxious and unsettled circumstances. But, my dear friend, this is your satisfaction and comfort, that your valued daughter knew how to cast her care on God; and that, whilst every thing was done for her, when separated from the friends she so much loved, she had in her last sickness the light and comfort of the divine presence, and the cheering hope of that better world, where separations shall be unknown, and where pain and sorrow shall be for ever excluded.

Affection naturally wishes to be present at the closing scene, and to watch the escape of the loved spirits, whom our love would still retain on earth. But there is no doubt that you and Miss Walton were spared that trial in wisdom and in mercy. You have now the news of the conflict and the victory together; and you are called at once to contemplate the falling of the earthly tenement, and the freed spirit exulting over the frailty of mortality, and already in the joy of its Lord. Thus your wound and your healing, your affliction and your consolation, have visited you hand in hand. You "sing of judgment and of mercy;" mercy, tender, saving, and everlasting. So you feel it; and in you may this consolation abound yet more and more!

How much we owe to the blessed Gospel!  
"God is love!" What a testimony is this! Love

to all, and love in every thing; love when he chastises, and love when he hides himself behind dark dispensations. Here is the ground of a firm faith. This painful affliction was in love to the dear departed saint, whose loss we deplore; love to you, her tenderest relative; love to Mary, who was joined to her in sisterly affection and constant friendship; love to all who knew her excellent character. The lesson of our mortality is repeated; the picture of a calm and peaceful death is again presented; the end for which we ought to live, and pray, and watch, and labour. For you, my dear friend, another part of your family is in heaven, among the glorified; safe and happy for ever. Your heart will therefore be more strongly attracted to that blessed world; you will feel a richer interest in that heavenly inheritance; your future journey will be cheered by the hope of joining them who are gone before; and O may the blissful assurance of meeting those we love on earth in the glory and smile of our divine Lord, be our merciful lot when our hearts shall fail!

Poor Lloyd, you will have heard, is gone, and his wife is again a widow.

The following letter was addressed, at the same time, to Miss Walton, the friend and solace of her revered father:—

*August 8th, 1823.*

MY DEAR MARY,

Your father's letter, containing some particulars of the death of your dear sister, greatly affected me. I could not but think of former days, when I

read of her favourite walks, and botanizing excursions; her taste for the calm and rich beauties of rural scenery, and her choice of a tomb where a quiet should be thrown around, emblematical of her own character, and amidst those pure scenes of nature, to which the purity of her own spirit most feelingly attached itself. All this was touching to my own heart, as it was characteristic of hers. I felt, too, how strongly this part of the communication would appeal to your feelings, and call up many, many tender remembrances. Your tears have been again called forth; and mine have this morning mingled with them.

But, above all, her death was as we might expect it to be; and for this, you, my dear friend, are called, with your beloved father, to give thanks to God, who hath given her the victory; and to comfort your heart with those blessed words of hope, "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." "Not lost, but gone before."

Mournfully tender is the memory of past friendships and past joys; but ours is the world of change. Its name is *earth*; and that explains the whole. Well, let it roll, if we keep fast our hold on heaven; and if, when we pass away from its changeful scenes, and itself shall flee away from the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne, we are found for ever with the Lord;

" Then in their bright results shall rise,  
Thoughts, virtues, friendships, griefs, and joys."

I need not, I hope, assure you, that for you and your departed Ann, I felt for many years an affectionate respect. She has left us: but you remain;

and I trust will long remain the solace of your venerable father, and the object of the regard of your friends;—and you have many. If you can set any value upon a friendship so poor as mine, and of so little consequence to any one, you have it in every degree you can wish. My prayer is, that this bereavement may be to you and to myself the means of leading us to a nearer walk with God, and a greater meetness for that world where we shall meet again. Let it lead us to consecrate ourselves anew to God, and his service; that in that immortal state we may be associated with all we have known and loved on earth, and enjoy that hallowed friendship which in this state has so many imperfections, and must suffer so many interruptions.

I cannot add more. My feelings you know. I had once hoped to see you again before I left Yorkshire; but I must deny myself that happiness. My health is better; but the future is known only to God.

On his return from the Conference Mr. Watson received the melancholy tidings of the death of Mr. Ward, of the Baptist Mission at Serampore, whose recent visit to England had made so deep and beneficial an impression upon the minds of Christians in general. The following tribute to the memory of that distinguished Missionary he drew up, and inserted in the Missionary Notices for September:—"We deeply regret to have received information of the death of the Rev. William Ward, after a short illness, of cholera morbus; a disease which has committed the most awful



ravages in India for several years past. The church of God, and the cause of Missions, have sustained a heavy loss in the death of Mr. Ward; but, amidst the regrets of the Christian world, at the removal of this eminent Missionary, there is this cause of great thankfulness, that by his long labours in India he was honoured to be one of those instruments by which the word of God has been so largely translated into the different languages of India, and the foundations of Christianity in that populous and idolatrous part of the world have been firmly laid. Mr. Ward's visit to this country tended also greatly to serve the same cause, by the affecting pictures he presented, in his sermons and public addresses, as to the true character of Hindoo Paganism, and the forcible manner in which he impressed upon Christians of all denominations the necessity of the special influences of the Holy Spirit, in order to the success of Missions, and of earnest and persevering prayers for their effusion upon the world. In answer to such prayers we trust that other equally qualified labourers will be sent forth by the Lord of the harvest, to enter upon and extend the evangelical and exemplary labours of those whom God has called to their eternal reward; and to reap the harvest which shall spring from the seed sown by them, in the different regions of the eastern world."

In the autumn of this year Mr. Watson addressed the following beautiful letter to the Rev. Dr. M'Allum, on the interesting subject of a Wesleyan Mission to the Holy Land; a measure which had been long contemplated, and in favour of which several subscriptions were presented:—

TO THE REV. DANIEL M'ALLUM, M.D.

LONDON, *Sept. 19th*, 1823.

DEAR SIR,

I WRITE to you on a subject of great importance; and one on which I trust you will make no attempt to say, "No," until you have asked counsel of God, and your best feelings.

You know that a Mission to Jerusalem is before the Committee, and something must be done with reference to that object. It is forced upon us by the prayers of the pious, and the contributions of the generous. We have never put it forward to excite interest; and yet we are constantly getting money with this designation.

Our view is, that a Mission-house should be taken, and a family settled there; and that two Missionaries be appointed, one married, and the other single. Much might be done by conversation, and circulating the Scriptures, &c., in the first place, and by *public* family worship. The rest must follow as the Lord may open the door. We think it likely, too, that the countries beyond may open; in which case the house at Jerusalem might become the centre of a distinct class of Missions, and the school in which the labourers might be trained for service, or sent out from England.

But who will go, and head this great work, looking forward to Syria and Lesser Asia, and backward upon the Euphrates and Armenia, as scenes to which his labours may extend; though not personally, yet by commencing the work in Palestine, the very centre of intelligence, and by training up the agents there? How noble a scene

of useful labour! And the sacrifices are not great. Jerusalem is healthy; protection can be obtained; the journey from England is short; intercourse with friends regular; and a trip to England every few years quite practicable.

But for such a Mission we, as a body, have a very limited choice of men; who ought to be literary; and, in addition, ought, in order to have the best chance of favour, &c., among the principal men, to know medicine and surgery.

We lay this matter before you, in the name of the Lord, at least to go on an exploring excursion, before you make up your mind fully to give yourself to the work. You might go with Mr. Cook, from France, or some other suitable person, to Jerusalem, and report; or if you will at once, in the name of Him whose blessed footsteps trod that soil, offer yourself to make the attempt to settle at once in Jerusalem, and put the practicability of a Mission there to the test, take your excellent wife, and we will give you the best brother we can find to help you. The time of your stay may be left with yourself. The Italian language might help you sufficiently at the first; and modern Greek and Arabic may be acquired there. We have no other person to head such a Mission, to whom we can look. Think, pray, and write as soon as you have determined at least to make further inquiries.

The God who has never forgotten Jerusalem direct you! There are ten thousand Jews resident there, and not highly prejudiced; many are respectable; there are many amiable daughters of Zion, with whom your wife can form a pleasant society; and several Christian Missionaries of the

first order, &c., &c. I speak the words of truth and soberness.

Give my love to Mrs. M'Allum. Let her remember Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, the family whom Jesus loved; and put no difficulty in the way of another family residing there in the same place, whom Jesus may also love, and to whom he will pay many special visits of mercy.

For some reasons, with which we are not acquainted, Dr. M'Allum declined the service here proposed to him; and the Rev. Charles Cook, of the French Mission, was requested to visit that interesting country, and report to the Committee the facilities that might exist for establishing a Mission at Jerusalem, or any part of Palestine. The Doctor died in the Lord a few years afterwards.

During the greater part of the year 1823 Mr. Watson was either severely afflicted, or in such a state of weakness, as to be scarcely able to travel, and to attend Missionary Meetings in the country; and his time was therefore mostly spent in the Mission-House, and in his own room. His powerful and active mind, however, rose above every infirmity, and was constantly engaged in useful study; and, when he could sit at his desk, his pen was seldom unemployed. The approbation with which his "Theological Institutes" was received, urged him on to the completion of that work; and the Wesleyan Magazine this year was greatly enriched by his communications. He wrote some valuable papers on that direct witness which is borne by the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of believers,

to the fact of their personal adoption. The reality of this witness was generally held by Protestant Divines in some former ages ; but it is now regarded by many as a mere peculiarity of Methodism. In this light it was viewed by Mr. Southey, in his "Life of Wesley ;" and Mr. Watson, in his reply, has shown that this great blessing of Christianity is distinctly recognised in the writings of the highest authorities in the Church of England. It is a remarkable fact, to which Mr. Watson has not adverted, that for more than half a century, under the reign of Elizabeth, and of the First James and Charles, there were bound up with the larger editions of the English Bible certain prayers for the use of individuals and families, printed by the regular authorities, the King's printers and the two English universities ; and with those prayers was connected "The Confession of the Christian Faith." In this document the devout Christian is taught to say, "I believe and confess the Holy Ghost, God equal with the Father and the Son, who regenerateth and sanctifieth us, ruleth and guideth us into all truth, PERSUADING MOST ASSUREDLY IN OUR CONSCIENCES THAT WE BE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, brethren to Jesus Christ, and fellow-heirs with him of life everlasting." In one of these prayers, entitled "A Confession for all Estates and Times," the believer is taught thus to express his confidence in God through the merits of Jesus Christ :—"For whose sake we are certainly persuaded that thou wilt deny us nothing that we shall ask in his name, according to thy will ; FOR THY SPIRIT DOTHT ASSURE OUR CONSCIENCES THAT THOU ART OUR MERCIFUL FATHER,

and so lovest us thy children through him, that nothing is able to remove thy heavenly grace and favour from us." An attempt being made by some anonymous correspondents of the Editor of the Wesleyan Magazine to confine this office of the Holy Spirit within much narrower limits than is warranted by the sacred writers, Mr. Watson enters somewhat largely into the question, and shows its direct bearing upon the entire system of experimental and practical religion. The papers were read with great interest at the time, and possess a permanent value. Mr. Watson contends, that "we must first be persuaded of God's pardoning love to us, personally, before we can, in the scriptural sense, love God; and that such a persuasion is therefore a pre-requisite to what is properly termed Christian holiness." This is the view taken of the subject by Mr. Wesley, and is fully borne out by the phraseology of holy Scripture, and the constitution of the human mind. We cannot love God, so as to delight in him as our supreme good, while we conceive ourselves to be the objects of his wrath. In this case he is rather an object of our fear and dread, than of our delight and grateful love; and yet this love is the principle of all holiness and acceptable obedience. The theory, therefore, which requires men, in the first instance, to ascertain the fact of their personal acceptance with God from the actual conformity of their temper and conduct to the precepts of the Gospel, is directly calculated to produce a "spirit of bondage unto fear," rather than that filial disposition which characterized the Christians of the apostolic age, and which is indeed the believer's "strength."

On this subject Mr. Watson's convictions were very deep. He often referred to it both in his ministry and writings, and laid great and just stress upon it in the examination of Missionary candidates. Thus he speaks concerning it in one of his published sermons; in which he censures that philosophical Christianity which has become fashionable in modern times, and which many persons have mistaken for the Christianity of the New Testament. "It allows," says he, "that there is a witness of the Spirit to our adoption; but then this Spirit, we are told, is nothing more than the Spirit in the word, who has there described the moral characters of those who are the children of God; and that it is by comparing our own moral state with those recorded characteristics, that we are to apply his general testimony to ourselves.

"We deny not that there is a testimony of the Spirit in the word as to the true character of all who are the children of God; but then one of these characters is love to God as a Father, which I can never feel until by some means I know that he is not only the common Father of mankind, but my Father reconciled; and of this I must be persuaded before I can apply the rule. I am set, therefore, upon this impossible task, to infer from a general description of the moral character of the children of God, what has passed *in the mind of God*, as to my personal justification; and to discover in my own heart love to God as reconciled to me, whilst I have a trembling fear of him as a Judge. No; it is the Holy Spirit that 'knoweth the mind of God,' which 'no man knoweth;' and

his clearly revealed office is to show us, by his own direct impression upon the heart, what God has decided on the matter of our personal pardon ; and hence we are taught, not that the Spirit, as having inspired the written word which lays down authoritatively the terms of pardon to all, enables us to infer our adoption ; but that 'the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God ;' and that he thus 'abides with us' as 'the Comforter.' "

The excellent papers on the witness of the Spirit were not the only articles supplied by Mr. Watson to the Magazine in the course of this year. He also furnished an admirable sermon, under the title of "Man magnified by the Divine Regard," in which are contained some of the noblest views of human nature ever presented to the minds of men. They form a perfect contrast to the wretched and grovelling principles of infidelity and materialism ; systems which separate man from his Creator, deprive him of religion and immortality, and leave him to live and die without either dignity, happiness, or hope. Mr. Watson shows, in a strain of beautiful and impressive eloquence, how greatly God has magnified man by the communication of an intellectual and moral nature ; by the constant and merciful care of his providence ; and especially by redemption, with its rich and endless train of spiritual blessings both in earth and heaven.

Reference has been already made to Mr. Watson's fine taste in sacred music. Of his judgment in this science his friends were fully aware ; and especially in reference to congregational singing. The Methodists in Wakefield, having for some



time been dissatisfied with the manner in which this part of divine worship was conducted among themselves, meditated the erection of an organ in their chapel; and some time about the end of the year 1823 solicited his opinion and counsel on this measure. In answer to their inquiries he addressed to them the following letter, the principles of which are of deep and general importance. The letter is not dated; and the name of the person to whom it was sent does not appear.

LONDON, *Monday.*

DEAR SIR,

I AM unable to say any thing, but what is exceedingly obvious, in the case of the introduction of organs into our chapels; and I think the only question to be considered is, whether they serve or obstruct congregational singing. On this opinions differ; some affirming, and others denying as positively, that the congregation trusts to the organ, and listens, rather than joins in the service. As far as my observation goes, this does not necessarily follow. In churches, where the congregations are irreligious, it is so; but it would be the same, if there were only a clerk, or an orchestra of singers and fiddlers. In many churches I know, where the Minister is evangelical, and the congregation devotional, the organ is scarcely heard, but at the commencement of the tune, its sounds being mingled with the full swell of the voices of the worshippers.

Among ourselves, at Brunswick chapel, Liverpool, the congregation joins with as much ardour as if there were no organ, and I think more. This

is also the case at Bath, (in both the chapels,) at Margate, and at Newark. These facts have fixed my opinion in favour of organs in large chapels, and where they are prudently and constitutionally introduced. The only exception I know is one in which the tone of the organ is so intolerably harsh, that no sound, in heaven or in earth, can commingle with it. I believe, however, that, even there, the people sing; but, after all, the tones of the organ, like the voice of a fish-woman in a market, keep a lofty distinction above all others. This exception only proves that it is of importance to have an instrument of full and mellifluous tone.

On the other hand, we shall regret the day when the liberty to introduce organs into our chapels, under certain circumstances, was granted, if we are to have organists also who seek to display their talents, and to tell a gaping crowd below with what elasticity their fingers can vibrate, and how many graces and trills they can add to the composition before them;—men who could not think the sun shone bright, unless they looked at his beams through a painted transparency of their own; and who would fancy they heightened the sublimity of a peal of thunder by ringing hand-bells during the storm. The attempts of some organists to embellish and garnish the noble compositions of our great masters in psalmody is disgusting beyond endurance. Voluntaries are equally objectionable, for a different reason. If good, they are out of place; if bad, they do not deserve a place any where.

As you are good enough to attach the least importance to an opinion of mine, I may give you

in few words my deliberate judgment, formed now for several years, and after some observations of the practical effect. It is, that organs in our large chapels are desirable,

1. When they abolish formal choirs of singers.
2. When they are played by persons of judgment and sobriety.
3. When the end for which they are introduced, to assist congregational singing, is steadily maintained.
4. When no voluntaries, interludes, &c., are on any account, or at any time, permitted.
5. When the tune is not first played over by the organ alone,—a common but very silly practice.
6. When nothing is done rashly, or in the spirit of party: for many of the best men have the strongest prejudices against the instrument.

---

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE second part of the Theological Institutes, completing the first volume, was published at the beginning of the year 1824, and fully realized the expectation which the first had excited.

Having before ascertained the divine authority of the holy Scriptures, Mr. Watson proceeds, in the part now published, to examine their contents, and to collect from them that information on religious and moral subjects which they contain. This portion of the work treats of the existence

and perfections of God,—his unity, spirituality, eternity, omnipotence, ubiquity, omniscience, immutability, wisdom, goodness, and holiness. It treats, also, of the Trinity in Unity; of the pre-existence of Christ; and partly of his divinity, proving him to be the Jehovah of the Old Testament; the further prosecution of the argument being reserved for a future occasion.

The knowledge of God, as an infinite and eternal Spirit, and as the Creator and Preserver of all things, was originally communicated to man by revelation; and when that knowledge has become extinct in any part of the world, it does not appear that it has ever been recovered but by the same means. It would therefore seem, judging from the history of all ages, that the human mind, by its own unassisted efforts, is unable to discover this first principle of all true religion. But the existence of God, once communicated by his own revelation, direct or traditional, is capable of ample proof, and receives an irresistible corroborative evidence. It is well known that two modes of argument have been applied to this subject by learned men, which are usually denominated *à priori*, and *à posteriori*. “An argument *à priori* is an argument from something antecedent to something consequent; from principle to corollary; from cause to effect. An argument *à posteriori*, on the contrary, is an argument from consequent to antecedent; from effect to cause.” The most remarkable examples of the former kind of reasoning on this great question are Dr. Samuel Clarke’s “Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God,” and the more recent “Attempt to prove the Exist-

ence of the Supreme Unoriginated Being," by the late Bishop Hamilton.

Upon the argument *à priori* Mr. Watson was inclined to lay but little stress. Whatever might be its value, he saw that it was not adapted to the popular mind; and the other argument was every way sufficient, while it had the direct sanction of inspiration: "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." (Rom. i. 20.) In discarding the argument *à priori*, Mr. Watson was sanctioned by high and competent authority. It is thus spoken of by Dr. Reid: "Sir Isaac Newton thought that the Deity, by existing every where, and at all times, constitutes time and space, immensity and eternity. This probably suggested to his great friend Dr. Clarke what he calls the argument *à priori* for the existence of an immense and eternal Being. Space and time, he thought, are only abstract or partial conceptions of an immensity and eternity, which forces itself upon our belief. And as immensity and eternity are not substances, they must be the attributes of a Being who is necessarily immense and eternal. These are the speculations of men of superior genius; but whether they be as solid as they are sublime, or whether they be the wanderings of imagination in a region beyond the limits of human understanding, I am unable to determine." \*

Dr. Clarke's "Demonstration" was far from being generally satisfactory at the time of its pub-

\* Essays on the Powers of the Human Mind. Essay third Chap. third.

lication. Bishop Butler, then a young man pursuing his studies in a Dissenting academy, addressed a series of letters to the author, in which he controverted some of his positions; and Dr. Gretton published a formal answer to the work. "Its main principle was, by many, deemed questionable, if not fallacious; and some of the inferences deduced from it, not only doubtful, but of dangerous tendency. The more cautious and considerate inquirers after truth judged it expedient rather to rely upon the well-established proofs of the Divine Being from arguments *à posteriori*,—those which resulted from the actual phenomena of the universe,—than to rest so great and fundamental a truth, the very ground of all moral and religious conduct, upon abstract metaphysical speculations, above the reach, perhaps, of any finite understandings, and confessedly not adapted to general apprehension. Even among those who were favourable to the general design of the work, considerable doubts were entertained as to the solidity of certain parts of it, on which doctrines of such importance were made to depend." \* It is highly probable that it was by his speculations on this subject, that Dr. Samuel Clarke was led into Arianism. He thought that he could, on metaphysical principles, independently of Scripture, and of the phenomena of nature, demonstrate the necessary existence of a First Cause; but he could not, in the same manner, demonstrate that there are three

\* Bishop Van Mildert's Life of Dr. Waterland The reader who wishes to pursue this subject farther, will be greatly assisted by an able Dissertation at the end of the fourth volume of Waterland's Works, edit. 1823.

co-equal and co-eternal Persons in the divine essence; and he is known to have spent a considerable part of his life in opposing this vital article of the Christian faith.

In proving the existence of God from the works of creation, and tracing the marks of wisdom and design which are presented by universal nature, Mr. Watson has availed himself of the writings of several eminent men, and especially of the "Living Temple" of John Howe, one of the most able and profound treatises in the entire compass of English theology. From this work Paley has borrowed several of his best arguments and most striking illustrations; and he has made a very inadequate acknowledgment of his obligations to the author. This part of Mr. Watson's work has more the appearance of a compilation than any other; and several persons expressed themselves disappointed on account of the copious citations with which it abounds. But the complaint rests upon no solid foundation. It would have been mere affectation and folly for the author to spend his time in original composition, merely to save appearances, when facts and arguments, every way suited to his purpose, were already prepared for him, and were beyond the reach of a considerable part of his readers; being found only in large and scarce publications. So much extract, however, occasions a degree of inequality in the style of this part of the work; and the author, some months before his death, requested his printer, the able translator of the Works of Arminius, to give a modern dress to such of the extracts as were somewhat antiquated in style, so that the inverted

commas might be laid aside, and the different authors be simply referred to in the margin. Of course, it was intended that the whole of this should be done under Mr. Watson's own direction ; but as nothing of the kind was attempted during his life, the work must now remain in its original form. It would be unjust to the author, to make him responsible for phraseology which he never saw.

In describing the perfections of the divine nature, and establishing the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the Godhead of Christ, Mr. Watson derives all his arguments from the holy Scriptures, to which he subordinates every principle and sentiment ; and while he brings out the general meaning of the sacred oracles, as bearing upon these vital truths, with all the force of demonstration, he furnishes many admirable illustrations of particular texts. A becoming seriousness and zeal characterize his reasonings in defence of the pre-existence and divinity of Christ ; for he felt that the Socinian controversy, respecting the person of the Son of God, affected the very substance of Christianity. If Christ be not God, in the full and proper sense of that term, Christian worship is idolatry, the doctrine of redemption is a fable, and in no true and legitimate sense is he a Saviour. On the other hand, as "God manifest in the flesh," he is entitled to our highest adoration ; there is in the sacrifice of his death an adequate atonement for the sins of the whole human race ; and he is worthy of the absolute confidence of mankind, both in life and death. He is able to save from all sin, and from all its penal consequences ; and able to confer, through everlasting ages, all the happi-



ness of which his redeemed creatures are capable. The subject was barely introduced in the second part of the Institutes; and the full discussion of the question was reserved for a subsequent portion of the work. A few weeks after the second part appeared, a new edition of the first part was published; a substantial proof of the estimate which was formed of its value.

Early in the spring of this year, Mr. Watson published "A Catechism of the Evidences of Christianity, and the Truth of the Holy Scriptures." He had previously compiled two Catechisms of Christian doctrine, and Scripture history; one for the use of children of tender years, and the other for children of seven years of age and upwards. They had been prepared under the direction of the Conference, and submitted to the careful examination of a Committee appointed for the purpose; and, having been approved, the entire series was published under the sanction of the Connexion, as the authorized Catechisms of the body, and designed for the use of Sunday-schools and private families. In the first and second of these publications considerable use was made of the Catechism of the Church of England, and that of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, as well as of Mr. Wesley's "Instructions for Children." They have been in very extensive requisition; tens of thousands of children, especially in Sunday-schools, both at home and abroad, have by means of them received their religious training; and they are justly entitled to the distinction which they have acquired, as a plain and familiar exposition of the first principles of evangelical truth. A preference

is given to them in some institutions with which the Methodists have no connexion. The "Catechism of the Evidences of Christianity" is an original and very important work, well adapted to establish the minds of young persons in the belief of the truth, and to guard them against the snares of scepticism and infidelity. In an age like the present, when principles subversive of all religion and morality are sedulously disseminated, in cheap and inviting publications, and are often artfully mixed up with popular and periodical literature, the guardians of youth are certainly guilty of a fearful dereliction of duty, if they neglect to fortify their charge against evils of this magnitude. Scepticism in religion flatters the pride of the unrenewed heart, and justifies all its vices and depravity; but it is ruinous to the soul, and often prematurely drowns men in destruction and perdition. The minds of young people, therefore, cannot be too early impressed with the divine origin of Christianity, and its authoritative character; and in the attainment of this object valuable assistance may be derived from Mr. Watson's manual. It states, with great clearness and force, the leading evidences of revealed religion, and refutes the most plausible and popular objections. Christian parents should not only put it into the hands of their children, as they advance in life, and their intellect expands; but they should frequently endeavour to ascertain, by actual examination, what degree of acquaintance has been formed with its facts and arguments. The most beneficial results might be justly anticipated from this wise and pious course. The number of young persons who have been

preserved from infidelity by the blessing of God upon this excellent little work will only be known in "the day when God will judge the secrets of men's hearts by Jesus Christ."

In consequence of the delicacy of his health, Mr. Watson was compelled to avoid travelling during the winter ; but as the spring approached he lent his assistance at a few Missionary Meetings in the country. Burslem, Bristol, and two or three minor places, were favoured with his help ; but he was not able to repeat those labours to which a few years before he had been accustomed, and in which he had taken so much delight. He rendered, however, to the General Society, at its Anniversary in April and May, the most important service. This was an occasion of unusual interest, on account of the peculiar state of the West India Mission. The question of Negro emancipation had begun to excite attention, and in some quarters was warmly agitated ; and the House of Commons had passed several Resolutions, pledging the Legislature to introduce certain measures of amelioration in regard of the Negro, with a reference to the ultimate extinction of slavery. The death of the Missionary, Smith, in the prison at Demerara, and the riot in Barbadoes, by which the Methodist chapel was demolished, and the Missionary driven from the island under circumstances of peculiar atrocity, caused a feverish anxiety among the friends of the Mission cause. Many of the planters assumed an attitude of determined hostility, not only to the religious instruction of the slave population, and to all Missionary operations, but to the Government itself ; and either believed, or

affected to believe, that the Missionaries were the agents of the abolitionists in England. As Mr. Watson had a thorough knowledge of West Indian society, and perfectly understood the nature and bearing of the Mission to the Negro slaves, as well as the peculiar state of public feeling, he was requested by the Committee to preach one of the annual sermons before the Society; to confine his attention to the Society's labours in the West Indies; and to prepare his discourse with a reference to publication. With this request he complied, and preached at the City-road chapel, on Thursday evening, April 29th. The task assigned to him was one of great delicacy, and in many respects was exceedingly difficult; but it was one of the peculiarities of his character, that his mind always rose with the occasion; and he never disappointed the expectation of his friends in any emergency.

The text selected was most appropriate. It was, "Honour all men;" (1 Peter ii. 17;) enjoining upon Christians the duty of honouring human nature in all its forms. The sermon was addressed to a large and very respectable congregation. It was delivered with fluency and power; and was heard with the most profound and breathless attention. The delivery of it occupied two hours within a few minutes; and a member of the Senate, who had accompanied Mr. Butterworth to the chapel, said, when returning from the service, "The sermon was the greatest display of intellectual strength in a public speaker I ever heard. I have perhaps sometimes witnessed an equal degree of power for a short period; but an extemporary

address of two hours' length, delivered with such unabated energy of thought and feeling, never before came under my observation." As the sermon had been prepared with a view to the press, it was soon published, under the title of, "The Religious Instruction of the Slaves in the West India Colonies, advocated and defended." It is the most elaborate of all Mr. Watson's printed discourses, and is, without exception, one of the noblest compositions of the kind in the English language. There are passages in it which, for sublimity of thought, richness of illustration, and strength and beauty of expression, would not suffer from a comparison with the most admired productions of our best prose writers; but its great excellence consists in the pure and elevated principles which it maintains, and the spirit of Christian benevolence and justice with which it is so thoroughly imbued. It quickly passed to a second, a third, and a fourth edition.

Had Mr. Watson never written any thing besides this admirable discourse, it would have been sufficient to establish his reputation as a man of superior genius and talent, and a Christian philanthropist. But while his intellectual powers appeared daily to acquire new vigour, and his mental resources seemed to be all but inexhaustible, he was a subject of disease, and often of great personal suffering; and his general aspect, and the frequent prostration of his strength, excited the sympathies of his friends, and awakened in their minds many painful anxieties as to the result.

About a fortnight after the delivery of his powerful discourse before the Missionary Society, Mr.

Watson addressed the following letters to his daughter, then at school in Paris. They show the tender yearning of a father's heart; and present, with some others which will be given in the course of this narrative, an interesting view of his spirit in the domestic relations.

*May 13th, 1824.*

MY DEAREST CHILD,

YOURS, dated April 29th, did not arrive at Wellington-street till yesterday; so that we were kept long in anxiety and suspense. It was ill judged in you not to write by post, especially your first letter; and the consequence is, you have been kept so much longer from hearing of home.

Your mother is much better than when you left; and I, through mercy, am able to go through my exercises in a tolerable degree of health. I am not surprised that you felt lonely and uncomfortable at first, never having been from home at all; but in such situations your object is to be kept in view; and the constancy of application, and the occupancy of your time, together with increased familiarity with new scenes and new faces, will remove all uneasy impressions. To this, you must recollect that you are in the way of duty; and must look up to God for his presence with you, and his blessing upon your endeavours. Thus you may be happy every where; though you cannot forget, nor do we wish you to forget, that you are not at home.

I am glad to hear that you find your French master so competent. In addition to what you are required to do in French, read as much in it as

you can ; and if you choose such standard historical works as are within your reach, you will get information, whilst you improve in the language. Converse as much as you can. Be determined to talk ; and by asking the names of things, you will acquire a *copia verborum*. Resolutely also attempt to think in French, which will greatly facilitate your progress. It is satisfactory that your pronunciation is pretty near the standard ; but you must remember that accent is as important as pronunciation ; though you must take care of affectation in this particular. Attend patiently to music. Take particular care of your fingering, which you know is essential to a good execution. When you are pretty much at ease in French, it will be time enough for you to begin Italian.

Amidst your application, take care of your health ; and, in order to promote it, walk much in the garden. As for acquaintance among the ladies, they come in course ; and the more general they are, the better. You must lean on nothing as a source of happiness, but on God, on your daily duty, and your hope of seeing home ; the last not to be indulged so as to make you unquiet.

I shall, *Deo volente*, visit you in September. Write immediately. Keep up your spirits. Your mother sends her love and blessing.

May 24th, 1824.

MY DEAREST GIRL,

I WRITE by return of post, in answer to yours, to say, that whatever your own judgment thinks necessary for your improvement, I wish you to attend to ; and I shall not mind the expense.

As I am going into Devonshire, I shall not be able soon again to write to you, and must leave your mother and you to exchange letters.

The way to avoid, as much as possible, the English accent in speaking French, is to be very attentive to the native French you hear spoken; and by comparing the difference in your own mind, you may get a tact for discriminating, and this effort will produce a delicacy of ear. The ear acquires its distinguishing delicacy in language, as in music, by long and close application.

Above all, my dear Mary, give your heart fully to God, and live entirely to him. You have entered on the Christian course, and nothing could have given so much pleasure to your father. Read the Scriptures. Observe your times of private prayer; and watch your heart; so shall you grow in grace, and become a steady and honourable member of the church of Christ.

God bless you. Keep up your spirits.

---

## CHAPTER XVIII.

In the early part of the summer of 1824 Mr. Watson visited Oxford, and spent some days in that interesting city and neighbourhood, where the friends were delighted with his spirit and conversation. His cheerfulness, his sanctified wit and humour, his intelligence, and his communicative habits, were to them a source of the highest gratification. It was the time of the Commemoration, when the members of the University assemble in



the vast theatre, erected by Archbishop Sheldon; degrees are conferred; prize poems, and other compositions, are recited; and the Undergraduates claim the right of expressing their opinion of the highest authorities in that learned body, either by plaudits, or by groans and hisses. As a spectator, Mr. Watson enjoyed these proceedings; for his powerful and well-disciplined mind drew practical instruction from almost every object that was presented to his attention. Before his return to London he accompanied Mr. Cubitt, who was then stationed in the Oxford Circuit, and some other friends, to Nuneham, the seat of Lord Harcourt, to refresh his spirits by a change of air and scenery; and to survey those beauties of art and nature of which, through life, he was a passionate admirer. One of the party was a medical gentleman, of considerable experience and skill. While leaning upon the branch of a tree in the estate of the nobleman just mentioned, Mr. Watson, in a manner perfectly frank and unconstrained, began to speak concerning himself. "I know not," said he, "what change is taking place in my constitution; but I am apprehensive that disease, in a somewhat new form, is beginning to develope itself. I believe that I am not naturally an ill-tempered man; at least my friends have not been in the habit of charging me with ill-nature; but of late I have found myself snappish, without being able to assign any particular reason for it. There is also another symptom which leads me to form this opinion concerning myself. Up to a late period my spirit has been sanguine and cheerful; my horizon has been generally bright and distinct;

but latterly I have caught myself gloomy and beclouded, and yet I could not tell why." The medical gentleman stated his persuasion to be that Mr. Watson's liver was diseased; but expressed a hope that by prudent management his life might be prolonged, and his services to the church continued for many years. He engaged, before Mr. Watson left Oxford, to give him some written directions respecting diet and medicine.

A more interesting companion than Mr. Watson, especially in a place like Nuneham, it is scarcely possible to conceive. He generally carried with him a small magnifying glass for the examination of minute objects, and particularly of flowers, and a lancet with which he was accustomed to dissect them. Several young persons were of the party on this occasion; and it appeared to be an object with him to render himself as agreeable and instructive as possible. His spirit was unusually bland and kind; and he directed their attention to endless scenes of wonder in the creation, accompanied by devout and hallowed references to the great Architect, who had surrounded them with such striking displays of his wisdom, power, and love. The individuals who formed the party still retain a vivid recollection of that memorable day.

The Conference of 1824 was held in Leeds; and during its sittings Mr. Watson enjoyed several pleasing interviews with his old and faithful friends at Wakefield. At this time it was found necessary to make some new arrangements with regard to the Secretaryship of the Missionary Society. Mr. Bunting was about to leave London, and therefore could not any longer continue in the

office of Secretary, which he had so long and honourably sustained ; and the labours and responsibility of this department of the Mission work were greatly increased, in consequence of the augmented income of the Society, and the enlargement of the foreign operations. The Conference, therefore, in compliance with the recommendation of the Managing Committee, appointed three resident Secretaries, who were to devote their whole time and attention to the concerns of the Society. Mr. Taylor, having lost his health, removed from the Mission-House, where he was succeeded by the Rev. George Morley ; the Rev. John Mason was appointed as the third Secretary ; and Mr. Watson remained in his former situation. The foreign correspondence, and the publications of the Society, were confided to him ; and the correspondence with the Auxiliary Societies, the accounts, the outfit of Missionaries, &c., devolved more especially upon his colleagues. During the period in which these excellent men were associated together in connexion with the Missionary Society, mutual confidence, and a perfect cordiality of affection, were preserved among them. Mr. Watson was invariably found most assiduously attentive to the duties of his office, and ever ready to take his full share of labour and responsibility ; and in all his official intercourse with his fellow-Secretaries, he was perfectly frank and candid,—an example of Christian honour and uprightness.

The influx of strangers into Leeds, at the time of each Conference in that town, from the surrounding country, especially on the Lord's day, is usually very large ; often amounting to many

thousands more than the chapels can contain. It is therefore common for a number of Preachers, when the chapels are filled, to address the assembled multitudes in the open air; and on one Sunday evening, at the Conference of 1824, being in tolerable health, Mr. Watson took his share in this honourable work, in the neighbourhood of the chapel in Albion-street. In early life he had borne the hootings and pelting of mobs while he delivered his evangelical message to the peasants of Lincolnshire, in fields and lanes; but in the populous town of Leeds, where religion has exerted so powerful an influence upon all classes, he found the people as serious and devotional in the open air as in the most splendid temple; and the zeal and simplicity with which he conducted the entire service were admired by those who had the privilege of being present.

During the autumn of this year the Anti-Slavery Society published its first Report. When this institution was founded, Mr. Watson hesitated to connect himself with it, as being doubtful what character it might assume. He perceived that such a Society, had its tone and measures been violent, might easily involve the Missionaries and their congregations in the West Indies in the most serious calamities; and both the Missionaries and their people were authorized to look to him for counsel and protection. No man was more deeply impressed than he with the evils of Negro slavery; and no man could be more desirous of bringing that wretched system to an end; but the question of emancipation, at that time, was beset with difficulties of the most formidable kind. His friend

Mr. Bunting, however, had connected himself with this Society soon after its formation; and had fearlessly denounced West India slavery in the Wesleyan Magazine. When the first Report of this institution was published, Mr. Watson's fears concerning it vanished; and, in an able article which he drew up for the same Magazine, he denominated the Anti-Slavery Society a "truly patriotic and Christian Society." It has, says he, "in the strife and struggle of prejudices and passions excited by the great questions arising out of the slavery existing in so many of our colonies, been greatly misrepresented, and assailed with coarse and disgraceful virulence. Its objects are now, however, most fairly before the public; and they will be found to be of a kind from which we are persuaded no sound politician, no real friend to the country and her colonies,—to say nothing of the higher considerations of humanity and religion,—can withhold his cordial assent, and in which such a one can hesitate to co-operate. It will be seen that no measures of violence or injustice are proposed; that moderation is united with firmness; that nothing is advocated but legitimate measures; and that the great ends proposed are, to awaken the British public to the injustice, impolicy, and cruelty of the slave system, and to remind them of the great moral duty of strengthening the hands of Government in mitigating the evils which are immediately removable by its wisdom and firmness, with a view to as speedy a termination as practicable of a state of things which, without any benefit to the colonies, seals up near a million of our fellow-beings and

fellow-subjects in ignorance and barbarism, and excludes them from the benefits of an equal and free government."

The Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society state in their Report, respecting the measure of emancipation, "Your Committee, and all who take their view of the subject, may not only consent to delay, but may consistently recommend it, as affording the best means of ensuring to the injured Negro race the full benefit of their intended deliverance. They may, and they do, most earnestly wish to accomplish this great end with the smallest personal risk, and the least immediate disadvantage, to the slave owner. They may cheerfully submit to their share of any loss which shall be proved to be incurred by the change; but they cannot yield one atom of their principle,—that nothing can justify the making one man a slave, OR EVEN THE RETENTION OF ONE MAN IN SLAVERY LONGER THAN THE REAL BENEFIT OF THE SLAVE HIMSELF, VIEWED IN ALL HIS CIRCUMSTANCES AND RELATIONS, MAY REQUIRE." This passage, says Mr. Watson, "appears to contain the only just principle which can be urged for the continuance of slavery for any period; and the principle, too, by which alone it can be limited. The case is much the same as that of a stolen child among ourselves. No right was ever acquired in the child: but, supposing the party who has committed the theft to be brought to a sense of the evil of his crime, and of the duty of restitution, he is not to abandon the child to starve, in order to put away his crime; for that would be to aggravate the injury. He is to support it, and to educate it,

if able, until the parents can be found ; and if not, to do his utmost that the child shall sustain no injury, as to its future situation in life, which he can prevent. Slavery is a national violence, a national theft. The nation could never acquire a moral right of property in slaves ; and could therefore never give it by any legislative act to any individuals whatever. National repentance of this evil has been announced ; and what then follows, as 'fruits for repentance?' Not, we grant, emancipation *instantly*, IF that, after calm investigation, can be proved injurious to the slaves ; but emancipation as soon as ever it can be beneficial, and the honest and united efforts of Government to remove all present real injuries, and to adopt instant means to prepare the slaves for as speedy a relief as possible, from the necessary evils of that bondage to which we have reduced them, in opposition to every law of God."

In the spring of this year Mr. Watson made a tour in the north, and attended the Anniversaries of Missionary Societies at Liverpool, Manchester, Newark, Stafford, and some other places ; and, wherever he went, though his emaciated appearance excited sympathy and concern, his sermons and speeches were heard with unabated delight and profit. The "outward man" appeared to be sinking into decay ; but the strength of "the inner man" was undiminished, and his thinkings retained all their freshness and vigour. If there was any alteration in his public ministrations, it was that they were more spiritual ; and his whole manner was increasingly devout. The long and severe affliction to which he had been subject had

somewhat chastened his natural flow of spirits, and rendered him more grave ; but his mental powers were, if possible, invigorated ; and his prayerful habits had secured to him, by God's blessing, a sanctified use of his protracted sufferings. Having for some years been kept in a state of almost constant suspense, with regard to the continuance of his life, his thoughts were familiarized with eternity ; and on some occasions he appeared to approach so nearly to pure intellect and perfect sanctity, as scarcely to seem like an inhabitant of earth.

Notwithstanding the delicacy of Mr. Watson's health, and the importance of his services as Secretary to the Missionary Society, the friends in some places were very anxious to secure his appointment to their respective Circuits as an Itinerant Preacher. To an application which he received from Hull, where he had formerly laboured so usefully and acceptably, he returned the following answer. It shows the infirm state of his health, and lays down a very important principle by which he was guided in his public conduct.

TO MR. ROBERT GARBUTT, HULL.

LONDON, *May 15th*, 1825.

MY DEAR SIR,

I THANK you for your very kind letter, still pressing me to the Hull Circuit ; and that you may not suffer from your kindness, for want of explicitness in me, I must again inform you, that I am not in a state of health to warrant my engaging in the regular labours of a Circuit.



I have no doubt of the kind consideration of the Hull friends; but it will always be a rule with me, not to undertake a Circuit in an invalid state. If in tolerable health I was appointed to one, and then fell sick, it would be another matter; but with a rational doubtfulness of doing the full work, I would not go to any place; because I should think I was not called to it, however inclination might lead.

This is my present state. Perhaps by care, and God's blessing, I may become effective; but I have no immediate prospect of it, and must, therefore, for the coming year, decline your kind invitation; of which I shall always retain a grateful and pleasing recollection.

After lending his efficient and acceptable assistance at Missionary Meetings at Nottingham, Leicester, and some other places, Mr. Watson attended the Conference of 1825, which was held in Bristol. As his health was very delicate, he could not bear to travel from London to Bristol in one journey; and, at his request, the writer of these memoirs agreed to accompany him, and spend a night at Marlborough on the way. The subject is here mentioned because of a curious incident which Mr. Watson related on the occasion. We arrived at Marlborough in the afternoon; and, after dining at the inn, walked out to see that ancient town, and very interesting neighbourhood, where there are large and numerous *tumuli*. In passing by the church-yard, which is close by the Bath and Bristol road, Mr. Watson pointed to a gravestone, in a conspicuous situation, and said, "The

first time I travelled this way, that grave-stone caught my eye ; and especially the words, ' Who died.....aged forty-two.' A very deep impression, for which I could not account, was immediately made upon my mind, that I should die precisely at the same age. The impression was both strong and sudden. I have already passed beyond that period ; and this shows how little stress can be justly laid upon those sudden impulses and impressions of which some people make much account." This impression, it appears, had created considerable uneasiness in the family of Mr. Watson ; but its precise effect upon his own mind it is not easy to determine.

The Conference, this year, at Mr. Watson's suggestion, published the declaration that " nothing is more contrary to the writings of our venerable Founder, and to the views which our societies in general maintain to this day, than the notion that it is in any sense consistent with the spirit or the laws of Christianity, to enslave our fellow-men, or to retain them in interminable bondage. The slavery of the Negroes this Conference considers to be one of the most heinous of our public offences ; the principle of which it becomes us as a nation instantly and heartily to renounce ; and the practice of which we are equally bound to discontinue, as speedily as a prudent and benevolent regard to the interests of those who are the subjects of this oppression will permit."

The Annual Pastoral Address of the Conference to the Methodist Societies was this year written by Mr. Watson ; and the spirit of pure and elevated devotion which it breathes presents a fine display

of the temper of his mind at this period. That spirit was not assumed for the occasion, but was the habit of his life. The nation at that time was in a state of great and growing prosperity; and commercial speculation was indulged to an unlimited extent, which soon after led to the most calamitous results. The Address very properly warns religious people against an abuse of the providential goodness of God.

At the conclusion of the Conference Mr. Watson went to Gloucester, with his friend the Rev. William France, whose company he specially requested. They both preached in that city on the Sunday, and on the following day attended the public Missionary Meeting, where the increased contributions of the people demonstrated the lively interest they took in the conversion of the Heathen. Before his return to London he spent a few weeks at Cheltenham, in the hope of receiving some improvement in his health; but in this, as well as in every similar case, the relief which he obtained was only temporary. The disease under which he laboured was unsubdued. A medical gentleman whom he consulted there promised a complete cure; but Mr. Watson's hopes were not sanguine.

During the autumn Mr. Watson published the third part of his "Theological Institutes;" the rapid sale of the first volume, and the decided approbation of competent judges, affording him the fullest confidence of ultimate success in his responsible and difficult undertaking. The part now published completes the argument on the divinity of Christ; treats of his incarnation, and of the

union of the divine and human natures in his person. It contains also a discussion of the questions relating to the Godhead and personality of the Holy Ghost; and to the fall of man, and the consequent corruption of his nature. In regard of these subjects the author presents one of the distinguishing peculiarities of his mind,—absolute submission to the authority of Scripture. He was aware that men can know nothing of God as existing in three persons, nothing concerning Christ or the Holy Spirit, except through the medium of revelation. On these questions every oracle in nature is silent. Having ascertained the Scripture to be a revelation made by God himself, the business of the writer is, to discover its meaning, and then to surrender himself entirely to its guidance. A professed acknowledgment of the Bible, accompanied by a denial of its vital and most prominent doctrines, because they happen to contradict preconceived opinions, he felt to be nothing more than disguised unbelief; and the system defended by the disciples of Socinus, which degrades the Son of God to a mere man, and represents him in his mediatorial character as nothing more than a religious teacher and a martyr, he could regard in no other light than a modification of infidelity, equally dishonourable to God, and injurious to the spiritual interests of men. He found that one leading design of revelation is to exterminate idolatry, and to secure to God alone the religious homage of mankind. On this point God has declared himself to be “jealous;” his “glory will he not give to another;” and the acknowledgment of him as the only object of prayer and praise,

of supreme confidence and love, is enjoined by the first commandment of his law. Idolatry is so abhorrent to Him, that those who practise it shall be for ever excluded from his presence and kingdom. And yet this same revelation of God, authenticated by prophecy, and by signs and wonders and divers miracles, gives to Christ all the titles of God ; ascribes to him all the essential and incommunicable attributes of the divine nature ; declares him to be the Creator of the universe, the Governor of the world, the Raiser of the dead, and the Judge of all mankind ; and it claims for him the highest religious homage both on earth and in heaven. The conclusion is inevitable. Jesus Christ is God, in the full and absolute sense ; and as such, men are every where bound to acknowledge and adore him.

In this part of his work Mr. Watson also contends zealously for the divine and eternal Sonship of Christ, in opposition to the theory that he is only to be regarded as the Son of God with regard to his human nature. About seven or eight years before, in his pamphlet on that subject, he had avowed his conviction that this question had not only a direct bearing upon the doctrine of our Lord's divinity, but also upon the authority of the Bible ; and continued attention to this question had only confirmed him in these views. His former reasonings on this subject are greatly strengthened in the Institutes ; and the whole of his discussions on the person of Christ form a triumphant defence of those principles which have been held sacred by the Christian church in all ages, and in which all orthodox believers are

agreed. Independently of the general argument, this department of the work contains many valuable elucidations of particular texts ; and a considerable portion of original criticism, especially on the New Testament.

The question of original sin Mr. Watson has treated with great judgment and moderation. This is a doctrine of immense importance, and affects the entire system of Christian theology. It was the universal sinfulness of men that rendered necessary a universal atonement ; and because man in his fallen state is "without strength," and totally depraved, both in mind and heart, the influence of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary, in order to his renewal in righteousness and true holiness. Defective views of original sin lead to defective and erroneous conclusions respecting the extent of redemption, and the nature of the Christian salvation. When Mr. Wesley, therefore, was engaged in defence of this doctrine, against the semi-Pelagian refinements of Dr. Taylor, he declared that the question at issue between him and his antagonist was, in point of fact, whether Deism or Christianity were to be preferred. For if man were not fallen, he needed neither a Redeemer nor a Sanctifier ; and the Christian scheme must, of necessity, fall to the ground, as being inapplicable to the state of the world. Of this Mr. Watson was fully aware. He has therefore exhibited this momentous truth in a striking and impressive light, and with great force of evidence, derived from Scripture testimony, and the history and experience of mankind.

## CHAPTER XIX.

As Mr. Watson proceeded in the composition of his Theological Institutes, the subscribers became increasingly sensible of the importance and value of the work ; but he did not suffer it to engage his exclusive attention. The Missions lay near his heart, and daily engaged his anxieties and prayers.

At this period the Popish controversy was somewhat warmly agitated in the United Kingdom. The Roman Catholics were loud and clamorous in their demands for political power ; and several Protestants, both in the Church and among the sects, contended that their claims ought to be conceded ; while others were apprehensive that this measure would be ultimately fatal to British liberty and independence. In Ireland the Romish Priests were greatly alarmed for the consequences of that extensive circulation which the holy Scriptures obtained ; and in several instances they attended the Meetings of Bible Societies for the purpose of exciting disturbance. They were unhappily successful in not a few cases, and the Protestant speakers were compelled to flee for their lives. Challenges to public discussions of the points at issue between the Roman Catholics and Protestants were the consequence of these intemperate proceedings ; and immense crowds often assembled to hear the tenets and claims of their respective Churches canvassed by rival disputants. The results were most satisfactory.

Many a votary of Rome was convinced of his error, and joined the Protestant communities. The wily Popish Bishops saw "whereunto this" was likely "to grow," and laid their Priests under an interdict with regard to public disputations.

Mr. Watson's head and heart were thoroughly Protestant; and the prominence thus given to the principles which produced the Reformation afforded him the highest pleasure. His delicate health, his official engagements, and the important theological work which he had in hand, rendered him unable to devote any considerable portion of time to this controversy; and yet he desired to do some service to the cause of truth and liberty. He could not conveniently produce any original work against Popery; but he translated from the Latin of Episcopus one of the best tracts ever written in opposition to its peculiar dogmas. It is entitled, "The Labyrinth, or Popish Circle; being a Confutation of the assumed Infallibility of the Church of Rome." In a concise advertisement Mr. Watson says, "The following tractate of the learned Episcopus is found in the first volume of his Works, published in folio at Amsterdam, in 1650; and was intended for popular use, having been first published in the Dutch language. In former times it produced great effect, for which it was admirably adapted, by confining the argument to those leading points of the controversy on which, in fact, all the rest depend. It penetrates to the citadel of the enemy, and leaves the outworks, numerous as they are, an easy prey. It is perhaps one of the best specimens of the dilemma, or cornuted kind of argument, which can be produced; and possesses



the merit of uniting brevity with a plainness which lies level to every capacity."

Sufficient means were not employed to bring this excellent pamphlet into general notice; and hence it has never commanded that attention to which it is justly entitled. The learned author proves, by an easy and familiar process, that the Papists cannot point out the true Church which cannot err; that they cannot demonstrate from the holy Scriptures, that the head of their Church cannot err; that they cannot prove from the Fathers, that their Church cannot err; that they cannot prove this point by argument; that the controversy respecting the succession is useless and endless; and that truth is to be preferred to antiquity and succession.

The year 1826 will be long remembered as a season of unexampled commercial distress. For some years the country had enjoyed prosperity, and the spirit of speculation became rampant. Joint-stock companies were formed in endless variety; and multitudes of people, dissatisfied with a moderate competency, and fondly anticipating the speedy possession of immense wealth, engaged in tempting and deceitful enterprises, embarking the whole of their property, with the addition of a fictitious capital. The consequence was, a sudden and frightful reaction. Credit was generally shaken among commercial men; a run upon the banks ensued; extensive failures occurred in all parts of the country, and in every department of business; the loss of property was incalculable; and thousands of respectable families were reduced to indigence and beggary. That the funds of the

Wesleyan Connexion were supported with scarcely any perceptible diminution, was a surprising fact, and demonstrates the strong attachment of the societies to their institutions. The subscriptions and congregational collections received at the Anniversary of the Missionary Society in April and May amounted to more than a thousand pounds; and nearly half that amount was contributed a few weeks afterwards at the opening of a Methodist chapel in Manchester. Mr. Bunting at that time was stationed in the southern division of that town, where, in conjunction with his excellent colleagues, the Rev. Messrs. John Waterhouse and Peter M'Owan, he exercised a most efficient ministry. Two large chapels were built nearly at the same time, within a comparatively short distance of each other, in addition to one of similar dimensions which had been erected about six or seven years before. Mr. Watson lent his assistance at the opening of the first of these in the month of June.

Almost immediately after Mr. Watson's return to London, the Missionary Society sustained a severe loss in the death of one of its Treasurers, Joseph Butterworth, Esq., a man of exemplary zeal and benevolence. He was the son of a Dissenting Minister; and his prospects, when he entered into life, were not of the most flattering kind. By the blessing of God, however, upon his talents and industry, he rose to eminence both in regard of property and influence. He was brought to a knowledge of himself and of his Saviour under the ministry of Dr. Adam Clarke, to whom he was related by marriage; and by the same means he

was introduced into the Wesleyan Connexion. His piety was simple and unostentatious; and for many years he was the Leader of a class, consisting mostly of young men, to many of whom he was rendered a means of great spiritual benefit. His principles and spirit were eminently catholic; and perhaps no man of his age possessed the confidence and affection of a greater number of good people of every denomination. To the poor his liberality was unbounded; and many an honest and industrious artisan and mechanic did he counsel in perplexity, relieve in distress, and supply with the means of establishing himself in business. Twice he was elected a Member of Parliament; once for his native city of Coventry, and once for Dover. In the Senate he was independent, the undeviating friend of religious liberty, and the advocate of Missions and of public morals and order. He was connected with nearly all the great religious and philanthropic institutions of the age, and took an active part in their management. The peculiarities of his character admirably fitted him for the office of Treasurer to the Wesleyan Missionary Society. For not only did he possess a large share of the public confidence; but his liberality and holy ardour, his energy and enterprise, especially qualified him to assist in directing an institution which has extended its operations to every quarter of the globe, and has been honoured by God with pre-eminent success. Mr. Butterworth was not a man to be satisfied with low and subordinate aims; nor was he daunted by opposition and difficulties. His generous mind sympathized with the wants of universal man; and his

love to the human race, and zeal for the Saviour's glory, prompted him to urge forward his less ardent colleagues in their career of usefulness, and to embrace every providential opening to extend the light and salvation of the Gospel to regions previously unvisited by the messengers of truth. After attending a contested election at Dover, in which he was an unsuccessful candidate, he returned home in a state of great exhaustion, and, as he stated to a friend, with a pure and untroubled conscience. His health, which for a considerable time had been delicate, entirely failed; and in a few days he died, in the faith and hope of the Gospel. His remains were interred under the City-road chapel; and an elegant monument to his memory ornaments that house of prayer, of which he was a Trustee.

At the request of Mr. Butterworth's executors, Mr. Watson attended the funeral of this eminent man, and improved the event of his decease by a sermon which he preached at the Wesleyan chapel in Great Queen-street; the place of worship which Mr. Butterworth was accustomed to attend. This discourse was afterwards published under the following title:—"A Sermon on the Death of Joseph Butterworth, Esq., late M. P. for Dover: preached at Great Queen-street chapel, on Sunday, July 9th, 1826." Mr. Butterworth was no ordinary man; and the sermon is almost entirely occupied in the developement of his character. The text, which is Gal. i. 24, "And they glorified God in me," is used merely as a motto, and as suggesting a few introductory observations. The discourse was prepared with a reference to publication, and

was read by Mr. Watson from the pulpit, to a large and respectable congregation. At the conclusion of the service he remarked to a friend, that the plan which he had been led to adopt was not "the most excellent way" in cases of this nature; and that it would have been more congenial with his own feelings, and more conducive to the edification of the people, had he followed the general usages of the Methodist body, by preaching extempore, and connecting his account of the deceased with a discourse upon some appropriate branch of evangelical truth. The sermon was immediately committed to the press.

The Conference of 1826 was held in Liverpool. It commenced on the 26th of July; and on the first morning of its assembling Mr. Watson received, in his election to the office of President, a substantial proof of the confidence and esteem of his brethren. He had justly merited that distinction by the valuable and important services which he had rendered to the body; and the honour was conferred upon him with great unanimity, and with the most cordial affection. Every one seemed to feel a thrill of gratification when he took possession of the chair, and delivered a short address, remarkable for its modesty and propriety. Through the whole Conference his mind appeared to be under an especial divine influence; and his official conduct presented a remarkable admixture of Christian dignity and brotherly kindness. It may be proper to state, that the Conference regularly holds three sittings every day, and often a fourth, when it is occupied by an unusual press of business; that each of these sittings is begun

and ended with prayer ; and that the brethren who engage in these acts of devotion generally commend to the divine blessing the President and other officers, upon whom the labour and care of business more immediately rest. Mr. Watson remarked in conversation, that so far as he was concerned, those prayers appeared to be answered ; and that improved health, and a hallowed cheerfulness and recollection of spirit, were the happy result. "It seems," said he to the writer of this narrative, "that I am benefited by those good prayers which are daily offered up by the brethren in my behalf." That there might be neither confusion nor delay in regard of the singing, with which prayer in the Conference is always connected, he requested the Rev. William Hill, who was an adept in music, to lead the tunes ; and the devotions of the Conference were remarkable for their spirituality, and the gracious influence by which they were accompanied. In one instance it was his painful duty to administer censure ; and the impression it produced by the force of his remarks upon the aggravations and consequences of sin in a Minister of the Gospel, can scarcely ever be effaced from the minds of those who witnessed the impressive scene.

Mr. Watson's sermon before the Conference was delivered on the Sunday evening, in the Brunswick chapel, and was one of his happiest efforts. It was founded upon Dan. xii. 13, "But go thou thy way till the end be : for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days ;" and had a reference to the Preachers who had departed this life in the course of the year, twenty-four in num-

ber. "The end of the days" he described as the end of time, when every faithful servant of the Lord shall stand in his own lot or inheritance. His remarks upon the subject of immortality, viewed in connexion with the present probationary state of men, and future retribution, were particularly striking. Having spoken, in his own inimitable manner, of the end of time, and the dissolution of the universe, he described the soul of man as "reposing upon its own immortality;" and exclaimed, "Why do we not reverence ourselves more, and live in a manner becoming our exalted hopes, when we are assured by the testimony of the living God, that we shall not only survive the wreck of matter, but retain our conscious being through everlasting ages?" The application of this subject to his brethren in the ministry supplied topics of admonition, of the most stirring and influential kind. The Preacher seemed scarcely less than a messenger from the world of spirits, sent to warn all present of what awaited them in a future state; and especially to remind those who were entrusted with the care of souls, of their fearful responsibility, and the consequent necessity of vigilance and fidelity; that when, like Daniel, they should be dismissed from their work, they might receive a great and everlasting reward. The Conference, by a unanimous vote, requested him to publish this sermon; but he could not be prevailed upon to comply with their wishes.

The beginning and conclusion of every Conference are usually seasons of peculiar solemnity. When the Preachers meet after an interval of twelve months, the places of some beloved and

venerated men, who had long been recognised in those annual assemblies, are generally found to be empty. The ravages which have been made by death often awaken the most serious and tender emotions; and the startling inquiry comes with power to many a heart,

“ Who next shall be summon'd away ?  
My merciful God, is it I ? ”

When the last vote of the Conference has been passed, and the Journal is signed by the President and Secretary, the Preachers, the great body of whom are perfectly one in affection and judgment, prepare to separate, in the certain anticipation of never all meeting again till they appear before the Judge of quick and dead. After receiving the Lord's supper together, and commending each other to God in earnest prayer, they depart to their several scenes of labour, often with tears, and always with mutual benedictions, and in the earnest hope of meeting in a world where

“ Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.”

At the conclusion of the Conference in Liverpool Mr. Watson prayed with great enlargement and fervour, and at considerable length. He prayed for the preservation of the Preachers in their several journeyings; for the continuance of their health and lives; the success of their ministry through the year; the general prosperity of the work of God; the peace and harmony of the societies; and the conversion to the faith of Christ of “ a great multitude ” of people in all parts of the land. The Missionaries, “ separated from their brethren,”



and labouring in different parts of the heathen world, and in the midst of great discouragements and trials, were particularly remembered, and commended to the blessing and merciful protection of God. There was one subject in this prayer which seemed to rest with peculiar weight upon Mr. Watson's mind, and to which he gave considerable prominence. It was the case of the Preachers who at that time had become Supernumeraries. Several aged men, who had long borne the burden and heat of the day, and been accustomed to active service in various parts of the Connexion, were compelled by infirmities to retire from the labours of their itinerant ministry, and become stationary. With these venerable servants of Christ he appeared deeply to sympathize. Their circumstances were now greatly altered, and they were liable to strong and distressing temptations. In some instances they were likely to be straitened in their income, and means of subsistence; and in every case, to retire into comparative obscurity. They would, therefore, be in danger of considering themselves slighted, and of yielding to a querulous disposition. From this he prayed that they might be preserved; that the evening of life with them might be calm and tranquil; their usefulness continued; and that their lives of pious and honourable toil might be crowned with a peaceful end, and a glorious reward. The deep feeling which he manifested in this part of his prayer was admirably characteristic of the affection and respect with which he was accustomed to regard aged Christians, and especially aged Ministers, and reflected the highest honour upon his principles and temper.

During the Conference he lodged at the house of his faithful and tried friends, Mr. and Mrs. Kaye ; where many of his brethren met him, and enjoyed his conversation, which was bland, instructive, and devout.

As the President of the Conference, it was Mr. Watson's duty through the year to supply, from the Preachers who were on the List of Reserve, any vacancies that might occur in the different Circuits by death, sickness, or other causes. He felt the responsibility of his situation ; and in this, as well as in every other part of his duty, he was careful to serve the Connexion in the best manner. In appointing young men to different Circuits, he availed himself of the opportunity, to suggest to them advices which were calculated to be of service to them in future life. One of his letters, addressed to a promising young man, is subjoined as a specimen of his spirit and manner. It is laconic, but important.

LONDON, *August 16th*, 1826.

MY DEAR SIR,

You will be kind enough to proceed to assist Mr. ——. As your expenses will be paid by a sick Preacher, you will see the propriety of travelling as frugally as possible ; and in entering upon this work, give yourself wholly to it, and to the Lord. Be a diligent student of the Scriptures, and of the theology of the heart. Avoid the frippery rhetoric which some affect ; and aim at being Wesleyan, which is your calling. Remember that your business is not to shine, but to win souls.

During the year of his Presidency Mr. Watson still retained his connexion with the Wesleyan Missionary Society, though the duties of the Secretaryship ostensibly devolved upon other men ; and in the month of October he repaired to Leeds, to assist at the Anniversary of the Auxiliary Society for that District. His sermons and speeches produced their usual impression, though his health had again begun to fail, and he was in a very languid state.

Under all his bodily infirmities Mr. Watson's mind still retained its activity and vigour ; and at the end of the present year he published the fourth part of his Theological Institutes, which completed the second volume of that work. He had already established, upon the basis of Scripture authority, the depravity, helplessness, and guilt of the human race ; and he here proceeds to exhibit the provision which has been graciously made for their salvation. If man is guilty, he needs justification ; and how a sinner can be justified in the sight of God, consistently with the claims of law, and the divine attribute of infinite justice, is a question which human wisdom has never been able to solve. If in every instance he can be justified on the ground of mere mercy, the authority of law is at an end, and the sanctions of law are an idle dream. The same objection lies against the notion, that sinners can be justified by mere penitence. That God is just, and that it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands, is not only manifest from the denunciations of holy Scripture, but from the terrible calamities which have been inflicted upon mankind in every age, and from which they have been unable to

escape. "How, then, can" sinful "man be justified with God?" One great design of revelation is to answer this most momentous of all inquiries, by presenting to the view and confidence of mankind the atonement of Christ in all its efficacy and value. Into the nature of that atonement Mr. Watson carefully inquires; and he has brought out the evidence which the holy Scriptures contain in favour of this vital article of the Christian faith in a manner the most striking and conclusive, and refutes the objections which modern scepticism has urged against it. In the prosecution of his argument he endeavours, in the first place, to ascertain the principles of God's moral government, as laid down by himself in the Scriptures; and by this means he proves the necessity of the atonement, as a demonstration of the justice of God. He next shows that the death of Christ was propitiatory; and that both the sacrifices of the law, and the sacrifices of the patriarchal times, are to be regarded as types of the sacrificial death of Christ, and confirm this view of the subject. Many important disquisitions are introduced in connexion with the main argument, on the origin of sacrifices, and other collateral subjects, in which great powers of reasoning are displayed, and much valuable criticism is embodied.

Having established the doctrine of atonement for sin by the death of Christ, Mr. Watson proceeds to consider the benefits which result from that atonement; particularly justification and adoption; with the nature of that inward witness to his adoption which the Holy Spirit vouchsafes to the believer. Into the question of justification,

and that of the witness of the Spirit, he enters at considerable length, and with great force of argument. His views of justification were substantially those of John Goodwin, Mr. Wesley, and other Divines of the same school; and he strenuously opposes the Antinomian theory of justification by the imputation of Christ's personal righteousness; and the scheme of Bishop Bull, that sinners are justified before God by faith and works, or by faith considered as the root and principle of evangelical obedience. The witness of the Spirit, he contends, is direct and immediate; and confirms this view of the subject by the combined testimony of several theological writers of the highest authority.

Pursuing the doctrine of atonement through its practical consequences, Mr. Watson connects the death of Christ with the entire process of human salvation. It is through this medium that the preventing grace of God, which waiteth not for the call of man, and all the means of religious instruction and salvation, are vouchsafed. The ungodly are justified "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" by the same means they "receive the adoption of sons," and "the promise of the Spirit through faith." The intercession of our High Priest is founded upon his meritorious sacrifice; this is the means of all access to God in acts of religious worship; and "eternal life" itself "is the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

## CHAPTER XX.

EARLY in the year 1827 the annual Report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, which was drawn up by Mr. Watson, was published for the benefit of the subscribers. It announced a slight defalcation in the funds, in consequence of the deep commercial distress in which the country was then plunged; but its details were, in other respects, calculated to call forth expressions of gratitude, and to inspire the most animating hopes. The following burst of eloquence forms the conclusion:—

“There is, doubtless, great reason to exult in the monuments of success, and in the trophies of conquest, which Christian Missions have, in these later times, and especially within the last half century, erected in so many lands;—in the breakings of those dark clouds which for ages have overhung the sister kingdom, and through which the beams of heavenly truth at length begin to pour their vital radiance upon a people whose hearts are expanding to receive them;—in the rekindling of those lamps of evangelical truth in the Protestant churches of the Continent which have been so long extinguished, and the stirrings of the once mighty spirit of the Reformation, so long rocked to slumber by a false and insidious philosophy;—in the visitation of the regions of slavery and degradation by the commiserations, the consolations, and the better hopes of Christianity;—in the introduction of our divine religion into the regions of degraded Africa, where she has

led up in her train agriculture, and arts, and laws, and literally converted 'the desert into a fruitful field,' and Hottentot kraals into Christian villages, with their schools of learning, and their humble but consecrated temples of worship;—in the incipient triumphs of the mild and merciful spirit of the Gospel, over the rude and sanguinary habits of the savages of the South Seas;—in the impression made upon the closely compacted idolatry, and the obstacle of caste, in India. Nevertheless it is yet true, awfully and emphatically true, that 'the world lieth in wickedness;' for such is the vastness of that majority which is still under the dominion of error, superstition, and vice, as almost to annihilate, in our consideration, the comparatively few who, by the hand of mercy, have been rescued from the gulf which has drawn down the millions of past ages below the reach of hope; and which still whirls within its deepening eddies the millions of the present, to rescue whom no helping hand is near. Our grateful exultation is not forbidden; for this is for the honour of our Saviour, the Author of all the good which has been effected, and the only object on whom hope, as to the future, can rest: but with this joy let us mingle the deepest sympathies, and yield up our hearts to more tender and stirring anxieties. The case of an alienated, a perishing world, is under our eye, and we cannot avoid seeing it. Our colonies carry us to the scene; our commerce wafts us to it; our enterprising travellers expand it before us in its length and breadth of wretchedness; and, what is more, the empire of our country opens the high road to the march of our practical compassion, and

thus, by giving us the 'opportunity' to 'do good,' literally, to almost 'all men,' renders that the high vocation of British Christians, and binds it upon us as one of our most solemn duties. This duty has been largely recognised and acted upon; but there remain many hearts among the professed Christians of this country, still insensible to the obligation; hearts which never thrilled with these sacred sympathies, and never glowed with the sublime anticipation of the universal reign of our adored Saviour. Greatly as our Missionary exertions are outrunning the means, liberal as they are, which are provided for their support, it might be comparatively hopeless to expect, from the majority of our friends, that their contributions should be greatly increased; and the temporary pressure of the times may, in some degree, affect the receipts of the next year: but there are large and unexplored resources around us; and he who, by his arguments, his example, and the activity with which he spreads those publications which bring the real condition of the world, and the cheering progress of salvation among the Heathen, under the notice of the public, wins another heart to embrace this sacred cause, at once opens to its affections new and sanctifying interests, and secures additional aid in promotion of its glorious designs. So long as this is felt to be a sacred duty, our resources cannot diminish, and will surmount the temporary shocks of national adversity itself. We shall then see bands of holy men in greater number and frequency leave our shores, to enterprise labours for Christ and the souls of men, more arduous, more lofty, and more distant;—we shall



trace them, as they push their unstained and noiseless conquests deeper and wider into the yet unpenetrated empires of superstition and idolatry, into the central regions of Africa, now for the first time opening to the distant view of Christendom, —to those seats of eternal ice and regions of storm, which, as they witnessed the unshrinking courage of the British mariner, shall be braved as nobly by the breast of the British Missionary,—into those yet unpenetrated living masses of immortal men which thicken in the teeming countries of the east, where superstition first began to wield her fearful sceptre, and where it shall fall powerless and shivered from her hand amidst the shouts of liberated millions. Whilst we live on earth, if we are faithful to our high vocation, we shall pursue these hallowed triumphs; and we shall leave this work in unimpaired energy, to hasten on that result which shall stamp the seal of eternal truth upon every jot and tittle of the sacred volume; to brighten the splendour of the prophetic page into still more glorious history, and to fulfil ‘that mystery of God,’ that consummation over which earth with all her tongues, and heaven with all her choirs beatified, shall roll the triumphant notes and the lofty swell of the final anthem,—‘HALLELUJAH, FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH.’”

In the summer of 1827 Mr. Watson visited Edinburgh, attended by his friend Mr. Bunting, according to the arrangement of Conference, to meet the Preachers stationed in Scotland.

The Anniversary of the Auxiliary Missionary Society was held at Edinburgh during Mr. Wat-

son's stay ; and he lent his assistance on the occasion, both by preaching before the Society, and delivering an address at the public Meeting. After finishing his business in Scotland, he returned to London. From thence he repaired to Cornwall, having been officially called upon to assist in the adjustment of some differences in one of the Circuits ; and in this work of love he was happily successful. From Cornwall he sailed to Dublin, whence he proceeded to Belfast. The object of Mr. Watson's visit to this town was, to attend the Irish Conference. Here his ministry, his counsel, his conversation, his entire spirit, and example were greatly admired by the Preachers and friends, and were made a lasting blessing to many. Some of the most distinguished persons in Belfast, Professors in the college, as well as others, attended his ministry, and expressed their astonishment and delight in unmeasured terms ; while the Methodists rejoiced in him as "a burning and shining light." He was often requested to visit Ireland again, but was prevented by ill health.

From Belfast Mr. Watson repaired to Manchester, to attend the English Conference ; where, having presided in the preparatory Committees, on the first day of Conference he resigned his office, and received the very cordial thanks of his brethren for the part which he had acted through the year. Some of the official duties which devolved upon him were at once difficult and painful ; but he executed his trust so as to command the decided approbation of his brethren, and preserve the rules and order of the body inviolate. His general health, though delicate, was superior to

what it had been some time previously ; and his spirit, during the Conference, was eminently cheerful and devout. He lodged at the house of his friend James Wood, Esq., where he received the kindest and most respectful attention from every part of the family ; and his conversation was a perpetual source of instruction and hallowed pleasure. The company, from day to day, seemed to hang upon his lips ; and to minister to their happiness, evidently increased his own.

As the Ex-President, it fell to Mr. Watson's lot to deliver the charge to the Preachers who were that year received into full ministerial connexion with the Conference. According to the usages of the body, they had remained four years upon trial ; and having passed acceptably through their several examinations, they were solemnly recognised by their brethren as Ministers of Christ ; they were commended to the divine blessing in fervent prayer ; and then addressed on the subject of their duties and responsibilities. The discourse delivered by Mr. Watson was every way worthy of himself, and of the occasion. It was founded upon 2 Tim. i. 7 : "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear ; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." The Conference requested its publication by a unanimous vote ; and it soon after appeared, under the title of "An Address delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. John Bell, Jonathan Crowther, and others, at the Conference of Wesleyan-Methodist Ministers, held in Manchester, August, 1827. Published by Request of the Conference." Ordination Mr. Watson considered to be the solemn and official separation of men from secular business, and

appointment to the duties of the Christian ministry. The imposition of hands he regarded as a scriptural rite, and one which ought not, therefore, to be omitted ; but he looked upon it rather as a circumstance connected with ordination, calculated to render it more impressive, than as constituting ordination itself. Though the rite in question was not then used by the Wesleyan Conference, in the appointment of men to the sacred ministry,—a fact which Mr. Watson and several of his brethren regretted,—he did not hesitate to apply the term ordination to the service, on occasion of which his discourse was delivered. The text he regards as descriptive of those supernatural endowments with which every true Minister of Christ is invested ; endowments which are not the result of physical constitution, nor of study and discipline, but the gift of God through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

The immense congregation which pressed into the chapel in Oldham-street, to hear this address, listened to the whole with deep and earnest attention ; and the impression which it produced in the minds of the young Ministers, for whose benefit it was more immediately designed, was salutary and lasting.

Mr. Watson had now for six years discharged the duties of resident Secretary to the Wesleyan Missionary Society ; and beyond this period the rules of the Connexion would not allow him to continue in that office. He himself was also desirous of again resuming the full labours of the Christian ministry, which he regarded as his proper calling. The friends in many places, as might

be expected, were anxious that he should be stationed among them ; but the principal contest for his appointment was between the Birmingham Circuit, and that of Manchester South. After the claims of both these places had been fully heard in the Conference, it was determined that he should be sent to Manchester, as the successor of Mr. Bunting. The Circuit had only been recently formed ; two large chapels had been lately erected ; in addition to that in Grosvenor-street, which was built about six or seven years before. The ministry of a man of such piety and commanding talents was deemed exceedingly desirable to give stability to the congregations which had been just formed, and for whose accommodation so large a pecuniary expenditure was incurred. He was succeeded in his office of Secretary by the Rev. Dr. James Townley.

When the Conference was over Mr. Watson returned to London, to prepare for his journey. He had been resident in the metropolis eleven years, and during this period had formed many cordial attachments ; so that his removal awakened painful feelings in many minds as well as his own. Self-possession was one of his most distinguishing characteristics. He was often affected by the sufferings of others ; but under his own trials and sorrows he generally appeared firm and independent, and suppressed all indications of strong emotion, except in the presence of persons with whom he was particularly intimate. The day and hour of his removal were at length fixed ; and a few of his friends met him at the coach-office in Islington, where he and his family were waiting.

When he saw them, his manly and generous spirit was overcome; his philosophy forsook him; the tear glistened in his eye; his lip quivered; his voice faltered; he could only utter the words, "I did not expect this mark of kindness;" and then turned away his face to relieve his feelings by weeping.

He arrived safely in Manchester, and opened his commission on the following Sunday morning, by a discourse, in the Grosvenor-street chapel, on Acts x. 29: "Therefore came I unto you without gain-saying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?"

His colleagues were the Rev. John Hannah, Peter M'Owan, and William M. Bunting; Ministers whom he greatly esteemed and loved, and with whom he laboured in happy unity and affection. By the congregations, of course, he was received with every mark of satisfaction and pleasure; and his preaching was made a blessing to many, especially to young persons of respectability and education.

In the earlier years of his ministry Mr. Watson was accustomed to study his sermons with close attention, but he wrote very little by way of preparation for the pulpit. He endeavoured to make himself thoroughly master of the subjects upon which he intended to discourse, and arranged in his own mind the train of thought and argument which he designed to pursue; and his great command of language enabled him to express himself in public with fluency, correctness, and effect. During the six years in which he was resident Secretary to the Missions, his ministry was gene-

rally confined to the Sabbath, and to public occasions; such as the opening of chapels, and the Anniversaries of Missionary Societies, chapels, Sunday-schools, and other charities. When he was stationed in Manchester he was placed in new circumstances; and he resolved to adopt a course different from that which he had hitherto pursued. He was persuaded that in ordinary cases, and especially in a large manufacturing town, where the habits of the people are very active, and religious ordinances are abundant, to make a practice of preaching long sermons is not the most excellent way. It was, therefore, his determination not to extend the services of religion to an immoderate length; and with a reference to this object, as well as to some others with which his mind was impressed, he resolved to write his sermons at greater length preparatory to their public delivery. His design in this was not to preach from memory; for to the repetition of sermons he had a strong and a conscientious objection; but that he might make himself more completely master of every subject upon which he preached; that his sermons might be less discursive; and that he might be able to compress what he had to say within narrower limits than those to which he had been accustomed. Several of the sketches of sermons contained in the third and fourth volumes of his works were written in Manchester, and will be recognised by his friends in that town, as having been delivered in their chapels. While he was in this Circuit he wrote a considerable part of the third volume of his "Theological Institutes," which completes that very able and useful work. In addition to much

general reading, he also carefully studied some of the Greek writers, particularly Xenophon, St. Chrysostom, and St. Basil. At the same time, his interest in the cause of Missions was unabated; and, as he stood in the relation of Honorary Secretary to the Wesleyan Missionary Society, he kept up a regular correspondence with the managers of that institution in London, and occasionally drew up official documents at their request.

Yet in the midst of all his engagements, his attention to his peculiar duties, as the Superintendent of a Circuit, was most sedulous and exemplary. In all affairs of discipline he consulted his colleagues in the most frank and candid manner. Though some of the country congregations were small, he never employed a substitute when his health allowed him to fulfil his own appointment. The sermons which he preached in Manchester on the week-day evenings, as well as on the Sundays, were thoroughly digested, rich in evangelical sentiment, and generally delivered with such holy fervour and energy, as showed that they had been prepared with much prayer. "Many of these sermons," says Mr. M'Owan, "I heard; and can say that they fully sustained the high character which Mr. Watson had acquired by his services on great public occasions. His variety at home was as remarkable as his greatness abroad."

Like the Apostle of the Gentiles, Mr. Watson not only taught the objects of his pastoral charge publicly, but also from house to house; paying especial attention to children, and to the youthful branches of religious families; and he generally contrived to spend one or two hours every day in



the visitation of the sick ; in which he displayed equal fidelity and tenderness. His deepest sympathies were excited in behalf of young people who were the victims of disease. He could not rest till he had acquired their confidence, and understood their spiritual state. When this was done, he was most assiduous in communicating instruction, and in offering up prayers in their behalf, till they were enabled to rejoice in the favour of God, and in hope of future glory.

He attached great importance to the meetings of the different Committees appointed to manage the affairs of Sunday-schools, and Missionary and Tract Societies ; and that he and his brethren might have an opportunity of attending them, he preserved one night in the week free from preaching engagements. The religious services of the several chapels he regarded as incomplete without an evening prayer-meeting once a week ; and when his numerous and pressing engagements would permit, he esteemed it a privilege to attend the meeting which was held in the chapel nearest to his residence. To every thing like rant in the worship of God he was strenuously and from principle opposed ; yet he often greatly rejoiced at such meetings to hear the language of agonizing and scriptural supplication flow from the lips and hearts of poor and unlearned men, of the depth of whose piety he had satisfactory proof.

As a spiritual watchman, Mr. Watson felt it to be his duty to warn his hearers, and especially the people who were under his pastoral care, of the evils to which he saw them liable ; and during the first year of his residence in Manchester, his fidelity

in this respect received a striking demonstration. Few men were better judges of sacred music than himself, or had a higher relish for the sublime strains of Handel's genius. With a feeling deep as that of Milton he could say,

“ But let my due feet never fail  
 To walk the studious cloister's pale,  
 And love the high embowed roof,  
 With antique pillars massy proof,  
 And storied windows richly dight,  
 Casting a dim religious light ;  
 There let the pealing organ blow,  
 To the full-voiced choir below,  
 In service high, and anthems clear,  
 As may with sweetness, through mine ear,  
 Dissolve me into ecstasies,  
 And bring all heaven before mine eyes.”

But he felt, also, that this noble science is particularly liable to abuse ; and that it is worse than profane for ungodly men to sing the hallowed language of inspiration merely as matter of amusement. It is a direct and presumptuous mockery of God himself, for men of this character to express the sorrows of penitence and the joys of salvation, the glorious announcements of prophecy, and the humiliation and triumphs of Messiah, and especially as an introduction to dance and revelry. A splendid musical festival and fancy-ball were advertised [to be held in Manchester ; and some members of the Methodist society, and others who attended the Methodist ministry, deceived by the word “ sacred,” were known to have purchased tickets of admission. Mr. Watson preached a sermon with a reference to this subject, in which he

proved that the whole affair was a laboured attempt to reconcile Christ and Belial, and to ensnare the unwary, by disguising the pleasures of sin under the garb of religion. After describing the spirit and habits of many professional singers and performers, in terms unhappily true, but the reverse of complimentary, he exclaimed, with great emphasis, "And, forsooth, these men are pledged to mimic the sacrificial wailings of my blessed Lord; and to sound on catgut the groans which redeemed the world!"

The effects of this sermon were most satisfactory. Not more than one or two members of the Methodist society in the Circuit to which Mr. Watson belonged attended the festival. Those who had purchased tickets chose rather to forfeit the money which they had inadvertently paid, than sacrifice their religious consistency.

His success in dissuading his hearers from countenancing this feat of fashionable levity presents a strong and pleasing proof of the deference which was paid to his judgment on questions of Christian morality: a natural result of that confidence which they had in him as a man of superior understanding, and of great piety and uprightness. The whole of his conduct, both as a man and a Minister of Christ, was calculated to produce and strengthen that impression.

It might be expected, considering Mr. Watson's talents and reputation, that applications would often be made to him, from Circuits both near and remote, to preach occasional sermons; but he could only take a very limited portion of this kind of service. The general delicacy of his health ren-

dered him ill able to endure the fatigue of long journeys; and the nature of his complaint made travelling particularly inconvenient. He had also a deep conviction of the responsibility which rested upon him as a Christian Pastor, to whom the care of a large flock was committed. No man was more willing to oblige and serve his brethren, in this and in every other way; but he felt that he ought not to leave his own people and congregations; except in cases of necessity, which would justify him in his own conscience. He was therefore generally to be found at the post of duty in his own Circuit; and his great regularity secured for him the confidence of the congregations, as well as their esteem and love.

---

## CHAPTER XXI.

MR. WATSON accepted the pressing invitation of the Committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society to attend the Anniversary of that institution in the spring of 1828; and delivered an admirable sermon in its behalf, at the chapel in Great Queen-street, on the morning of Friday, May 2d. His text was Eccles. xi. 1—6; and the sermon will be found in the second volume of his works. It was delivered with an energy and a glow of pious and benevolent feeling which it would be difficult to describe. The attendance was very large; and the wasted form of the Preacher, and his pallid countenance, indicative of intense suffering, created a deep sympathy in the assembly.

He was in such a state of infirm health on the day of the public Meeting as to be unable to take an active part in its proceedings ; but he participated in the feelings of holy joy which were generally cherished on that interesting occasion.

Early in this month he published the fifth part of his "Theological Institutes," completing his view of the doctrines of Christianity. He had already vindicated the Scripture doctrine of redemption by the death of Christ, and had proceeded to speak of its benefits ; and he here inquires whether or not those benefits are attainable by all men. This inquiry leads to a discussion of the whole Calvinistic controversy ; in which he takes the Arminian side. This controversy, in fact, lies within a very small compass, though it has often been drawn out to great length. The whole is resolvable into this one question,—“Are the decrees of God, according to which the eternal states of men will be determined, absolute or conditional ?” Calvin taught that the endless destiny of every man was unalterably fixed by God from eternity, by his own sovereign will, irrespective of the personal conduct of his creatures.\* Arminius

\* The following is Calvin's own statement of the subject:—“God ‘hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.’ You see how he (the Apostle) attributes *both* to the *mere will* of God. If, therefore, we can assign no reason why he grants mercy to his people, but because such is his pleasure ; neither shall we find any other cause but *his will* for the reprobation of others. For when God is said to harden or show mercy to whom he pleases, men are taught by this declaration, to seek no *cause beside his will.*”—CALVIN'S *Institutes*, translated by Allen, book iii., chap. 22. “Many, indeed, as if they wished to avert odium from God, admit elec-

contended, on the other hand, that God's predestination of men is founded upon his foreknowledge ; and that individuals are saved as believers in Jesus Christ, and condemned as obstinate and incorrigible unbelievers ; the means of faith having been supplied by the mercy of God, in regard of Christ's atonement and intercession. In this question, it will be perceived, are comprehended many others ; such as the nature of God's election ; the extent of human redemption ; the freedom of the human will ; and the perseverance in the ways of God of those who have once been the subjects of renewing grace.

Mr. Watson had many serious objections to the tenets of Calvinism, when considered in detail ; and he was conscientiously opposed to the system, as a whole. He used to observe that its essential principles are not deduced from the word of God, but from metaphysical speculations concerning the divine nature. Men have contended for the doctrine of absolute predestination, because they could not reconcile the certain foreknowledge of God with contingent events ; and have limited the atonement of Christ, because they thought it dishonourable to the wisdom of God that any of his redeemed creatures should perish. Several of the most popular and esteemed defences of the Calvinistic system are almost exclusively metaphysical.

tion in such a way as to deny that any one is reprobated. But this is puerile and absurd ; because election itself could not exist, without being opposed to reprobation : whom God *passes by, he therefore reprobates* ; and *from no other cause* than his determination to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines for his children."—Ibid., chap. 23.

Such, especially, are those of President Edwards and Dr. Williams, men of unquestioned piety and ability, who, nevertheless, in the recommendation and establishment of their peculiar views, often lose sight altogether of the Scriptures, and bewilder themselves and their readers in the subtleties of abstract philosophy. To all such attempts to explain and modify "the Gospel of our salvation," Mr. Watson was strenuously opposed. He thought that Christians are bound implicitly to receive "the testimony of God." To limit the divine mercy in the redemption of mankind, upon philosophic grounds, and in the teeth of the most express declarations of Scripture, he regarded as presumptuous, and a conduct to be earnestly deprecated.

The peculiarities of the Calvinistic theory, he also thought, impose very serious restraints upon Christian Ministers in the discharge of their official duties, and often involve them in painful perplexities. Suppose a Minister of the Gospel, in the argumentative part of his discourse, to establish, to his own perfect satisfaction, and the full conviction of his hearers, the doctrine of absolute predestination and limited atonement; what is the practical conclusion to be deduced from these premises? Not, certainly, that the way of salvation is opened to all present, by the infinite mercy of God; and that pardon and holiness, as a preparation for heaven, are immediately attainable by every one through the sacrifice of Christ. In exact proportion as the principle of absolute predestination takes hold upon the unregenerate mind, exhortations to immediate repentance, and to a believing

application to the blood of atonement, are necessarily neutralized. And in the case of individual inquirers after the way of life, whether they be in health, or on the bed of sickness and death, the uncertainty as to whether the persons in question be actually redeemed, and whether they are predestinated to life or death, must greatly restrain those free and encouraging offers of salvation which would otherwise be poured forth by Christian zeal and love.

The moral tendency of the tenets of strict Calvinism, he also thought, was far from salutary. That they are so often rendered innocuous by an admixture of the pure and sanctifying principles of evangelical truth, was to him matter of grateful acknowledgment; but when men cherish a full persuasion that they are irreversibly appointed either to heaven or hell, by an irrespective decree, as Calvin distinctly teaches, the result, in many instances, will be a vain and unhallowed presumption, maintained under spiritual decays and practical ungodliness; and, in other cases, a withering despair. On this subject, Mr. Watson once received a remarkable concession from a man who, in the earlier years of his life, was greatly distinguished by his ardour in defence of those principles, in opposition to the tenets of Mr. Wesley. Not long after he had become resident in London, he met a number of Dissenting Ministers, on some public occasion, the nature of which is not distinctly recollected. The venerable Rowland Hill, supposing him to belong to the Independent denomination, said to him, "Whatever shall we do, Sir, to prevent the spread of Antinomianism,



which is making such dreadful havoc of many of our country churches? Don't you think, Sir, that there really is something in our Calvinistic doctrines which is calculated to produce this terrible evil?" Mr. Watson, who was taken by surprise, and felt himself placed in a somewhat peculiar situation, assented to Mr. Hill's suggestion; and the aged apostle of Calvinian theology added, in his own emphatic manner, "I spent my younger days in fighting the Arminian devil; but I will spend the rest of my life in fighting the devil of Antinomianism." This pledge that excellent man fully redeemed. For several years no Minister of his age was more strenuous in the inculcation of purity of heart, and of universal holiness, than he; and though it is not pretended that he renounced the peculiarities of his creed, they were less prominent in his ministrations than they had formerly been; while his zeal for practical religion and righteousness, it was often said, led him occasionally even to surpass the doctrine of Christian perfection as taught by his former opponents, Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher.

In the discussion of the Calvinistic controversy Mr. Watson steadily adheres to the principle by which he had been guided through the whole of his work,—the absolute authority of holy Scripture on all doctrinal questions. Some Arminian writers, he thought, in imitation of their Calvinian antagonists, had conceded too much to metaphysics in this controversy; and were to be blamed for not satisfying themselves with a simple and direct appeal to the law and the Prophets. The subject of predestination and its concomitants are there-

fore by him brought to the test of the sacred writings, honestly and conscientiously interpreted. He was aware of the difficulties connected with many of these topics, difficulties which may perhaps exceed the ability of even angelic minds to solve ; and he was aware, too, that the system which he opposed had been held, with various modifications, by several of the greatest ornaments of Protestant Christendom,—men of equal learning, piety, and zeal ; he therefore felt that the discussion was not to be conducted with levity and sarcasm, but with charity and seriousness, and with a respectful deference to the judgment and opinions of the men from whom he conceived himself bound to dissent. His arguments are founded upon Scripture ; his reasonings are strong and convincing ; and his spirit is uniformly benevolent and kind. No man was more sensible than he, that all is not error which bears the name of Calvinism ; and that the Genevan Reformer and the great body of his followers have strenuously advocated the vital truths of the Christian revelation. He therefore carefully distinguishes between what he conceives to be merely the opinions and “commandments of men,” and principles of a far higher origin.

This portion of the Theological Institutes is distinguished by great originality of thought and manner. The writer doubtless derived considerable advantage from the writings of Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher, and those of John Goodwin, and Doctors Pierce and Womack ; but through the entire discussion he thinks for himself, and is an imitator of no preceding advocate of general redemption, especially in his answers to the theo-

ries of some modern writers, who have endeavoured to give to some parts of the Calvinistic system an aspect less revolting than that in which it had been presented by their fathers. When he was writing this part of his work, a friend put into his hands the tracts of Dr. Thomas Pierce; in the perusal of which he was deeply interested, especially the "Correct Copy of some Notes concerning God's Decrees." He had never previously seen this incomparable tract, which greatly strengthened the conviction which he had long entertained, that, however the Almighty may, by an act of mere sovereignty, elect nations and bodies of people to the enjoyment of church-privileges on earth, his decrees according to which their eternal states will be appointed are respective of character. Pierce was an Episcopal Divine of great learning, who flourished during the Commonwealth, and the reign of Charles II. He assisted Bishop Walton in the publication of his Polyglot Bible; and, with his friend Dr. Lawrence Womack, most ably defended those views of divine truth which Melancthon promulgated in the latter years of his life, and which Arminius afterwards maintained. On some subjects he was the successful antagonist of Baxter; and in his vindication of Grotius, especially, against Baxter's harsh censures, he compelled that great controversialist to quail before him.

Having, according to his apprehension, settled the question of the extent of redemption, Mr. Watson resumes the consideration of its benefits. Among these are, entire sanctification, the right to pray, victory over death, the reception of the spirit

into paradise, and the resurrection of the body. On the subject of entire sanctification, his views accord with those of Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher. He contends that it is the common privilege of believers to be saved from all sin during the present life; and to be sanctified to God in body, soul, and spirit, till they enter upon the heavenly state. The notion, that the identity of the human body consists in some minute germ, which is to be the element of the body that shall be raised, he strenuously and successfully opposes, as having no foundation in Scripture, and a mere suggestion of sceptical philosophy, designed to relieve the imaginary difficulty of raising the dead, in the obvious sense of that expression. God has pledged his veracity for the accomplishment of this work; his omnipotence is equal to the task; and beyond this Mr. Watson had no inquiries to make. The resurrection of the dead must, in the nature of things, be strictly miraculous; and philosophical speculations on such a subject savour far more of presumption than godly edifying.

The Conference of 1828 was held in London. It commenced on the 30th of July, and was a season of painful anxiety, on account of the dissensions which had taken place during the preceding year in the Leeds society. Some individuals, who had long been hostile to the Methodist discipline, and had not the honour peacefully to retire from the Connexion, had unhappily been allowed to acquire considerable influence in the large societies of that town and neighbourhood; and seemed to be waiting for an opportunity to carry their principles into practical effect. That opportunity at length

arrived. The permission given by the Conference to the Trustees of a large new chapel in Leeds to erect an organ there was made the occasion of raising the standard of opposition to all rule and authority. A special District-Meeting was called to assist in the restoration of order. The ring-leaders were expelled; but they succeeded, by inflammatory publications, and other means, in drawing away several people from the Wesleyan body. This secession produced considerable uneasiness in various parts of the Connexion; the Conference devoted several days to a careful investigation of the whole case; and the result was, that the thanks of that body were almost unanimously given to the Preachers of the Leeds Circuit, to the members of the special District-Meeting, and to the official persons in the Leeds society, for the part which they had severally acted in preserving the rules and usages of the Connexion on that very painful occasion. Mr. Watson took a share in the debate, and fully concurred in these resolutions. The Conference directed the Preachers who were returned to Leeds, to receive again into the society those private individuals who had been led astray, and were inclined to retrace their steps; and at the same time affectionately invited such persons to return to their former friends, among whom they had first drawn the breath of spiritual life, and from whom they had, in an evil hour, been separated.

At that time there were persons belonging to the Methodist societies in London who were, like the separatists of Leeds, desirous of introducing serious innovations in the discipline of the Con-

nexion ; and as the attention which the Leeds case had excited rendered the opportunity favourable for putting forth their views, they assumed the character of agitators. They had already published a pamphlet under the title of "An Address to the Conference," which they circulated industriously ; the mischievous character and design of which were obvious, and called forth the animadversions of that body in the printed Minutes. They next drew up certain Resolutions, to which several good men were induced, by dishonest means, to affix their names, without being duly aware of the design of the framers of that document. When the matter was understood, some of them complained bitterly of the manner in which their signatures had been obtained. In the meanwhile, every means was employed to give circulation both to the Resolutions and the Address.

The leading principle of both these publications was, that each separate society among the Methodists has its own jurisdiction, from which there is no appeal ; so that, whatever may be the decision of a Leaders' Meeting, or of a Meeting of Local Preachers, it shall in no case be interfered with, whatever may be the nature of that decision, and however respectable may be the parties who feel themselves aggrieved. Neither a District-Meeting, nor the Conference, shall control any of the determinations of those local authorities. This, it will be perceived, is the principle of Independency, upon which the generality of the Dissenting Churches are formed ; but then they carry the principle through all their ecclesiastical arrangements, and never dream of adapting it to a Con-

nexion, like that of the Methodists. The Independent Churches claim the right, in their Church capacity, of adopting what system of theology to them appears the most correct, from the lowest grade of Socinianism, to the principles of supralapsarian Calvinism; to determine the conditions upon which members shall be received into their communion, and admitted to the Lord's table; whether infants or adults shall be baptized; and whether this ordinance shall be administered by sprinkling or immersion; with the hymns they shall sing, and the form of worship they shall practise. Every Independent Church also claims the right of appointing its own Minister; and while he retains his relation to them, of course it is expected that he shall agree with them in all their peculiarities of sentiment and worship, let them be what they may. In the Churches thus constituted, when the minority are dissatisfied, either with the doctrine taught, the order maintained, or the moral conduct of their brethren, they have no means of redress, except that of retiring, and providing for themselves elsewhere the means of Christian edification. It is not intended by these remarks to cast any reflection upon the Christians who prefer this form of ecclesiastical order; but merely to show the principles upon which their Churches are constituted, and the manner of their operation.

That the decisions of Leaders' Meetings and of Local Preachers' Meetings should never be controlled in ordinary cases, and when they are in accordance with the doctrines, rules, and usages of the body, is freely acknowledged; and no man

was a more strenuous advocate of the just rights of these local authorities than Mr. Watson ; but to make them absolutely independent, and yet consider them as parts of a Connexion, like that of the Methodists, he saw to be palpably absurd. To invest them with that character would lead to endless strife and contention ; and ultimately subvert the entire system of Wesleyan Methodism. Whatever abstract rights the different functionaries and private members of the Methodist societies possessed, they have freely conceded, for the sake of the superior advantages resulting from an itinerant ministry, and their union with an extended religious connexion. Had the Methodist societies been so many independent bodies, they would have been comparatively powerless in the world ; and neither their Missionary operations, nor their efforts for the promotion of religion at home, would have borne the slightest comparison with their present extent and efficiency. Of this Mr. Wesley was fully aware ; and he therefore denominated the people under his care, as they really were, “ the United Societies ;” that is, the religious societies, so united as to constitute one body, having one common form of discipline, doctrine, and worship ; and an itinerant ministry, appointed first by himself, and afterwards by the annual Conference. According to the principle now attempted to be introduced, should a Leaders’ Meeting, under whatever circumstances, tolerate the violation of the Methodist rules, by conniving at particular acts of immorality,—a very possible case, especially where the number of Leaders is small, and the men are under the control of some



powerful individual ; the sound part of the society have no means of relief, however deeply they may feel themselves injured. Should a majority of Local Preachers, in any Circuit, however inconsiderable their number, unhappily adopt heretical opinions, even to a denial of the Godhead and atonement of Christ, the minority among their brethren, and the congregations to whom they minister, can obtain no redress ; but must submit to attend the ministry of men who even deny the Lord that bought them. In vain might they appeal to a District-Meeting, or to the Conference, and declare that they joined the Methodist body with a distinct understanding that they should enjoy a *Wesleyan* ministry ; the answer to all their applications, according to the doctrine now attempted to be established, would be, "The local authority is absolute and independent ; and there lies no appeal from its decisions." The aggrieved parties, upon this plan, have no means of satisfying their consciences, but that of withdrawing from a corrupt community, and from chapels which perhaps they have themselves built. Nor could the Trustees of the chapels exclude from their pulpits these teachers of heresy but by an appeal to law. According to the new modification of Methodism, recommended by the Address and Resolutions, the Travelling Preachers, too, might find in some of the Circuits every form of doctrine, and every mode of worship ; in which they would be required to acquiesce. Whatever those irresponsible bodies, Leaders and Local Preachers, chose to establish, in any particular place, either in the shape of doctrine, discipline, or morals, every

Superintendent must not only tolerate, but sanction. A Dissenting Minister who accepts the call of an Independent Church is acquainted with its tenets and order, and has an opportunity of judging whether or not they accord with his views of Scripture; but the hapless Methodist Itinerant must, in the case contemplated, "become all things to all men," in a sense which neither his Bible, his conscience, nor even common honesty would warrant.

The cases of corrupt doctrine and conduct here supposed are not imaginary. Serious errors, both in theology and practice, have risen up in different parts of the Connexion, and at different periods of its history. The discipline of the body has wisely provided against them; and they have in every instance been effectually arrested in their progress; but the means of their extinction, when a majority of men could in any place be found to defend them, the agitators in question laboured to remove; and were clamorous for the attainment of this object. Had they avowed a conscientious preference for the Independent mode of church government, quietly withdrawn from the Connexion, and sought to satisfy their own minds by connecting themselves with churches formed upon their own model, their motives and integrity would have entitled them to respect; but they laboured to disturb the peace of the body by attempting to subvert those parts of its constitution which are even essential to its existence.

Mr. Watson, with his characteristic manliness, came forward in this emergency, and prepared a seasonable antidote to a publication which was

bold in assertion, and had already produced an injurious impression upon the minds of many people, who had been more attentive to their spiritual interests than to the principles of ecclesiastical order, and the history of the Connexion to which they belonged. The title of his publication was, "An affectionate Address to those Trustees, Stewards, Local Preachers, and Leaders, of the London South Circuit, whose Names are affixed to certain Resolutions, bearing date Sept. 23d, 1828."

It was written in a spirit of great kindness; for the author knew that several of the persons whom he addressed were not prepared to carry into practical effect the principles to which they had been induced to give the sanction of their names. An honest indignation at the men who had imposed upon their brethren, it was difficult to repress.

At this time the Methodist Connexion at large was inclined to pay great deference to Mr. Watson's opinions. For several years he had given such substantial proofs of enlarged and comprehensive views, of active zeal and piety, of sobriety and moderation, and of attachment to the body of which he was an ornament, that a high respect was shown for his judgment. His pamphlet was, therefore, generally read, and with the most satisfactory effect. It was in such demand that some thousands of copies were sold in a few weeks, and it greatly served to restore confidence and tranquillity to the Connexion. The spirit of the writer was universally admired; his exposition of the principles of the Wesleyan discipline carried conviction to most minds; and the circumstance, that the writer had once belonged to another com-

munity, in which he had seen the practical effect of divisions among religious people, gave an authority and impressiveness to his remarks and warnings which they otherwise would not have possessed. He had no quarrel with those Christians who prefer the Independent mode of church government; they have an unquestionable right to follow their own convictions: but to identify Independency with Wesleyan Methodism, comprehending an itinerant ministry, and a uniform system of discipline, he saw to be worse than absurd; and the plea, that such was, in fact, the constitution of the Connexion, he found it difficult to reconcile with an honest intention. The power possessed by Mr. Wesley had been used not to grieve and oppress the people under his care; but to preserve inviolate the doctrine and order of the body, and to afford protection to those who might feel themselves injured. Since Mr. Wesley's death, the Conference has stood in the same paternal relation to the Connexion; and up to the period in question, the right of appeal to that assembly, by all who conceived that they had just ground of complaint, does not appear ever to have been denied.

While Mr. Watson defended the Methodist discipline, the Rev. Daniel Isaac, who was then stationed in Leeds, exposed the designs of the dissentients there, by comparing their practices with their professions, and both with the holy Scriptures; and the consequence was, that the plan of effecting an extensive separation from the Methodist body entirely failed. In Leeds and the vicinity a considerable number of the pious people, who had been misled, returned to their former associ-

ates ; and the society soon began to feel the beneficial effect of the removal from its pale of the disaffected men who, by their agitations, had for years retarded its prosperity. It was now at unity with itself ; and the happy effect was very apparent. The deficiency of its numbers, occasioned by the separation, was soon supplied, by the accession of new converts, and the return of those who had been drawn from the fold ; and for some years the cause has there been in a more healthy and efficient state than its friends had ever previously witnessed. The society and congregations far surpass those of any former period ; and the piety, order, and spirituality of those who are in church-fellowship have kept pace with their increasing numbers. It must afford a high gratification to the excellent men whose painful duty it was to maintain the Wesleyan discipline in Leeds, against so much determined and clamorous opposition, that results so beneficial have ensued from the measures which they adopted ; and particularly to the Rev. Edmund Grindrod, the Superintendent of the Circuit in which the standard of revolt was raised. The sad fact, however, is, that several persons who were under religious impressions at the time of the secession, yielding to the influence of clamour and party-spirit, lost their convictions, and abandoned altogether the profession of religion. The blood of these souls must be accounted for, in the day of the Lord, by the men who turned them out of the way of righteousness. The great lesson to be learned from the whole case is, that men of unsound principles, and of factious habits and character, ought never to be invested

with a leading influence in the church of God. Those persons cannot be guiltless who give to mischievous men the means and opportunity of working evil in Christian societies. On this occasion Mr. Watson acted the part of a peace-maker, not by flattering bad men, for of this he was incapable ; not by concealing the truth, for this he felt to be contrary to the simplicity of the Christian character ; not by conceding any of the rights which are inherent in the pastoral office, and which are invested in it by the Head of the church for the benefit of his people, for such a conduct would be fatal to the interests of piety ; but by a distinct avowal and defence of the Methodist discipline, and a kind expostulation with the men who, while they professed to walk by it, and admire it, were in fact seeking its subversion. He rendered a valuable service to the Connexion, and the Connexion highly appreciated his labours.

Mr. Watson was returned to Manchester a second year, at the earnest request of the friends in that Circuit ; and he hastened to complete his Theological Institutes. The following letter, which he addressed to his printer, Mr. James Nichols, the author of " Calvinism and Arminianism Compared in their Principles and Tendency," will show the modest estimate which he formed of his own publication, notwithstanding the favourable reception which it had met with from his brethren and the public. Mr. Nichols had printed the greater part of Mr. Watson's works ; and his knowledge of divinity and ecclesiastical history, as well as his accurate scholarship, justly entitled him to that

confidence which the letter expresses, and which its writer had long cherished.

TO MR. JAMES NICHOLS.

*June 3d.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I COMMEND all my corrections to your care with confidence. I send you all the copy, except one chapter on the Lord's supper, which will conclude the work. This will not be a long one. In the next parcel please to send me all the sheets that are worked off, that I may finish the index, which I have already made for the former parts, and now must complete.

I am glad that my politics meet your approbation. On Episcopacy and church government I hope I shall not disagree much with a judgment I respect.

I trust I have put the baptismal question in a tolerably clear view ; although it is difficult to stir that water without raising mud. Many of our own writers are somewhat obscure. I turned, therefore, from my books, and followed my own deductions from Scripture, according to my plan throughout the work.

I am not, I assure you, elated with my Institutes, as a whole ; and I ought never to have begun them ; but I hope they may lead to something better from some of our own writers in future years. They are at least adapted to the Methodist body, for which they were designed.

The concluding part of his Theological Insti-

tutes was published on the 1st of July. It treats of the morals and institutions of Christianity ; the duties which men owe to God and to one another ; the constitution of the Christian church ; and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. The author contends that no particular form of church government is laid down in the New Testament, as binding upon the consciences of Christians ; but that certain offices are there specified, which ought ever to be retained ; and principles relative to the discipline of the church are given, which it is left to the wisdom and piety of Christians to apply, and practically exemplify, under all providential circumstances, to the end of time. On the subject of Christian morals he often corrects the defective views of Paley ; and introduces many discussions of superior value ; particularly on the subject of obedience to the civil power, prayer, the sanctity of the Sabbath, slavery, and the subjects and mode of baptism.

In reference to the order of Christian churches, he observes, with equal piety and truth, " However difficult it may be, in some cases, to adjust modes of church government, so that, in the view of all, the principles of the New Testament may be fully recognised, and the end for which churches are collected may be effectually accomplished, this labour will always be greatly smoothed by a steady regard, on each side, to duties as well as to rights. These are equally imperative upon Ministers, upon subordinate officers, and upon the private members of every church. Charity, candour, humility, public spirit, zeal, a forgiving spirit, and a desire, the strong desire, of unity and harmony, ought to



pervade all ; as well as a constant remembrance of that great and solemn truth, that Christ is the Judge as well as the Saviour of his churches. Whilst the people are docile, obedient to the word of exhortation, willing to submit in the Lord to those who preside over them, and are charged to exercise Christ's discipline ; and whilst Ministers are gentle among them, after the example of St. Paul ;—a gentleness, however, which, in his case, winked at no evil, and kept back no truth, and compromised no principle, and spared no obstinate and incurable offender ;—whilst they feed the flock of Christ with sound doctrine, and are intent upon their edification, watching over them as they that must give account, and study, live, and labour, for no other ends, than to present that part of the church committed to their care, perfect in Christ Jesus ; every church will fall, as it were, naturally, and without effort, into its proper order. Pure and undefiled religion in churches, like the first poetry, creates those subordinate rules by which it is afterwards guarded and governed ; and the best canons of both are those which are dictated by the fresh and primitive effusions of their own inspiration."

The completion of the Theological Institutes was to Mr. Watson an occasion of great satisfaction and gratitude. The work had cost him much labour and thought ; had been written during intervals of time, snatched from his other engagements and duties, and often in great pain and weakness ; and had occupied his anxious attention for many years. The approbation with which it was received by his brethren was gratifying to his

mind, as his intentions were pure and upright. It is an admirable digest of theological knowledge, sound in doctrine, and presenting throughout an absolute deference to the authority of Scripture. No undue prominence is given to any favourite tenets, but Christian truth appears as one beautiful and harmonious whole. The spirit which pervades it is pious and benevolent; and, while the work enlarges the reader's views, and strengthens his belief of Scripture verities, it promotes holy and devout affections. Its principal defect is, an occasional negligence in the style. It is written with great and unabated energy of thought and expression; but the sentences are sometimes too long and involved for a didactic work. The words are generally well chosen, but their collocation is often capable of considerable improvement; for the author did not, in every instance, devote the requisite time to the correction of what he had written. His design in the composition of this work was to assist the junior Preachers of the Wesleyan Connexion in their theological studies. It was his intention from the beginning to give the copyright to the body; and the manner in which he did this displayed a delicacy and honour which are worthy of special record. When he committed the Institutes to the press, though his friends were sanguine both as to its execution and sale, he had doubts concerning both; and hence, though money with him was not plentiful, and the details of business were foreign from his habits, he took upon himself the entire risk of publication, and offered the copyright to the Connexion when the work had received the stamp of public approbation, and

when the demand for it was such as to render it worthy of acceptance even in a pecuniary point of view. As soon as the last part was printed off, he presented the entire work to the Book-Committee in London, and through them to the body.

The Conference of 1829 was held in Sheffield; and, after a long debate, it was determined that Mr. Watson should be appointed to the Superintendency of the London North Circuit, of which City-road was the head. At this Conference he preached an admirable sermon on Acts xvii. 28, which he afterwards printed in compliance with the request of his brethren then assembled. Their acknowledgments were presented to him for the gift of the great work which he had just completed; and the following record appears in the Minutes:—"That the cordial thanks of the Conference are due to the Rev. Richard Watson, for his kind and generous gift of the copyright of his *Theological Institutes* to the Book-Room."

Mr. Watson's return to London was hailed by a numerous circle of friends: and though the station was not one which he would have chosen for himself, because of the onerous duties connected with it, which were sufficient to exercise the full strength of a man in robust health; yet he regarded the appointment as providential, and entered upon his labours with superior pleasure. His appearance at this time was sickly and languid; his constitution, during his residence in Manchester, had been evidently impaired by disease; but his intellectual powers were as vigorous as ever, his habits of activity were unabated, and his piety had acquired a greater richness and maturity. He

seemed to feel that the continuance of his life was a matter of extreme uncertainty; and he lived, and conversed, and preached, as became a man who almost daily expected to hear the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh. Go ye out to meet him."

On his arrival in the Circuit, he cherished a strong desire to witness the prosperity of the work of God; and therefore laboured to remove every hinderance out of the way. In a few places he found there were individuals in the society whose minds were prejudiced against their Ministers, and the discipline of the Connexion, by inflammatory and misleading publications; and he sought those persons out, and conversed with them, showing them that they had been deceived by misrepresentation. He was successful in this labour of love, and soon saw every society at unity with itself. The Circuit was considerably in debt; and he instituted a subscription among the more opulent friends for the removal of this burden; remarking that the moral effect of pecuniary embarrassments, both upon individuals and public bodies, is always injurious. He himself presented a handsome donation to the fund which was thus raised. The people flocked in large numbers, and with deep interest, to his ministry; and though they found his sermons less abundant in metaphor than they had formerly been, in originality and depth of thought they were not at all inferior to his former ministrations, and even surpassed them in evangelical sentiment and holy feeling. His private conversation, which was always intellectual and improving, was eminently spiritual and edifying.

To the afflicted members of the society he was kind and attentive; regularly devoting a portion of his time every week to pastoral visitation. He regarded the societies as committed to his care; and that he might render his final account with joy, he deemed it necessary not only to teach them "publicly, but from house to house," paying special attention to the younger branches of each family.

At this time, indeed, his mind was greatly impressed with the peculiar situation of young people, the offspring of pious parents, and the children of the church; particularly those of them who had enjoyed the advantages of education, and were not decidedly pious. He saw that much of the popular literature of the age was calculated to divert their attention from their spiritual interests, and to produce a general scepticism in reference to the truths of revelation. For the purpose of removing the doubts which some of them might have imbibed, and of leading them to a cordial reception of the truth as it is in Jesus, and thus to prepare them for the enjoyment of vital godliness, he employed his leisure time in the composition of a small manual, adapted to their instruction. Upon this work he bestowed considerable care.

It has been already observed, that, when Mr. Watson removed to Manchester, he was appointed Honorary Secretary to the Wesleyan Missionary Society; and that, during his residence in that town, he continued in regular correspondence with his colleagues in London, on subjects connected with the affairs of that institution. On his return to London, he still sustained the same office, and

afforded the most efficient assistance in carrying the plans of the Society into effect. He regularly attended the meetings of the Committee, prepared several of the most important official documents, superintended the studies and training of some of the Missionaries, and generally took a part in the services connected with their ordination.

---

## CHAPTER XXII.

NOTWITHSTANDING the pressure of Mr. Watson's duties, as the Superintendent of an important Circuit, and the attention which he was called to devote to the concerns of the Missions, particularly in the West Indies, by his unparalleled diligence he found time to execute various literary projects. In the spring of the year 1830 he published his "Conversations for the Young; designed to promote the profitable reading of the Holy Scriptures;" a work of great utility, which he had written in his intervals of time during the autumn and winter. It was intended to be of a miscellaneous character; and in this view the plan is very judiciously laid. A young person, actuated by good motives, and seriously inclined, is introduced making inquiries relative to the holy Scriptures, and the nature of true religion. His questions call forth replies, which embody a large mass of important information, the substance of many an elaborate treatise. In the course of twenty-four conversations the youthful inquirer, and the teacher who acts as his "guide, philosopher, and

friend," go through every book of Scripture ; and instruction, remarkable for its solidity, importance, and variety, is elicited on every subject which was likely to be started by an inquisitive and intelligent mind. The volume is a neat and beautiful epitome of Scripture antiquities ; containing, also, all the great principles of biblical truth, and personal religion. The style of this volume has great merit, and differs considerably from that of the author's other publications. It is easy, terse, and elegant ; suited to the subjects and the occasion. Nothing of a polemical or sectarian character occurs in it ; and hence it has been read with equal approbation by Christians of different denominations ; and the demand for it has been extensive.

The Annual Meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society was held this year in the City-road chapel, on Monday, May 3d, 1830 ; the Right Hon. the Earl of Mount Cashel in the chair. Mr. Watson delivered an admirable speech, in the course of which he said, " It has been a frequent and a favourite metaphor made use of by several eminent speakers and writers on this subject, to compare the fraternal union of churches, to the union of the colours in the rainbow ; and a very beautiful metaphor it is. It was not till lately that the church of Christ has been at all entitled to this comparison ; for, if formerly it was like one, it was so distinct in its lines of colour, and with edges so sharp and defined, that they seemed to be intended to cut each other through the whole span of the arch. For my part, I should not admire such a rainbow as this ; neither should I

be much taken with a rainbow of one colour only : I am afraid we should begin to dispute as to what colour this should be ; and if we agreed as to that, we should not long rest satisfied with it. One party would wish to have it enlivened with a little more red ; and another would have it sobered with a little more purple. For my part, I am contented with the rainbow of nature, with its distinct yet commingling hues, soft, beautiful, varied, one ; and if we could see all the churches of Christ worthy to be compared to such an appearance, we might, in the language of one of the writers of the Apocrypha, say, ' When thou seest the rainbow, bless Him that made it ; very glorious is it to behold, and the hands of the Almighty have bended it ; ' and I have no desire that the union of the churches should be more perfect than this, till we enter into the bright and colourless light of eternity, and see ' eye to eye and face to face.'

" This day is the Anniversary of the death of Dr. Coke, sixteen years ago. That is a name always to be mentioned with honour and veneration by us ; a man whose ardent mind kindled the flame of Missionary exertions in our societies, and whose spirit is now rejoicing in the success of his labours. He was the man who first carried our exertions to the West Indies, and was the father and founder of that Mission which has brought so many sons to glory, and introduced so many into the liberty of the Gospel. May we possess his spirit, and take up that work which he has left us as a legacy, and be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in it, until the whole of those interest-



ing colonies be filled with the light of the glorious Gospel!"

On the 15th of May, a general Meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society was held in London. A dissolution of Parliament was expected speedily to take place; and it was deemed exceedingly desirable that due exertions should be made throughout the country, at the general election, to secure the return of such members as would vote for the emancipation of the Negroes. The Society had then been in active operation for several years, and by means of its publications, and the Meetings which had been held in the principal towns in England, it had succeeded in making a strong impression upon the public mind as to the evils of West Indian slavery, and the duty of the Legislature to bring the system to as speedy a termination as possible. That impression was strengthened by the fierce and determined opposition to Negro instruction with which the Missionaries had to contend, especially in the island of Jamaica; and by the cases of diabolical cruelty and oppression which had recently occurred, and were just published with all their afflicting details. The slave, Henry Williams, was almost flogged to death for being a Methodist and praying to God. So powerful, however, were the West Indian body in the Legislature, that scarcely any Member of the House of Commons, except Mr. Brougham, was heard with ordinary patience and decency in favour of the injured Negro, and against the continuance of a system which admitted of such atrocities. The period was therefore considered a crisis by the friends of emancipation; and an

expression of the national will on that question was loudly called for at the approaching elections.

In the righteous and benevolent feelings of the abolitionists Mr. Watson strongly participated, and cheerfully lent all the assistance in his power to further the desirable object which they all had in view. The Conference of this year was held in Leeds; and Mr. Watson thought that the time was come when that body ought, more publicly and distinctly, to bear its testimony against slavery as existing in the British colonies. On this subject Mr. Wesley had declared his sentiments with an explicitness and a force of which there were few examples; and his tract against slavery, which had greatly assisted Mr. Wilberforce and his friends in their long-continued struggle with the advocates of man-stealing, was as benevolent in its spirit, as it was pure in principle, and convincing in its reasonings. He characterized the trade in men as "that execrable sum of all villainies." With similar views and convictions, Mr. Watson moved in the Conference a series of Resolutions, declaring that the "holding of human beings in a state of slavery is in direct opposition to all the principles of natural right, and to the benign spirit of the religion of Christ," and calling upon the Wesleyan body to unite with Christians of other denominations to attempt, by the exercise of the elective franchise, and by petitions to Parliament, to bring the system of Negro slavery to an end. These Resolutions the Conference adopted with perfect cordiality.

At this Conference Mr. Watson was requested to write a Life of Mr. Wesley, to be published in

a cheap form, and adapted to popular use. It was not intended to supersede the very able and satisfactory Life of that eminent man, published a few years before by Mr. Moore; but so to compress the principal facts of Mr. Wesley's personal history as to place them within the reach of such readers as had not time to peruse Mr. Moore's voluminous publication, or to whom the purchase of it might be inconvenient. With this request he was very reluctant to comply. He thought that he had no talent for biographical composition, having never practised himself in narrative; and that his style, as well as habits of thought, were much better adapted to theological disquisition. On his return to London, however, he immediately began to collect materials for this work; and as he proceeded his mind became deeply interested in its execution. The more he studied Mr. Wesley's character the more he admired it; and he was accustomed to speak of him with strong affection and admiration. So intent was he upon the accomplishment of his design, that he often deprived himself of necessary rest, and employed a considerable part of the night in arranging his materials, and preparing the work for the press. His lamp might be seen burning in his study as late as three o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Watson was appointed a second year to the London North Circuit. He took his full share of labour in the Circuit, except when he was restrained by ill health; and was very attentive to all the duties of his office as a Superintendent. His preaching retained an undiminished interest; and in the City-road chapel, where his congrega-

tions, especially on the Lord's day, were always crowded, he not unfrequently adverted to prevalent errors and other evils, whether in the church or in the world, and guarded his hearers against them. The extravagancies of the modern millenarians, of the pretenders to the revival of miracles, and of the apostolic gift of tongues, occasionally called forth his animadversions; for he regarded these things as the devices of Satan, intended to divert the minds of Christians from practical holiness, and to bring discredit upon the religion of Christ.

For many years he had watched the progress of Christianity, under the name of Methodism, in the United States of America, with lively interest. The Methodist Episcopal Church, founded by Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, under the sanction of Mr. Wesley, already amounted to more than half a million of souls, and considerably outnumbered every other body of religious people in the Union. He admired the zeal which the American Methodists manifested in the cause of education; as they had long supported various literary establishments of reputation. At this period they had succeeded in forming a University, under the sanction of Government, from which they had received a charter, authorizing them to confer degrees upon such persons as might be deemed entitled to those distinctions. Mr. Watson's principal works had been reprinted in America; and his character stood high as a Divine, and an eloquent writer. The attention of the parties, therefore, who were deputed to direct the concerns of the University was naturally turned to him, as a man whose

acquirements and talents would reflect honour upon that body ; and they invited him to fill the chair of Professor of Belles Lettres and Moral Philosophy. To their invitation he returned the following answer. It was addressed to Dr. Emory, who had visited England in the year 1820.

LONDON, *Nov. 24th*, 1830.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR communication from the Committee of your University singularly came when I was ruminating upon American Methodism. In that I have felt increasing interest, regarding it as taking a large share in morally educating a vast and rising empire, and feeling that the present race of American Preachers, and the leading friends, are deeply responsible to posterity, to the interests of which their anxieties and plans are thrown forward. I rejoice much in those plans of effective education for your youth in which you are so honourably engaged, being persuaded that if you give Methodism its full play in society, you must render it a means of supplying all the wants of your people, literary, scientific, and religious. The Lord give to your good designs his special blessing. Had we made provision for the educating of our youth, we had not been exposed to the mortification of seeing them alienated from us by the world, and (what you know not in America) the established Church, which has the attraction of worldly honour. The honour you do me, in inviting me to a chair, I duly appreciate, and feel myself very unworthy of. To belles lettres I have no pretension ; moral philosophy I have studied, and think it a most

important department, as the source of most misleading error, or of important truth when kept upon its true principles, both theological and philosophic. Being, however, fifty years old, and having a feeble constitution, I do not think that it would be prudent in me, were I otherwise better qualified, to encounter the fatigues of an unaccustomed duty, and a foreign climate. Brethren I know I should find, and a candour of treatment; but I can only offer my best wishes, that you may suitably and efficiently fill up so important a department. Of the state and prospects of your University, I shall, however, be very happy to learn any particulars. Be pleased to present my respectful compliments to the gentlemen of the Committee, and receive my thanks personally for the kindness of your communication.

In accordance with the Resolutions of the Conference, Mr. Watson felt it his duty to promote the great cause of Negro emancipation, by calling upon the congregations in his Circuit to present petitions to Parliament for that most desirable boon. It was deemed expedient to request the attendance of the congregations at their several chapels, on a week-day evening, when the subject of slavery was stated by one or more speakers, and a petition was proposed and signed. At the Meeting which was held in the City-road chapel the subject was explained and argued by Messrs. Gal-land and Dixon. Mr. Watson also delivered an address which carried conviction to every mind. He showed that slavery, as existing in the West Indies, was an intolerable evil, an outrage upon

religion and humanity; and that the only hope for the Negro was in the Imperial Parliament. The petition was numerously signed.

In the spring of the year 1831, a dissolution of Parliament, and another general election, were anticipated; and the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society, ever alive to the object of that institution, called a public Meeting at Exeter-Hall on the 23d of April, for the purpose of directing the attention of the electors of Great Britain to the degradation and wrongs still endured by the Negro slave. It was probably the most numerous assembly of the friends of the Society ever convened under one roof; and the interest was intense. Mr. Watson had long cherished a lively interest in the success of this Society, and was now an efficient member of its Committee; but, though repeatedly desired, and though much had been expected from him, he had never addressed any of its public Meetings, having been prevented by indisposition. On one occasion he had come from Bath, for the express purpose of delivering a speech, at one of the Meetings of this Society; but when the day arrived, he was so ill as to be unable to leave his bed. He was now suffering from affliction; his manner of speaking indicated great feebleness; and his speech was but indistinctly heard by the immense concourse of people; yet it was every way worthy of himself, and of the cause which he was wishful to promote. It contained some noble sentiments, expressed in his best manner.

The sentiments contained in this able and impressive address were not assumed by Mr. Wat-

son for the occasion ; nor were they uttered merely for the sake of the effect. They were the deep and solemn convictions of his conscience. His thorough knowledge of West-Indian society, the result of a long-continued correspondence and intercourse with the Missionaries and other persons, had convinced him that every attempt to convert the Negro population throughout the West Indies must fail, unless the people could be delivered from that state of bondage under which they groaned. He could have related many a secret of that prison-house, and have given most revolting details, not only of extreme physical suffering, but of moral pollution, the direct consequence of that absolute power which the slave-holder possessed over the hapless creatures who were denominated his "property." The system of West-Indian slavery in many respects presented itself in an attitude of direct hostility to Christianity ; and the question was, which of them should predominate. The owner of men, women, and children often claimed the right to interpose between them and their Maker and Redeemer ; and denied them all access to the means of salvation. The unmarried Negroes were sometimes avowedly denied the blessings of religious instruction and public worship, lest moral principles should be planted in their minds, and these should interfere with the increase of population, which the master claimed as his right. The shameless violation of God's command, and the degradation of their moral nature, were encouraged for the sake of gain. Indifference to evils of this kind would have been a crime ; and every sentiment of justice, benevo



lence, religion, and patriotism urged Mr. Watson forward in the use of all constitutional means to obtain their removal. At this time he formed the design of publishing an address to the Methodist Connexion on the subject, with reference to the exercise of the elective franchise; but he was induced to alter his purpose in consequence of the course adopted by the Anti-Slavery Society. At the General Meeting of this institution, on the 23d of April, an "Address to the People of Great Britain and Ireland" was agreed to, calling upon the electors, in returning Members to Parliament, to remember the enslaved Negroes, and to support such candidates only as would vote for emancipation. To this document, which was stitched up with the principal monthly periodicals, and extensively circulated by other means, Mr. Watson affixed his name, in honourable connexion with the signatures of Messrs. Buxton, S. Gurney, Wilberforce, William Smith, Macaulay, Clarkson, Dr. Lushington, and the Rev. Daniel Wilson.

On the 1st of June his "Life of the Rev. John Wesley" was published in a duodecimo volume, with a beautiful portrait. It was not merely a condensed view of the principal events of that great man's life, deduced from the works of his former biographers; but contained a large portion of original matter.

The influence of Mr. Wesley's labours and plans upon public morals and happiness, and the conduct which he pursued in reference to the established Church, are largely and ably discussed; and the charges of inconsistency, of schism, and of other evils, so often urged against him, are effectually

repelled; while due respect is shown to the national Church, for which Mr. Watson cherished a sincere regard. Like Mr. Wesley, he was no theoretic Dissenter, but was friendly to the principle of a religious Establishment. The peculiarities of Methodism, and the treatment which its adherents have received, are occasionally described by Mr. Watson with the happiest effect.

As soon as the Life of Mr. Wesley was published, the Wesleyan Book-Committee in London requested Mr. Watson to compile a Biblical and Theological Dictionary, for the use of the Connexion. With this request he readily complied, for a reason with which at that time they were not acquainted. For some years it had been his intention to publish such a work, and, in the event of his decease, to apply the profits which might arise from the sale to the benefit of his own family; and with this view the collections and memoranda which he had made were copious and valuable. He therefore began immediately to arrange his materials, and was ready in the course of a few weeks to put the early part of the work into the hands of the printer. It was published in separate parts, the first of which appeared at the beginning of October, and fully justified the expectations which had been formed concerning it. When the publication was somewhat advanced, and the demand for it was urgent and extensive, he was requested to accept some remuneration for his services, especially as his original intentions as to pecuniary advantage were then discovered; but this he peremptorily refused; and when the proposal was repeated, and urged upon him, he declared that

unless he might be allowed to finish the work gratuitously, for the benefit of the Wesleyan body, he would decline all future connexion with the publication, and the Committee might complete it as they pleased. At that time he cherished the design, if his life should be prolonged, of writing some other work for the benefit of his widow and children, should he be removed from them.

The Conference of 1831 was held in Bristol; and the manner in which Mr. Watson had executed the task imposed upon him twelve months before, of writing a Life of Mr. Wesley, had given such satisfaction to his brethren, that they unanimously adopted the following Resolution:—"The cordial thanks of the Conference are given to the Rev. Richard Watson for the very able and satisfactory manner in which he has fulfilled the request of the last Conference, in compiling a concise Life of Mr. Wesley, adapted to general circulation, and for his generous gift of the copyright to the Book-Room; and he is requested to enlarge that work, so that it may become the standard and authorized Life of our venerable Founder." This request he did not live to fulfil.

---

## CHAPTER XXIII.

DURING the autumn of this year the people of England were under great alarm and terror because of the near approach of the Asiatic cholera; a disease which was said to have had its origin some years before in the East Indies, and to have already carried off

no less than fifty millions of the human race. After extending its ravages through Hindostan, Persia, Turkey, and Russia, it had appeared in Poland and Germany, and was making near approaches to the British islands. At length it broke out in Hamburgh; and soon after in Sunderland and Shields; and its extension through the land was generally anticipated. Medical men resorted to Sunderland in considerable numbers, to ascertain the nature of the disease, and determine upon its treatment when it should appear in their respective neighbourhoods. The general alarm was greatly increased by the details which were given in the public journals, and by the fact that the disease bade defiance to all that science and humanity could devise to arrest its progress. This "pestilence" emphatically "walked in darkness;" the principle of its movements could not be ascertained; and no effectual specific could be discovered for the relief of the sufferers. It withered all the strength of man in a few hours; and in some instances individuals were pursuing the business of life in the morning, in their usual health, and at night were consigned to the tomb.

The mystery connected with the cholera seemed particularly to mark it out as a special visitation of the Almighty; and in this light Mr. Watson viewed the subject. His spirit bowed before the Lord; and he spoke of the disease with great reverence and humility. When it first broke out in the north of England, it was agreed that a day of fasting and humiliation should be appointed for the congregation and society connected with the City-road chapel; and on that occasion three pub-

lic prayer-meetings were held in the morning chapel; one at eight o'clock, another at twelve, and the third at seven in the evening. At twelve o'clock the chapel was filled at the commencement of the service. After the congregation had sung an appropriate hymn, Mr. Watson said, "I am sorry to inform you that the news from the north, received to-day, is unfavourable. Five more cases of cholera have occurred; and three of them have been fatal. I will read to you, as appropriate to this solemn occasion, the twenty-fourth chapter of the second book of Samuel; and afterwards we will unite in prayer to God." He then read, with great solemnity and impressiveness, the proposal made to David, when the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, whether he would choose, as the national punishment, seven years of famine, or to flee three months before a conquering army, or that the land should be visited by three days of pestilence. "And David said unto Gad," by whom the fearful message was delivered, "I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man. So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men."

After reading this chapter, Mr. Watson engaged in prayer, in which he expressed himself with uncommon power and enlargement, and continued for about half an hour. He acknowledged the great mercy which God had long shown to this land, and the consequent obligations of the people to serve and glorify him; and then confessed, with

minuteness and particularity, and with every expression of humiliation and shame, the sins of individuals, of the church, and of the nation. The open and blasphemous attacks made by infidelity upon the truth of God, and on account of which Christians had not sufficiently grieved and wept; the murderous cruelty and injustice with which the slaves in the colonies had for ages been treated, while the nation had generally been indifferent to their tears, and the cry of their blood; the scoffs at serious godliness which were often uttered in the Senate; the profanation of the Sabbath, by cabinet councils and political feasting; the spirit of party violence, by which the nation was divided; the want of zeal and unity among professing Christians; and the open and general neglect of personal religion among all classes of the community; were some of the evils which he confessed to God, with all their aggravations, and deeply lamented. He acknowledged the just liability of the nation to the severest inflictions of almighty wrath, and earnestly pleaded with God, that mercy might yet spare a guilty people. The victims that might fall by the scourge he besought the Lord, by his grace, to prepare for their great change, and appearance before the divine tribunal; and he besought "the God of all grace," in honour of his Son, and in the exercise of his sovereign compassion, to sanctify the judgments of his rod by a general and copious effusion of the Holy Spirit, so that the people might every where return unto him with penitential sorrow and praying faith. The hymns which he selected and the congregation sang, during the subsequent part of the

meeting, were highly appropriate ; and the entire service was such as can scarcely ever be forgotten by those who engaged in it. The people seemed to resign themselves absolutely into the hands of their Saviour, prepared either to live or die, as he might determine.

When the disease broke out in London, Mr. Watson preached in the City-road chapel, on Amos iii. 6: " Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it ? " and endeavoured to impress the congregation, and especially the pious part of them, with a conviction that all calamities are under the immediate control and direction of the Lord, who has engaged that all things shall work together for good to them that love him. Under whatever circumstances, and at whatever time, believers in Jesus may be called away, death to them is gain ; and every event connected with it is arranged by infinite wisdom and love. A weekly prayer-meeting was immediately instituted, with a special reference to this providential visitation, which was held in the morning chapel of City-road every Friday, at twelve o'clock. Mr. Watson's attendance upon this service was regular ; and here he generally met a considerable number of devout people, like-minded with himself, who were accustomed to leave their families and business, and unite in prayer to the Father of mercies, in behalf of a suffering and sinful people. His convictions of the prevalence of prayer were very strong, and in full accordance with the language of Scripture ; for on this subject his mind was unwarped by the theories of a semi-infidel philosophy. He was too well acquainted with the

Gospel of Christ, to doubt that the prayer of every believing suppliant has power with God ; and the manner in which he often poured out his soul before the Lord in these meetings showed how much he lived in the spirit of that duty, and how fully he was persuaded that, with regard to his praying people, God would yet be entreated in behalf of a guilty land, and the plague would be stayed. A large proportion of the persons who fell victims to the cholera were previously in a state of infirm health ; and as Mr. Watson was now become a constant subject of disease, he was apprehensive that his life was in continual jeopardy : he therefore lived, and preached, and prayed, and wrote, like a man who anticipated a speedy summons to his final account.

In this spirit he attended the annual watch-night in the City-road chapel, at the close of the year. The service, as usual, commenced at nine o'clock in the evening, and was continued till the new year had begun. This has long been a favourite service, not only with the Methodists, but with Christians of other denominations, who generally crowd that house of prayer, for the purpose of passing from one year into another in religious worship, and in those serious meditations which are suggested by the rapid flight of time, and the remembrance of departed days. In such an assembly, the sermon, the prayers, the exhortations, the hymns which are sung, all direct the thoughts to opportunities which will return no more, to friends who are gone the way of all the earth, and to the fearful probability that many then present, before the next return of that season,



will be numbered with the dead. At the watch-night just mentioned, the attendance was very large; the chapel was filled with people; and deep seriousness seemed to be impressed upon every countenance. The occasion was made increasingly solemn by the pestilence. Mr. Watson concluded the service in a manner scarcely ever to be forgotten. He was very feeble, and so seriously indisposed as to be unable to remain in the chapel during the whole service; and therefore came from his room into the pulpit, where he spoke "as a dying man to dying men." The midnight hour was approaching when he entered upon his address; and he dwelt particularly upon the principal facts mentioned in sacred Scripture, as having taken place in the night: the destruction of the first-born in the land of Egypt, and of the Assyrian army, by the ministry of an angel; the agony and bloody sweat of the world's Redeemer in the garden of Gethsemane. He then spoke of the certain appearance of Christ to judgment at the midnight hour, when the world is slumbering in carelessness and sin. Each of these subjects supplied various lessons of practical instruction, which he enforced with great earnestness, and tender affection; referring, in a very prominent manner, to the mercy of God, and his willingness to save. This was the last meeting of the kind that he was permitted to attend.

At this period he suffered greatly from affliction, and was induced, by the urgent solicitations of his friends, to consult one or two of the most eminent Physicians in London. He had often pursued a similar course before, but without any permanent

advantage; and he was not more successful in the present instance. On his return home he remarked, in his good-natured manner, that, after being duly questioned respecting his symptoms, he was informed, with all due and professional gravity, that his disease was a derangement of the biliary system; and that he must carefully avoid all such kinds of food as were difficult of digestion, &c.; information which he had received a thousand times, and for which he again expressed his obligations, and paid the accustomed fee. His days were now numbered; his disease was such as no medicine could reach; and the highest professional skill could only secure for him an occasional alleviation of his pain.

In the course of this year the most appalling accounts were received from the island of Jamaica. The Government at home had sent out some new regulations tending to meliorate the condition of the slaves, which were resisted by the local authorities, many of whom expressed themselves in language highly inflammatory, and even threatened to renounce their allegiance to the British crown, rather than submit to this interference with their authority over their human "property." Many of the Negroes, impatient of the chain, panting for liberty, and actuated by an erroneous persuasion that the King had given them their freedom, and that it was withheld by their masters, raised an extensive insurrection, in which many plantations were seriously injured. The blame of this rash and unjustifiable act was immediately charged upon the Missionaries, who were loaded with the foulest calumnies, and held up as objects of public

execration. In vain was it declared by the Governor himself, that no charge whatever lay against the Wesleyan Missionaries; the Editor of one of the newspapers, himself a Member of the House of Assembly, expressed his wish that these unoffending men might be shot, and then hung up in the woods to diversify the scene! An association was formed under the name of the Colonial Church Union, the professed object of which was the maintenance of the Church of England, against the encroachments of "sectarians;" but its real design was, the prevention of all future attempts to instruct and evangelize the slave population. The Union comprehended among its active agents and promoters, not only Episcopalians, but Jews, Deists, Presbyterians, and libertines; and, setting at open defiance all law and authority, they proceeded to destroy the Mission chapels, and sought to murder the Missionaries; one of whom they covered with tar, and then attempted to set him on fire. A part of the press in England adopted and propagated the calumnies against the Missionaries from the Jamaica papers.

These outrages were overruled by divine Providence, so as to hasten the measure of emancipation; but for a season it was doubtful "whereunto these things would grow." They made a deep and painful impression upon Mr. Watson's mind. The operations of the Mission in some parts of the island were at an end. Chapels which had been erected by a poor and oppressed people, under great pecuniary difficulties, and with many prayers, were laid in ruins; the Missionaries were hanged in effigy, compelled to place themselves under the

immediate protection of the civil power, or pining away in loathsome dungeons; the congregations, societies, and children belonging to the schools, were "scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd;" and several pious slaves, innocent of any guilty participation in the insurrection, were barbarously murdered under the sanction of military law. Mr. Watson was the less able to meet disasters of this kind because of that state of bodily suffering under which his days and nights were spent, and the mental depression which it often produced. He defended the persecuted Missionaries in the Wesleyan Magazine, and commended them and their injured flocks to the merciful protection of Almighty God.

As his health continued to decline, he was advised to retire from London, and spend a few weeks at Brighton, in the hope that rest, and a change of air, might at least mitigate his sufferings, and tend to the renewal of his strength. That his mind might be perfectly at rest, he was accompanied by the greater part of his family; and every means that the tenderest affection could dictate was tried to soothe his spirit, and abate the power of disease. Here he employed his time in conversation with his friends, in walking by the sea-side, and in writing. He took with him the numerous hymn-books published by the two Wesleys, at an early period of their public life, intending to make a selection from them of such hymns as are not now generally known, for personal and domestic use. These sacred compositions fully accorded with the devout feelings of his own heart; and he thought it a subject of just regret,

that so many noble hymns, the effusions of Mr. Charles Wesley's hallowed genius, should be at present lost to the church of God, being scattered through several publications which are rarely to be met with.

During his stay at Brighton the printing of his Theological and Biblical Dictionary was finished, and the work was published in a complete form. Its sale had already been very encouraging; and he lived to see the third edition rapidly passing through the press. It is professedly a compilation; yet it contains many original articles of superior value, and others which he greatly improved. Calmet's "Dictionary of the Bible," Harmer's "Observations upon various Passages of Scripture," Dr. Clarke's "Travels in Syria and the Holy Land," Paxton's "Illustrations of Scripture," Hales's "Analysis of Chronology," Jones's "Biblical Cyclopædia," Martindale's "Dictionary of the Bible," Rees's "Cyclopædia," Harris's "Natural History of the Bible," Hug's "Introduction to the New Testament," Lowth's "Lectures on the Poetry of the Hebrews," were among the works from which he made the most copious extracts; and other writers, of less note, and in great variety, were made to contribute towards a publication, certainly the best in its kind that has yet appeared in the English language. It is particularly rich in articles illustrative of the topography of the Holy Land. Many persons, well acquainted with biblical and theological literature, could have compiled a Dictionary of value and utility from these and similar sources; but few could have made the selections with equal judgment; and fewer still

could have supplied deficiencies with the same ability and tact.

On the completion of his Dictionary, Mr. Watson was earnestly solicited to prepare for the press two or three volumes of sermons; especially those which he had preached on Missionary and other public occasions during the last twenty years of his life. With this request he was very reluctant to comply; assigning as the reason of his unwillingness, that the interest which his discourses had created was but local and temporary, and arose principally from the comparative novelty of the Mission question when he was called forth as its advocate in the Methodist congregations: but the real cause was, an unconquerable aversion which he had long cherished to the writing of sermons. This most unaccountable antipathy every one who knew him greatly lamented; but it was too deep-rooted to be overcome. He so far yielded to the importunity of his friends as to make the attempt; and wrote the sermon entitled, "Christianity the Wisdom of God in a Mystery." That he intended, when he began to compose this discourse, that it should be followed by others, appears from the fact, that he wrote upon the first page of his manuscript, "Sermons on various Subjects and Occasions. By R. Watson." He had not, however, quite finished the sermon before his resolution failed; and when he had gone through the argumentative part of his subject, before he had written the application, he laid aside his paper, and entirely abandoned the design.

Some time after the commencement of his ministry in the City-road chapel, in the year 1829, he

entered upon a course of lectures on the Epistle to the Romans ; which many of his hearers requested him to publish. In consequence of the frequent interruptions of his ministry, occasioned by the failure of his health, he had not then been able to proceed beyond the eighth chapter ; and it had become very doubtful whether he could redeem the pledge which he had given to the congregation, at least before the time of his removal. The lectures which he had already delivered were almost entirely extempore ; he had only preserved a bare outline of the course of argument which he had pursued in each ; and he was strongly inclined to fill up his plan, and to publish the whole without delay. He made the attempt ; and wrote the sermon entitled, " St. Paul's Confidence in the Gospel ;" giving to his manuscript the general title of, " Sermons illustrative of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans ; with Notes, serving as a further Commentary upon the more difficult Passages." As his design was to bring out the meaning of the Apostle distinctly and fully, he soon found that the plan which he had adopted was very inconvenient ; he therefore abandoned it altogether, and formed the resolution, if God should spare his life, to attempt an Exposition, not of the Epistle to the Romans only, but of the entire New Testament. For this responsible task he possessed superior qualifications. The Greek Testament had been a subject of his daily study for many years ; and he had paid close attention to the principles of biblical criticism ; while his sound and discriminating judgment, and that fine taste by which he at once perceived and felt the beautiful sentiments and

phraseology of the Scriptures, rendered him a safe and instructive guide in their interpretation. "I do not," said he to the writer of these memoirs, "make great pretensions to learning; but I think I can judge of the critical labours of learned men,—give the English reader the results of their elaborate disquisitions and inquiries,—and show the theological bearing of the sacred text. It shall be a principle with me to evade no difficulties, however formidable, but to grapple with them in the best manner that I am able."

Having formed his plan, he entered upon its execution with an energy and a vigour which were truly astonishing, considering his personal sufferings, and the enfeebled state of his health. He devoted every hour that he could command to this work; his progress in it was rapid and satisfactory; and its influence upon his own mind was cheering and salutary. If his life should be spared, he believed that he should be able to complete his Exposition of the New Testament in three years; but he often remarked, "If I die before the work is finished, I shall not lose my labour; for the spiritual benefit to my own mind is worth all the toil."

The Conference of this year was held at Liverpool; and Mr. Watson attended this annual assembly of his brethren with very devout and hallowed feelings. The malignant cholera prevailed in that town to an alarming extent; and many fears were entertained that the Preachers would not escape that terrible scourge. During the week which preceded the Conference, and while the preparatory Committees were sitting, a day of



special prayer was observed, and meetings of intercession were held by the society and congregation belonging to the Brunswick chapel, when many fervent supplications were presented to the throne of grace, that the ravages of the pestilence might cease, the lives of the Preachers be preserved, and the health of the town restored. Mr. Watson took a prominent part in these services, and prayed with a power and an importunity which seemed more than human, and which made so deep an impression upon the minds of those who were present as to be a subject of general remark for a long time afterwards. The prayer was heard; the disease soon began to abate, and the Preachers, and the families by whom they were kindly entertained, were all mercifully preserved.

Mr. Watson's appearance at this Conference seriously affected his friends. His strength was greatly reduced; his countenance was unusually pale and wan; he was in almost constant pain; but his spirit was remarkably pious and cheerful. He lodged at the house of his faithful and affectionate friends, Mr. and Mrs. Kaye, where several of the Preachers with whom he was particularly intimate met him; and his conversation was spiritual, instructive, and edifying. It was evident that he "walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost;" and was anxious to bring all around him into the same holy and happy temper. His weakness rendered him unable to take a leading part in the business of Conference; but he occasionally expressed his sentiments on subjects which he deemed important. How deeply his mind was interested in his Expo-

sition of the New Testament, might be gathered, not only from his conversation, but from the fact, that he spent a considerable part of his time in the Conference in the revision of his notes upon St. Matthew's Gospel.

During the Conference he preached one Sunday evening in the Brunswick chapel, to a crowded assembly. His text was, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the Heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee." (Zech. ix. 9—12.) His attention had been directed to this subject a few weeks before, when writing his Exposition of St. Matthew's Gospel, in which this prophecy is quoted, and its accomplishment recognised. When he was engaged upon that part of the evangelical narrative, he called upon a friend in London, and in the course of conversation said, "Why did our Lord ride into Jerusalem upon an ass?" His friend answered, "I suppose he must ride upon some animal; and that he chose an ass, because it was at hand, and asses were generally used among the Jews for that purpose." "No," said he, "that was not the reason. The horse was a

warlike animal, employed in cavalry and in chariots of battle ; and as such was forbidden to the rulers of the Jewish nation. (Deut. xvii. 16.) The Kings and Judges of that people rode upon asses, administering justice and law in all parts of the land, and promoting peace and order. If you read the entire prophecy in Zechariah, you will find that our Lord's riding upon an ass was a symbolical action, designed to represent the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and the peaceful results of his reign. For the King of Zion, who comes riding upon an ass, meek and lowly, who is just, and has salvation, and whose appearance the daughter of Zion is to hail with shouts of joy, will 'cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem,' destroy the 'battle-bow,' and 'speak peace to the Heathen.' These views he fully illustrated in his discourse ; and while he expatiated upon the justice and meekness of Christ, as the King of Zion, the nature and freeness of his salvation, the spread of evangelical truth among the Heathen, and the consequent cessation of war and oppression, a glow of delight and benevolence seemed to brighten his countenance ; his words were not words of fire, but of truth and holy love. He spoke with a feeling and an authority which appeared even to surpass his former ministrations ; and some of his brethren, and of the congregation, were in tears during the greater part of the service.

As Mr. Watson's strength was now so greatly impaired as to render him unable to discharge the duties of the itinerant ministry, the Conference complied with the request of the Missionary Committee, and appointed him to the office of resident

Secretary to the Missionary Society, with the Rev. Messrs. James and Beecham. He took the place of Dr. Townley, who was compelled to retire through ill health. It was hoped that, by an entire cessation from labour, the Doctor would recover his wonted vigour; and that Mr. Watson, by avoiding the night air, and frequent preaching, would be able for several years to serve the Mission cause, and instruct the world by his writings.

Prior to the meeting of this Conference Mr. Watson executed a deed, by which he conveyed the copyright of all his works to Trustees, in behalf of the Connexion, excepting his "Conversations for the Young," which he still retained for the benefit of his family. For this extraordinary act of generosity he received the acknowledgments of his brethren, which are thus recorded in the printed Minutes:—"The most cordial thanks of the Conference are justly due, and are hereby affectionately tendered, to the Rev. Richard Watson, for his eminently liberal and disinterested conduct, in having presented to the Connexion the copyright of several of his highly valuable and important works, namely, his Theological Institutes, Life of Mr. Wesley, Biblical Dictionary, and Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley; and this Resolution shall be inserted in the printed Minutes of Conference."

Dr. Adam Clarke was present at this Conference, and took an active part in its affairs. He sat near Mr. Watson during the whole time; and his spirit was cheerful and pious. At the request of his brethren, and of the Liverpool friends, he preached two or three times; and his sermons

were delivered with great pathos, and simplicity of manner. When the business of the Conference was concluded, he said to Mr. Watson, as they shook hands together, "Brother Watson, I advise you, with as little delay as possible, to leave this town. The cholera, though it has abated, still prevails in Liverpool; and what God is about to do with the people here is only known to himself." This appears to have been the last interview between these eminent men, both of whom were evidently under considerable alarm because of the judgments of the Almighty.

On his return to London Mr. Watson began to prepare for his removal from the City-road to his former residence in Myddleton-square. He resigned his pastoral charge with strong and deep emotions; for his attachment to the friends in the Circuit generally, and especially to the society at the City-road, was very great; and he knew that for the manner in which he had discharged the duties of his Superintendency he must render a strict account to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. In the latter years of Mr. Wesley's life the City-road chapel appears to have had a larger share of his ministry than any other place; he paid an especial regard to the interests of the society; in the house connected with the chapel he breathed his last; and in the burying-ground belonging to it his remains are deposited. The influence of that great man's example and labours appears to have remained with the society to the present time. It is manifest in the piety and order of the people, and the entire absence of every thing approaching to faction and insubordination.

During his residence at the City-road the Local Preachers had regularly breakfasted with Mr. Watson on the Sunday morning, according to immemorial usage; when the plan of labour for the day was read over, and the vacant places were supplied. On these occasions he always introduced some question of Christian theology, upon which he used to elicit their remarks and inquiries, and then expatiate upon it in a manner calculated to promote their piety, and increase their knowledge. In consequence of these interesting and affectionate interviews, their attachment to him was unbounded; and his regard for them was very cordial and sincere. He often spoke of them with esteem and love.

Several of the friends in the Circuit had sympathized with him in his afflictions, and done every thing in their power to alleviate his sufferings. He owed much to the professional skill and Christian friendship of James Hunter, Esq., of Islington, having been for many years under the care of that eminent surgeon. Mr. and Mrs. Buttress, of Homerton, had frequently invited him to spend a few days in their kind family, for the benefit of relaxation and country air; and many other friends had shown him marks of affection and respect, all of which had made a deep impression upon his generous mind, and rendered the dissolution of his pastoral relation to them solemn and affecting.

Before his removal Mr. Watson met the society in the City-road chapel on a Sunday evening, when he delivered his parting admonitions to the people of whom he had held the charge for the last

three years. He dwelt upon the nature, benefits, and obligations of religious fellowship; the signs which indicate a church's prosperous or declining state; intermixed with many solemn, tender, and faithful exhortations to a steady perseverance in the course of public and private duty. He stated, that the three years which were then closed had been the happiest of his life; and that the daily attendance of the members of society upon their several class-meetings, and the other means of grace, which he had been accustomed to witness in his house adjoining the chapel, had conveyed to his mind the most pleasing thoughts and emotions. Recollecting the uncertainty of his own life, and the multitudes of devout people who had formerly worshipped in that chapel, and whose spirits were then in the paradise of God,—many of whom he had known,—he called upon the friends then present to unite with him in singing the fine hymn of Mr. Charles Wesley, beginning,

“Come, let us join our friends above,  
That have obtain'd the prize.”

A prayer, remarkable for its power and importunity, closed this memorable and affecting service, and with it Mr. Watson's ministry in that favoured place. He never entered the pulpit of the City-road chapel again.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

WITHIN a few days of his return from the Conference, Mr. Watson entered upon the duties of his Secretaryship with feelings of holy zeal and delight.

For many years the Secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society have drawn up a circular letter, immediately after the Conference, addressed to the foreign stations, informing the brethren of any new regulations that have been adopted, and the general state of the Connexion at home, accompanied by such advices as might be deemed necessary. The circular for the year 1832 was written by Mr. Watson. It contained many valuable advices, and was marked throughout by a spirit of deep and enlightened piety. Few ordination or episcopal charges are equal to it; at least, among those that we have seen.

Scarcely had the Preachers time to repair to their new appointments, after the Conference, before an unexampled scene of mortality was opened among them. The first that was called away was Dr. Adam Clarke; a man universally respected for his learning, and especially revered in the Methodist Connexion for his piety, zeal, apostolic simplicity, and usefulness as a Minister of Christ. He went from Liverpool to Frome, on a visit to his son; returned home by way of Bristol; and came to Bayswater, near London, on Saturday, August 25th, intending to preach at the Anniversary of the chapel in that place on the following morning. He was then in a state of ill health,



and became so much worse as to be unable to fulfil his engagement. The disease proved to be the malignant cholera, of which he died on the Sunday evening, in great peace, and in the faith and hope of the Gospel. The elevation of his character, and the circumstances connected with his death, rendered his removal deeply impressive and monitory. Mr. Watson participated in the general feeling; and showed his respect for the Doctor's memory by attending the funeral at the City-road chapel, although the day was exceedingly wet, and his own health was so seriously affected, as to render exposure to the rain hazardous to his life.

The Rev. Thomas Stanley was next separated from his family and connexions, and summoned to his final reward. He was the Superintendent of one of the London Circuits; an active and useful member of the Missionary Committee; and a most friendly and upright man. At the request of the Wesleyan Book-Committee, he had waited upon Charles Wesley, Esq., the celebrated organist, to obtain the loan of his father's portrait,—the poet of Methodism,—for the purpose of being engraved, and was returning home with the picture in his hand, in his usual health and cheerfulness, when he sunk down upon the causeway, and instantly expired. He died on the 9th of October; and the effect of his sudden removal upon the susceptible mind of Mr. Watson, himself in a state of increasing weakness and affliction, may be easily conceived.

Under great feebleness and constant suffering he nevertheless attended the Mission-House in Hatton-garden daily, watched the progress of the

Missions with deep interest, and discharged the duties of his office in connexion with them in a manner the most vigorous and efficient. His company was sought by many persons who knew his intelligence and piety, and who wished to profit by his conversation. He regularly attended the meetings of the Committees appointed to manage the affairs of the Wesleyan Book-room in the City-road; but he shortened his visits to his friends, and, greatly as he enjoyed the conversation of his brethren, no entreaties could induce him to prolong his stay when the business of the Committees was discharged; so intent was he upon completing his Exposition of the New Testament. To finish that work seemed to be the prevailing desire of his heart.

At that time it was in contemplation to publish a series of volumes under the general title of "The Wesleyan Miscellany." Mr. Watson entered heartily into this project; and at one of the meetings of the Committee to whom this work was confided, he said, "If the doctrine of Christian perfection, as taught by Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, be true, as we all believe it is, I fear we do not give that prominence to it in our preaching which we ought to do; and that some of us do not seek to realize it in our own experience, as it is our privilege and duty. To me it has long been a subject of regret, that in many places that blessed doctrine has been brought into some degree of disrepute by the objectionable spirit and conduct of the persons who have been its most zealous and prominent advocates. What Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher have written upon it is mostly in a con-

troversial form. I confess, I should like to see the doctrine clearly and fully stated, on the authority of Scripture, without any reference to controversy; and the whole confirmed by illustrative examples, of an unexceptionable kind." At his suggestion the compilation of such a work was assigned to the Rev. Joseph Entwisle. The manner in which he spoke on this subject showed his anxiety that the Methodist societies should never lose sight of the fulness and extent of the Christian salvation; but should aspire to the uninterrupted enjoyment of that "perfect love" which "casteth out fear." Like Mr. Wesley, he did not himself profess to have attained it; but during the subsequent part of his life he exhibited its fruits in all their maturity and beauty.

In a letter addressed to Mr. Blaine, of Hull, and dated Oct. 23d, 1832, he says,—

"I am an invalid, just able to do the in-door work of this office; but my strength is gone. My voice is cracked, by a complaint of the larynx, and my health very uncertain. I have therefore declined all engagements from home; and those which I have upon the plans in London, through sudden attacks, I frequently do not fulfil. This is my *trial*. May I have grace to submit to it with cheerfulness, and be purified in the fire! I must now pass away from the more active scenes of the church, and from the public eye; and I submit, praying that those who are spared to work in the vineyard may have large success. For myself, I shall be glad to do a little behind the scenes while I am spared; but that is all I can look for, according to the aspect of my present circumstances."

On Sunday, Oct. 28th, Mr. Watson attended his appointment at the Hinde-street chapel, Manchester-square, where he preached, and made the annual collection in behalf of the Wesleyan schools at Kingswood and Woodhouse-Grove. When he entered into the pulpit he was exceedingly unwell; and his wan and emaciated appearance deeply affected the congregation, many of whom were painfully apprehensive that his end was near. As he proceeded in the service he appeared to forget his infirmities, and the discourse which he delivered was made a blessing to the people. Many of them still speak of it with emotion. His text was, "Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness." (Psalm cxliii. 10.)

Having given a glowing description of the goodly land, in which the established Christian dwells, in an application of uncommon pathos, he encouraged his hearers to "go up at once and possess it." He enlarged, with even more than his usual copiousness and energy, upon the essential and exuberant goodness of that Spirit for whose guidance the Psalmist prayed; and described him as ready to bring every one present into this state of settled purity and happiness. The influence which attended this discourse was very powerful; and deep and salutary were the impressions which were made upon many minds, as to the nature and value of true religion, and its attainableness under the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit.

Thus ended the public ministry of this distinguished servant of the Lord Jesus, upon whose word multitudes had long been accustomed to

attend with mingled wonder and delight. He was in a state of great suffering when the service concluded. As the congregation retired, many an individual lingered to gaze upon the wasted form of their esteemed Pastor; and not a few "sorrowed most of all" for the probability that "they should see his face no more."

A few days after this effort, and while his health still remained unimproved, Mr. Watson's feelings were again lacerated by the sudden and unexpected death of the Rev. John James, one of his esteemed colleagues in the Missionary Secretaryship, and a man for whom he had long cherished a very sincere and affectionate friendship. On Sunday morning, November 4th, Mr. James appeared in his usual health; and at family worship selected the hymn beginning,

"Tremendous God, with humble fear;"

in which are the following impressive stanzas:—

"Submissive to thy just decree,  
We all shall soon from earth remove;  
But when thou sendest, Lord, for me,  
O let the messenger be love!

"Whisper thy love into my heart,  
Warn me of my approaching end;  
And then I joyfully depart,  
And then I to thy arms ascend."

In the evening he preached in the City-road chapel, when he betrayed signs of languor, and his mind seemed to be occasionally confused. His friends were alarmed, and conveyed him home in a coach. During the night he was seized with

apoplexy, which was quickly followed by paralysis. He remained in a state of stupor, deprived of the power of speech, till the following Tuesday, when he yielded up his soul to God. He was a man of great zeal and energy, of strong and manly sense, and of a frank and generous disposition. He had attended Mr. Watson's ministry in Liverpool when very young, and derived considerable advantage from it; and for many years he and Mr. Watson had lived in habits of intimacy and mutual confidence.

When Mr. James was thus suddenly removed, leaving an afflicted widow and six children, most of whom were very young, Mr. Watson's friends became seriously alarmed for him, lest the shock should be too powerful for him in his suffering and exhausted state; and the writer of these memoirs availed himself of the earliest opportunity of conversing with him on the subject, for the purpose of soothing his mind. "Mr. Watson," said he, "we must not suffer our minds to sink under these distressing bereavements. I hope you do not indulge such a sorrow as will be injurious to your health." "O no!" he replied; "I have such a conviction of the special agency of God's providence in all these things as preserves my mind in perfect tranquillity." Yet it was evident that, while "he thought as a sage" and as a Christian, "he felt as a man." He rested in the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, who numbers the very hairs upon the heads of his servants; and, as the happy result of this confidence, he possessed his soul in patience, and bowed with reverent submission to the divine will. Yet his heart bled for the widow and the orphan,

and because he had one friend less on earth. The solemnities of death and eternity now engaged his constant attention.

Mr. James's funeral took place on Saturday, November 10th; but Mr. Watson was too ill to pay the last mark of respect for his lamented colleague, by following his remains to the grave. He began to consider his own recovery hopeless; and he was apprehensive that his life was nearer its close than he had anticipated. When he entered upon his labours as an expositor of Scripture, as already stated, he began with the Epistle to the Romans; and it had been his particular desire to present to the church of God what he believed to be the legitimate meaning of that portion of the New Testament, and of the Epistle to the Hebrews. He had now proceeded as far as the twelfth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel; and he was persuaded, from increasing weakness and suffering, that he should not be able to complete his design, in writing an Exposition of the whole of the New Testament. He therefore passed over the remaining chapters of St. Luke, St. John's Gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles, and entered, without delay, upon the Epistle to the Romans; but when he had reached the third chapter of that book, his strength failed, and he was compelled to desist from all further attempts to explain those sacred oracles, which for many years were his delight and study. The Christian doctrine of the atonement had been through life one of the most prominent subjects of his ministry; it was the basis of all his hope and confidence towards God; it supplied in his mind the principal motives to personal piety,

and to ministerial and Missionary exertion ; and it is worthy of remark, that the last effort he ever made in theological composition was his admirable note upon Romans iii. 22, 23, intended to explain the method of a sinner's justification before God, through faith in the sacrificial blood of Christ. "Every thing," says he, "relative to the sacrifice of Christ bears the most public character. He was offered up before the world ; the doctrine of his cross forms the great subject of the evangelical ministry ; it is that which is commanded to be preached, published, and proclaimed to every creature ; whilst the institution of the church, which is not a secret society, but 'a city set on a hill,' holds up to the faith and trust of men, from age to age, that grand atonement by which alone the guilty are reconciled to God."

With the note of which this extract is a part, Mr. Watson concluded his labours as a theological writer ; and the efficacy of the atonement, which he here so forcibly inculcates, he happily realized during the few remaining weeks of his suffering life. From this time his strength rapidly declined ; and the pain which he often endured was frightful and overwhelming. Mr. Hunter, of Islington, who attended him with the most affectionate assiduity, suggested that one or more Physicians should be consulted, as no means which had been hitherto tried were effectual in arresting the progress of the disease. Mr. Watson had the fullest confidence in the judgment of his friend, and believed that if Mr. Hunter could do nothing more for him, the case was hopeless ; yet, for the satisfaction of his family, and of other parties who were



interested in the continuance of his life, he consented to the proposal, and Dr. Farre was requested to visit him. At first, considerable hope was held out, and entertained; but the disease remained in undiminished power. Its precise nature could not be ascertained; and it was afterwards found to be such as no medicine could possibly reach. His case now became eminently distressing. He had, indeed, intervals of comparative ease; but his paroxysms of pain were increasingly severe. They sometimes rose to agony; and continued, with scarcely any abatement, for twelve or fourteen hours together. Such, however, was the energy of his mind, strengthened and sustained by the truth and grace of his almighty Saviour, that his patience and self-possession never forsook him. "I have seen him," says Mr. Hunter, "in such a state of suffering, that nature could not have endured the slightest augmentation of pain, but must have fainted under the pressure; and his cry was, not so much that the chastisement might be withdrawn, as that it might be overruled to the improvement of his piety. 'Let it be sanctified,' was his constant prayer: 'O God, let it be sanctified!'"

In the midst of his sufferings Mr. Watson was not indifferent to the interests of religion and morality in the world; nor as a public man could he be inattentive to what was passing around him. Previously to this period, Dr. Farre had given some most valuable evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons respecting the Sabbath. He had shown that, in regard of this institution, there is a perfect analogy between the arrange-

ments of nature, and the requirements of holy Scripture; for the animal constitution is so formed as to require a weekly rest. The life both of man and beast is inevitably shortened by incessant labour; and the poor, therefore, who cannot always choose for themselves, have a right to legal protection in the observance of the Sabbath, which has been graciously given to them by God, with reference both to their spiritual and temporal welfare. On one occasion, when visited by Dr. Farre, Mr. Watson, in a very feeling manner, presented his thanks to that eminent man for this very important and seasonable evidence, so well calculated to impress the minds of even sceptical Statesmen, and to assist in obtaining some legislative enactment in behalf of those who are unwillingly doomed to profane the day of the Lord.

While Mr. Watson was in this state of affliction, waiting for the final summons, the great question of Negro emancipation was approaching its crisis. Committees of the two Houses of Parliament had been appointed to inquire into the subject, and each of them produced such a body of evidence as demonstrated that a system which generated evils, both physical and moral, of such fearful magnitude, ought not to be continued a day longer than the time at which it could be terminated with safety to the parties. At the late elections only eleven proprietors of slaves had been returned as Members of the House of Commons; a large proportion of the candidates owed their election to the pledges which they gave to their constituents, that they would vote for abolition; several Members of the House of Peers were so affected

by the evidence adduced, that they avowed their determination to assist in putting an end to Negro slavery; the nation in general was roused, and especially the religious part of the community, by the persecutions and other outrages in Jamaica, and by the intelligence which the Anti-Slavery Society had diffused; so that His Majesty's Government, supported by Parliament and the public voice, was ready to co-operate with those benevolent Statesmen who had long advocated the cause of the Negro, in arranging a plan for the extinction of this abomination. In this hopeful state of things Mr. Buxton, whose zeal in this cause of righteousness can never be forgotten by the friends of humanity and religion, addressed a letter to Mr. Watson, requesting his advice as to the plan to be adopted. The mind of this dying friend of the Negro race retained all its energy; and though his "right hand" had for some time "forgotten its cunning," his generous spirit was so roused, that he immediately called for his desk, and wrote a long epistle on the subject. The writing was so feeble and tremulous, that it was a matter of some difficulty to decipher the whole; but with Mr. Watson's assistance it was transcribed, and forwarded to Mr. Buxton. It was the last service that he was able to render the Negro race; a people to whose interests he had devoted a large portion of his time during the last twenty years of his life.

Just after Mr. Watson had finished this letter, his friend Mr. Mason called to see him; and, as they had been associated together some years before as Secretaries to the Wesleyan Missions,

they conversed freely on the subject to which it relates ; and Mr. Watson remarked, with considerable feeling, " I am now a dying man ; but it is a privilege to have lived to see the time when the day of liberty begins to dawn upon those poor oppressed people in the West Indies."

In this very able and important document, Mr. Watson distinctly recognised the leading principles which characterize the measure of emancipation that was adopted a few months afterwards by the British Parliament. He required that a period should be fixed when slavery should cease ; that the Negro might look forward with confidence and hope to the time when the chains should fall from his hands, and he should enjoy the rights of humanity ; and that the planter should have some motive to concur in such measures of amelioration as might be deemed necessary, as preparatory to universal emancipation. Mr. Wilberforce was spared till the Parliament had pledged itself to abolish colonial slavery, and had fixed the amount of sacrifice to be made by the country in carrying this measure into practical effect ; and just before he died, lifting up his emaciated hands, he is reported to have said, " O that I should have lived to see the day when the people of England will give twenty millions of money for the emancipation of the slaves!" Such was the fact ; and a more striking instance of the power of Christian principle was perhaps never exhibited in the history of the world. A great and powerful nation, from its own sense of justice, to free itself from a hateful system of oppression, sanctioned by long usage, resolved to pay a sum of money greater in amount

than some nations are able to raise under any circumstances whatever. What a lesson to the whole civilized world! The ultimate consequences of this act it is impossible to foresee; but it may be confidently expected to lead to the general abandonment of slavery, at least on the part of America and the European States. The hateful distinction of caste, founded upon the complexion of the skin, may be expected soon to disappear in a country where all are free, and the blacks and people of colour form so large a majority. Mr. Watson saw this state of things in distant prospect, and laboured most assiduously to hasten its consummation; but he was not spared to join in the pure and hallowed triumph of that noble band of philanthropic men with whom he had been associated in this work of humanity and religion, when the Act of emancipation passed the Legislature, and received the royal signature. Mr. Bunting first called upon the Methodist body to assert the Negro's right to liberty, by his strong and seasonable papers on the subject in the Wesleyan Magazine; but to the exertions of no individual are the Negroes so much indebted as to those of Mr. Macaulay, who for years never ceased to press upon the public conscience the guilt and misery of colonial slavery. Richard Matthews, Esq., a personal friend of Mr. Watson, was Secretary to the Anti-Slavery Society, at an early period of its existence; and, till the measure of emancipation was carried, a most efficient and useful member of the Committee.

Mr. Watson was now confined to his sick room; life was ebbing out apace; and the time was come

that he must die. Through the greater part of his life he had cherished the conviction, that Christianity is adapted to all the wants of man's intellectual and moral nature; this conviction had given energy to his ministry, and had supplied the principal motive to his extraordinary exertions in the Mission cause; and now his religious principles were to be put to the severest test. He had a "great fight of affliction" to endure, and to resign his life in obedience to the call of God. In what manner he sustained the fiery conflict, and realized the power of Christianity, will best appear from the accounts supplied by friends, who visited him, and especially by members of his own family, who attended him night and day.

"My last solemn interview with Mr. Watson," says the late Mrs. Bulmer, "was on Thursday, December 27th. I was then admitted to see him for a short time, after he had endured that paroxysm of awful suffering which had brought him to the verge of the grave. Never shall I forget the expression of his countenance, when I first met the glance of his languid and almost tearful eye. It was a look of ineffable kindness and affection; and seemed as if it could be second only to that with which I trust we shall again regard each other in a sinless and unsuffering world. It dissolved my soul in grief. I felt assured that his stay among us could not be long, and the idea of his removal inflicted a poignant pang. His frame bore the impress of the agony he had endured. But his spirit seemed pavilioned in the very divine presence. He said he felt the sustaining power of God, and discoursed for

a short time, and with frequent intermissions, through great debility, on that most delightful topic, peculiarly suggested by the season, 'They shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us.' 'Yes,' said he, 'God with us,—with us all,—with each of us,—with us at all times,—under all circumstances; especially with us in deep sympathy with all our sorrows, dangers, and sufferings.' He was evidently giving utterance to sentiments, the truth of which he was then powerfully realizing in his own experience. Faith triumphed over dissolving nature, and the Rock of ages he felt to be the strength of his failing heart. With a voice faltering through irrepressible emotion, he expressed a hope that our next meeting might be under more favourable circumstances, and added, 'If not,—if not,—may we have a happier meeting in heaven!' "

The Rev. John Beecham, Mr. Watson's esteemed colleague in the Secretaryship to the Wesleyan Missionary Society, enjoyed his confidence and affection in a high degree, and was in daily habits of intercourse with him during the season of his last affliction. He gives the following particulars:—

SEVERAL months before his death, Mr. Watson's declining state of health began to awaken serious apprehensions in his own mind, and to lead him to regard death as at no very great distance. He often adverted to this subject; but I recollect very distinctly a conversation I had with him about the middle of autumn, in which he dwelt on his situa-

tion and prospects with much feeling. He observed, it seemed hard to have to die at a time of life which might be regarded as the palmy state of man, and when, from the greater maturity of his judgment, and his more extensive experience, he felt as though he could do more for the church than he ever had done: "But," added he, "if I am cut short, it will not be by chance. Life and death are at the disposal of an infinitely wise and good Being, and all will be right."

After he had suffered for some weeks from those attacks of pain, to which he became subject in the latter stage of the complaint, he had a paroxysm, the violence and duration of which so prostrated his remaining strength, that it was feared he could scarcely survive another such attack. On the morning of Sunday, December 23d, 1832, on my calling to see him, he told me he feared he might have a relapse, as he had several unfavourable symptoms. His apprehensions were realized; and he passed the following night in great pain. On my seeing him again, he said to me, "All prospect of my recovery is gone. This return of pain proves that the cause of my affliction remains. I have no hope now. There is no ground of rational hope left. Nothing now remains for me but to address myself to the great work of preparing to suffer and die."

On the morning of Christmas-day, I found him again so free from pain, that he could converse without difficulty. I was no sooner seated by him, than he began: "Well, you see we are at length thrown back on those great principles which we preach: 'Life is yours;' 'death is



yours; 'things present;' 'things to come;' 'all things work together for good to them that love God.' Now, here are two points: first, Are these things so? and, ——— Have you an interest in them?" Having paused, as if in solemn consideration of these questions, he then said, with strong feeling, "Yes, these things are so; these principles are true; and, blessed be God, I have an interest in them; but it is all through the blessed Spirit." After an interval of a few moments, he exclaimed, "What a light was that! What a day, when the blessed Spirit first struck the light of heaven into our dark minds!"—and then went on to enlarge on our obligations to the Spirit of God for our religious illumination and enjoyment, showing that the impotent, depraved mind of man could have no religious experience whatever, were it not for that divine Agent. On my remarking, that it was a glorious reward for the faithful Minister of Christ, in the season of deep affliction and suffering, to prove, as he did, the reality and consoling power of the great truths he had spent his life in maintaining and enforcing, he replied, with emphasis, "Yes, a Minister has higher enjoyments and privileges than Christians in general; but he is exposed to greater temptation. His is an awful responsibility; and greater is the guilt of any unfaithfulness in him. I feel these things to be so." He then dwelt on his own unworthiness, and the abasing sense he felt of the worthlessness of his very best performances, and said his only hope, his only refuge, was in the atonement of Christ. He proceeded to enlarge on the sufficiency of that atonement; and showed what an infinite mercy it

is that we have such a resource, and that we know what use to make of it. Then, placing his attenuated hands together, and looking up to heaven, with his eyes partly closed, while his quivering lip marked the deep feeling of his soul, he quoted the following lines :—

“ His offering pure we call to mind,  
There, on the golden altar laid,  
Whose Godhead with the manhood join'd  
For every soul atonement made ;  
And have whate'er we ask of God,  
Through faith in that all-saving blood.”

Then, pausing, and looking, for a few moments, unutterable things, he added, with uncommon pathos,—

“ I the chief of sinners am ;  
But Jesus died for me.”

It was the following morning, if I remember right, that he formally gave up all public business. He had told me, some days before, that he wanted to talk with me on a few points, as soon as he was able ; and, being comparatively easy that day when I called on him, he laid on the table a small portfolio, in which he kept papers relating to the Missions ; and, opening it, showed me what he had been writing in reference to matters which we had previously deliberated on ; telling me I must now take up those subjects where he had broken off, and must finish them. After further conversation, on my preparing to leave him, I gathered up only the papers we had been examining ; when, taking them out of my hand, he placed them with the others, in the portfolio ; and folding it up, said, “ Here, take all together. If I get better,

you know, I can take it back again ; and if not, I must leave you, and you must leave me."

On a subsequent day, as I sat alone with him, he told me that his arrangements for death were now nearly completed ; and talked with me about destroying his useless papers, and respecting the manuscripts he should leave behind, and on his private affairs in general, with a calmness and composure which almost made me forget that I was conversing with one who regarded himself as a dying man. And this cool fortitude was not an occasional effort of the mind. In this respect, I invariably found him the same. His dying was his common topic ; and he would dwell on it with a composedness which strikingly indicated that all was right within. And it is worthy of remark, that no favourable change which his case might occasionally present, ever diverted him, as far as my observation went, from the great work of preparing for death. For a week before he evidently changed for death, the worst symptoms of his case so far abated as to awaken some hopes again respecting him ; and he said to me one day, " I may, it is possible I may, rally so far as to be able to advise with you again. But," added he, looking up, while the tears glistened in his eyes, " if not, blessed be thy name, I am resigned to thy will."

On my incidentally mentioning to him that his friends at a certain place had agreed to have a meeting for prayer in his behalf, he leaned forward, and, covering his face with his hand, he wept, and said, " What am I, that I should have an interest in the prayers of so many good people !" He repeatedly observed to me, during the latter part

of his illness, that, were he to be raised again, he believed it would be chiefly in answer to prayer; and to this cause he said he must greatly attribute it, that his sufferings were so much mitigated, and that such a worm as he should enjoy so much of the divine presence and goodness in his affliction.

The morning of the last Sabbath of his life but one, and the very last on which he could sit up and converse, was a gracious season to him: As I sat alone with him, I made an observation respecting the Sabbath; on which he exclaimed, "Blessed day of rest!"—and then dwelt on the hallowed enjoyments of the Sabbath, and its rich provision for the spiritual wants of man. After we had spent some time in prayer, during which the divine goodness appeared to overshadow us in an indescribable manner, I, on parting, said to him, "May the Lord of the Sabbath be with you!"—to which he responded, with deep fervour, "Amen, Amen!" He had a high sense of the importance of the sabbatic institution, for advancing the cause of religion; and has more than once said to me, with great feeling, when I have called upon him on the Lord's day, and found him unable to stir out, "Another blessed Sabbath must, in regard of public worship, be a blank to me."

On the last day upon which he was able to discourse at length, I sat with him a considerable time, and had full proof that he remained in the same elevated and heavenly frame of mind which he had manifested throughout his affliction. Such dignity, united with such deep humility; such intellectual strength and vigour, attended with so much child-like simplicity; such patience under

intense suffering; and, in the intervals of pain, such indications of ineffable intercourse with God, and such outbeamings of hallowed joy,—have been but rarely witnessed, I conceive, in any dying saint.

The Rev. George Marsden, who had been intimate with Mr. Watson for many years, thus speaks of him :—

I HAD two interviews with Mr. Watson, during his last affliction. At the first, after a few expressions relative to his illness, and the extreme pain he had endured, he almost immediately entered on the pleasing subject of Christ crucified. He dwelt for some time on its infinite importance, as the only foundation on which we can rest for pardon, acceptance with God, and the hope of eternal life. He then, in a very impressive manner, spoke of his own unworthiness, and of his firm reliance on the atonement, and repeated, with solemn and deep feeling, those expressive lines :—

“ A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
Into thy hands I fall;  
Be thou my strength and righteousness,  
My Saviour and my all.”

In the course of conversation, he was led to refer to some parts of his past life, and especially to some controversies in which he had taken a decided part; and he then remarked, “ I have sincerely endeavoured to do the will of God, though frequently with much defect. Sometimes, by maintaining what I believed to be right, I have

been brought into collision with some of my brethren, and subjected myself to the strife of tongues; but I do love the Preachers." He said that he had, for some time, a desire to live for a few years longer, that he might accomplish some things which he thought might be useful, if it had been the will of God: "But now," said he, "the very desire of it is taken away."

My last interview with him was on Saturday, December 29th. Almost immediately on my going into the room, he entered on spiritual and heavenly subjects. He seemed, as in the former conversation, to be desirous of dwelling on the delightful subject of the atonement, as if his whole soul centred there. He said, "The Methodists have right views of the atonement; and they also know the way of coming to the atonement, and the right use to be made of that important doctrine." After speaking for some time on that point, he began to converse about death, and said that he had now no particular desire either to live or die. He added, "Dying and death are two distinct things. There is something gloomy and melancholy about dying; whereas death is nothing, but as it opens the way to glory." His views then appeared to be raised to the heavenly world; and, as if contemplating the glory of God, and of the future state, while his soul was humbled in the dust, in the near prospect which he had of entering into the divine presence, he said, "I seem like a worm, creeping into the glory of God, and coming before the throne."

A kind friend and neighbour of Mr. Watson,

Mr. William Ince, often visited him during his last illness, and not unfrequently attended him through the night. The following particulars have been supplied by him:—

TAKING leave of a friend, who hoped to find him better in the morning, he replied, affectionately, “No; you will not find me better; I feel that death is upon me; but Christ is in my heart. He is mine, and I am his.”

Speaking of his call to the ministry, he said, “My dear friend, God called me very early to the work of the ministry. I began to preach before I was fifteen years of age. I never had any doubt that I was called of God. I always delighted in my work; and I can truly say, in reference to the Missions, and in some secular affairs necessarily connected with the ministerial office, I have acted as I thought for the best; but, my dear friend, we are all liable to err; and I doubt not that my motives have been frequently misunderstood. All secular affairs have a deadening tendency; constantly paining one’s mind, and doing us injury.”

On a Sabbath morning, alluding to the large congregation assembled at St. Mark’s church, opposite to his house, a friend asked, “Would you not like to preach to them?” With glistening eyes, raising himself up in his bed, he exclaimed, with great energy, “Indeed I should.”

On another occasion, he said, “O what a state will that be, when *I, I* shall be singing hallelujahs to God and the Lamb! when *I* shall be able to love him, and serve him, without the possibility of sinning against him!”—laying great stress on *I*.

“O,” he continued, “it is sin that keeps us at such a distance from God! What a wonderful scheme is that of redemption by Christ! What a glorious state, when mind shall expand to take in the heights and breadths and depths of love divine! to be able to enter largely into the wonders of Providence, without this clog of corruption. I shall see God; I, I, individually, I myself, a poor worm of the earth, shall see God! How shall I sufficiently praise him!” “A poor worm of the earth,” was his constant and familiar expression. “My blessed Saviour!” “My blessed Jesus!” “How wonderful the plan of redemption by Christ!”—were expressions constantly emanating from his lips. Frequently were the tears seen flowing from his eyes; and he was thankful for every little attention that was paid to him; observing, “I do not deserve it. Why is it that I have so much kindness shown me? You must love me; and I know there is no burden in love.” Under the strong impulse of grateful feeling, he often emphatically exclaimed, “God bless you!” During the night season the writer observed him very frequently pouring out his soul in prayer. The words were indistinct; but the muscles of his face, and the elevation of his hands, gave sufficient proofs of its fervour; nor did the writer feel at all disposed to interrupt the intercourse between the saint and his God. The place was holy.

Speaking of his brethren in the ministry, he again and again told the writer of these notices, that he loved them dearly. He valued them much, and could not speak too well of them. They had shown him great kindness. This was a



frequent topic of conversation with him. In reference to individuals he would say, "He is an affectionate man; I love him." "He is a valued friend; I love him much." "He is a warm and a kind-hearted friend."

The prevailing tenour of his discourse was his own sense of unworthiness and helplessness, and of the infinite goodness of God; especially in his merciful provision for the recovery of man from his fallen state by the death of Christ. He appeared to have a settled, calm reliance upon the sacrifice of Christ. "He died for *me*," was his constant language.

The Rev. James Dixon, Mr. Watson's son-in-law, who seldom left his revered relation during the latter part of his life, thus speaks of his spirit and conversation:—

ONE of the most striking features of spirit manifested by Mr. Watson during his affliction, and on the approach of death, was, a complete resignation to the will of God. By a mind so observant and well furnished, even on physical science, the progress and probable termination of his disease could not be disregarded. Hence, previously to the apprehension of danger by his family, he was observed to manifest, in his conversations and prayers, the evidence that his thoughts were seriously turned to the prospect of an early grave. Many casual expressions respecting the probability of this event threw sadness and gloom over the hearts of those who loved him, whilst himself was rapidly taking the impress of a deeper piety, and

labouring for entire submission to the will of God. He evidently watched the progress of the disease with anxiety, and on every new manifestation, or attack of pain, became more convinced of the probability of a fatal termination. The crisis at length arrived. He observed, that if another paroxysm came on, he knew what to expect. The usual time of suffering came, and with it, to his friends, not to himself, the dreaded token. Whilst enduring this fit of excruciating torture, his medical attendant came in ; and, as he was leaving the room, Mr. Watson exclaimed, “ ‘ Good is the will of the Lord.’ Remember, this is my testimony.”

This resignation was not the prostration of a wearied and exhausted mind, bending to its destiny from a palsied debility, or an incapacity any longer to indulge the natural love of life. With him it was a voluntary and religious effort. He sought grace from God, obtained it, and then girt up the loins of his mind to this great Christian duty. From this moment, to the period of his decease, neither his spirit nor his language ever betrayed the least want of perfect resignation. He remarked, on several occasions, “ I could have wished to live a few years longer, to finish some works and designs of usefulness which I contemplated ; but the Lord can do without any of us ;” adding, “ I have often admired the perfect resignation of David, when he said to Zadok, ‘ Carry back the ark of God into the city : if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it, and his habitation ; but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee ; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth

good to him.' So I say, If the Lord has no delight in me, here am I, let him do to me what seemeth good to him." His constant language was, "I have no wish either to live or to die, but that the will of God may be done." Mentioning that his Physician had attributed his disease to his habit of stooping to read and write, he remarked, that, even if it were so, it was in the order of divine Providence; "for," said he, "I am fully satisfied with what I have done; but, as to manner, that is another thing. I never engaged in any undertaking," referring particularly to his writings, "without being first convinced that Providence went before me, and called me to the duty."

To those who have been previously acquainted with the true elements of Mr. Watson's character, it will not be a matter of surprise that, in circumstances in which the heart discloses its most secret feelings, he displayed the deepest humiliation of spirit. He was never a man to boast. His most intimate friends never heard from him the language of self-approval, but often of self-reproach. His views of God, of his law, of the obligations of holiness, and of the many and great excellencies necessary to complete the Christian character, were so vivid, and his standard of ministerial and practical duty so elevated, that, amidst the applause of others, and the highest popularity, he sank in lowly shame before God, and, to his intimate friends, was constantly employing the language of sincere self-condemnation. This feature of his character came out in its full proportion towards the close of his life. Whilst in health, he was never remarkably communicative on subjects of

personal religion ; but he now became simple and open as a child : nor had he been accustomed to give vent to his feelings by tears,—generally endeavouring to repress his emotions ; but he now yielded fully to the feelings of his heart, and tears of deep humiliation, intermingled with sacred joy, flowed, when conversing on religious subjects, in copious streams from his eyes.

On one occasion, when visited by a venerable and respected brother Minister, who remarked, that it must afford him pleasure and comfort to have been able to state and defend the truth, to preach the Gospel to the edification of thousands, and especially to promote the cause of Missions, he said, that he thanked God that he had, he hoped, sincerely promoted the doctrines and discipline of the Connexion ; but added, that he placed no trust in this. He then made some remarks in justification of the principles and motives by which he had been governed on some disputed points. This conversation took place in the morning ; and towards evening he burst into tears, and, addressing the person who attended him, exclaimed, “ I hope I did not boast to Mr. — this morning : I thought it right just to state what were my motives on the subjects in question ; but God forbid that I should boast. O no,” he exclaimed, in the greatest agitation, “ I am a poor, low, vile sinner,—‘ a worm, and no man.’ ”

In remarking on the goodness of God in his early conversion, he observed, “ How great was his mercy in taking me up by his grace, and putting me into the ministry, at so early a period,—an unworthy, and, in some respects, a most obstinate

and refractory, sinner!" His favourite expression, when speaking of his state, was to call himself a worm. One night, moved by a sudden impulse, as he lay in bed, he exclaimed, with tears flowing down his languid countenance, "I am a worm, a poor, vile worm, not worthy to lift up its head. But then," he added, "the worm is permitted to crawl out of the earth into the garden of the Lord, and there, among the flowers and fruits, if it can, to speculate on the palace and ivory throne of Solomon.

' I shall behold his face,  
I shall his power adore,  
And sing the wonders of his grace  
For evermore.'

It was remarked, "No doubt you will see his face." "Yes," he rejoined, "there is doubt of every thing, but the great, deep, infinite mercy of God,—that is sure."

This deeply-humbled spirit was the element in which he appeared to exist, and prompted him to request the prayers of his friends, and to join most fervently in their supplications. Once, when through great debility he had fallen into the arms of his attendant, and was placed in the bed, he said, "Now kneel down and offer up prayer to God;" whilst he responded, as usual, to every petition. On the same day, (being Sunday,) he requested that the Gospel and Epistle for the day might be read to him; and afterwards said, "Read the *Te Deum*: I am fond of that when I cannot go out on the Sunday, because it seems to unite one in spirit with the whole catholic church in earth and in heaven."

Innumerable expressions fell from the lips of Mr. Watson, indicative of an entire and exclusive trust in the atonement of Christ for salvation. It appeared as if the Holy Spirit had taken up the blessings of the atonement, so ably exhibited in his preaching and writings, and applied them in fresh and saving efficacy to his mind. Every thing he uttered, on the subject of his own personal state, had a remote or direct reference to this great doctrine. "The atonement," he repeatedly remarked, "is the sinner's short way to God. On this rock I rest, and feel it firm beneath me. Yes; I feel that I am on this rock: in the Lord I have righteousness and strength.

' Fix'd on this ground will I remain,  
Though my heart fail and flesh decay;  
This anchor shall my soul sustain,  
When earth's foundations melt away;  
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,  
Loved with an everlasting love.'

On another occasion he exclaimed, "O the precious blood of Christ!" The Epistle to the Romans, he remarked, was very rich, especially the third chapter, in setting forth the atonement: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." "This is the only way of a sinner's approach to God; but through it he is permitted to enter the holy place." In speaking of the divine Being, his mind dwelt almost exclusively on his mercy. The attentions of his friends and medical attendants, his comforts and the smallest acts of

kindness, drew from him frequent expressions of gratitude ; and he would exclaim, with peculiar feeling and emphasis, "It is all of mercy." When one of his attendants reminded him that the Lord had been very gracious in reviving him a little, after a period of speechless lethargy, he adopted his usual watchword, "It is all of mercy." This was the last religious remark he made.

On another occasion he observed, that he wished to keep his mind stayed on God every moment ; but in consequence of his weakness and suffering he found it difficult. He wished to have his feelings constantly elevated to the great subjects of religion ; but experienced, what he believed many others in similar circumstances often did, a difficulty in realizing consciously the blessings of religion. "All that I can do in my circumstances is to repose on the divine mercy : and it is of the nature of that mercy to pity the infirmities and sufferings of his children ;" and on that mercy he did evidently repose in calm and tranquil confidence. He remarked one day, with great feeling, "There is no rest or satisfaction for the soul but in God. My God : I am permitted to call him mine, though an unworthy sinner. 'O God, thou art my God ; early will I seek thee : to see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live : I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness ; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips ; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on the in the night-watches. Because thou hast

been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.'"

He exhibited great tenderness and maturity of love in his last affliction. If we judge of the state of this affection towards God by its manifestation towards man, we can have no doubt that it had, by divine grace, ripened into evangelical perfection. Nothing but feelings of entire tenderness and love were expressed to those around him. Speaking of the Preachers, he said he loved the brethren; indeed, there was no class of men for whom he had so great an affection. He added, that he knew his manner had often appeared cold, distant, and reserved; and this had sometimes been attributed to motives which had no existence. He also said, that we (meaning the Preachers) were exposed to peculiar mental temptations from crossings, prejudices, and passions, though of one brotherhood; and that it was necessary to guard against them, and cultivate brotherly love.

By a lively and believing apprehension of the heavenly and invisible state, in combination with an assurance of his interest in Christ, he gained a full and complete victory over the fear of death; and he was not only willing to die, but anticipated it with triumphant joy. When visited by one of his brethren, he remarked, that "the prospect was gloomy as regarded this life, but bright and glowing as regarded another; like the shining of the sun" (it was then shining into the room) "through the mists and gloom of this winter's morning."

A few days before his death, having remained a long time in a state of lethargy, an organ struck up



a sweet and plaintive psalm-tune under the window. This roused him ; and, opening his eyes, he feebly said, " O how sweet ! All ought to be harmony on earth ; every thing should praise the Lord : it would be so, were it not for sin ; and in heaven this will be the case, where sin has no existence."

At one time, being in great pain, he exclaimed, " O how much labour and pain it costs to unroof this house ; to take down this tabernacle, and to set the spirit free ! When shall my soul leave this tenement of clay ! I long to quit this little abode, gain the wide expanse of the skies, rise to nobler joys, and see God."

In a state of high ecstasy, he burst forth, but a short time before he was deprived of the power of connected speech, exclaiming, " We shall see strange sights some day ; not different, however, from what we might realize by faith. But it is not this, not the glitter and glory, not the diamond and topaz ; no, it is God ; he is all, and in all !"

During three or four of the last days of his life, Mr. Watson sank into a state of lethargy, appearing almost insensible to those around him, and was nearly incapable of the use of speech. No conversation could be held with him on any subject ; but at intervals he seemed to be engaged in devotional exercise. At length, after many hours of difficult respiration, the moment of dissolution approached ; and, without any apparent pain, or convulsive struggle, his sanctified and happy spirit left its tabernacle of clay, and entered the world of rest and love.

Of Mr. Watson's tender regard for his daughter, Mrs. Dixon, these memoirs bear indubitable witness; and her esteem and affection for him were unbounded. The following interesting particulars are supplied by her:—

It was my father's constant practice, when he and my mother were prevented by sickness from attending the public ordinances on the Sabbath, to read with her in the forenoon the Church service, of which he always expressed himself in the strongest terms of admiration. He would go through the whole service, not omitting the psalms, the epistle, and collect for the day. My mother read the Litany, whilst my father, devoutly kneeling, responded with the deepest and most fervent devotion. In the evening, he selected a sermon (generally one of Mr. Wesley's) to be read to him; and then, with peculiar feeling and solemnity, repeated one of our hymns, and concluded with prayer. On Sunday, Dec. 16th, a day never to be forgotten, he went through the Liturgical service, in the forenoon, as above described. In the afternoon, he exclaimed, "Another silent Sabbath! This is the sixth Sunday that I have been prevented by illness from lifting up my voice in the sanctuary!" Then, handing me the Hymn-book, he said, "Read me some of those blessed hymns: I find them very refreshing." He then selected the following:—"O God, of good the unfathomed sea;" "Great God, indulge my humble claim;" "With glory clad, with strength array'd;" "The earth and all her fulness owns;" "O Sun of Righteousness, arise;" and "Join all

the glorious names." In the evening I read, at his request, Mr. Wesley's sermon on "The Way to the Kingdom." (Mark i. 15.) As I proceeded, he exclaimed, "How strong; yet how admirably simple! How beautifully clear and perspicuous! How forcible and convincing! No man ever saw the way to the kingdom more clearly than Mr. Wesley, and no man ever made that way so plain to others. The more I study his writings, the more I admire them." After reading a hymn, he prayed for nearly an hour, with astonishing and overwhelming power and energy, remembering not only his family individually, and pleading, nay, wrestling powerfully, with God on their behalf, but also the church in general, and especially our department of it, with an intensity of feeling, and earnestness of supplication, remarkably impressive and affecting.

The following incident is so characteristic that I cannot omit it. On the last day on which my dear father was able to come down stairs, I found him in great pain, with his head resting on the table, buried in papers and manuscripts. I was deeply affected; and remonstrated with him on the imprudence of suffering his mind to be occupied with business, when he was physically so incapable of attending to it, and besought him to allow me to lay the papers aside for the present. With a melancholy tone he said, "Well, I believe you must. I fear I must yield; but you know my motto: *Nulla dies sine lineá.*" So truly did he

"His body with his charge lay down,  
And cease at once to work and live."

During his illness, my father frequently repeated

the following striking saying of Hooker :—“ Since I owe thee a death, Lord, let it not be terrible, and then take thine own time ; I submit to it. Let not mine, O Lord, but let thy will be done ! ” When in great pain, he would often quote this passage from Jeremiah : “ If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses ; and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan ? ”

Speaking of the majesty of God, my father made the following remarks :—“ O the glorious majesty of God ! The peculiarities of the Christian religion are founded on the Majesty as well as the mercy of God. The Old-Testament writers dwell most on that subject. It is softened down in the writings of the New Testament. How mistaken are those who think it inconsistent with the divine majesty to regard the individual interests of man ! ‘ The very hairs of your head are all numbered. ’ This particular care is so far from lessening, that it rather heightens, the conception of this perfection, as an ocean that fills up all the creeks, sinuosities, and indentations of every shore ; and the ocean employs a series of secondary agencies, such as rivers and streams, which it sends forth, and then receives them all back again into its own bosom. So does God fill all in all.”

On the Sunday preceding Christmas-day, my dear father was free from acute pain, but in a state of great exhaustion, from previous suffering. He seemed to be fully aware of his danger ; but his mind was perfectly tranquil. Observing me weep-

ing bitterly, he said, "Compose yourself, my dear; keep your mind calm: commit the matter to Him who knows, not only what is right, but what is best. My flesh and my heart fail, but God is my rock. I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that when he shall appear, I shall appear with him. Yes; I shall see him as he is." On my expressing a hope that the disorder had passed its crisis, and that he would from that time begin to recover, he said, "Your affection makes you sanguine; but I wish neither to hope nor to fear, since He in whose hands I am knows best when to call his people to himself." In the evening of the same day, he requested me to read, from the Supplement, a few of the Hymns on the Nativity, remarking, that many of them were exceedingly striking and beautiful. Whilst I was reading, he responded to the sentiments contained in them with great fervour, and dwelt much on the majesty of the mercy of God in devising so magnificent and glorious a scheme of salvation. I then read that beautiful translation from the German, "Commit thou all thy griefs," and "Give to the winds thy fears;" which, he said, comforted him greatly. Soon after, the pain returned with great violence; and, from that time, he relinquished all expectation of recovery. He continued in great agony until Monday evening, when he experienced some relief. On the following morning, (Christmas-day,) he sent for me early; and when I entered the room, he smiled sweetly, and said, "My dear, this is Christmas-day. This is the blessed morning on which Christ broke upon this dark, dreary world. O, what a blessed Saviour! And here he

is ; ever at hand to sustain and comfort helpless man, and gild the dark and gloomy hours of pain and languor with bright hopes of immortal felicity."

I mention the following incident, because it shows the perfect composure with which my father contemplated death. One night, on my offering to wind up his watch, he handed it to me, saying, with great emphasis, "Here, take it, and wind it up for me a few times more. I shall soon be 'where day and night divide his works no more.'" Then, clasping his hands, he exclaimed, "Eternity!—eternity!" and, sinking back in his chair, seemed absorbed in the contemplations which that momentous word had suggested ; whilst his brightening features, becoming impressed with the vastness of his conceptions, assumed an almost supernatural expression. I felt awed, as in the presence of one already beginning to realize the mysteries of the eternal and invisible state ; and scarcely dared to move or breathe, lest I should interrupt his heavenly musings, or bring down his soul from those "celestial heights."

To a friend who visited him on Saturday, December 29th, he said, "I am very ill ; but I am where we have so often placed others,—in the hands of the Lord. He has imparted sweet consolation to me during my affliction. We have not preached cunningly-devised fables. O no ! There is real, solid, substantial comfort and support in religion. I have been many times heavily afflicted, and have been often brought, so to speak, into the waters ; but I have always found the rock firm beneath. I have never been so powerfully im-

pressed with a sense of my own worthlessness as during this illness; and, in the prospect of approaching the Majesty of God, my feeling is that of a worm crawling into the brightness of the sun. I feel as if about to take my place near some glorious throne; but I wish to creep low, and feel my own nothingness." My dear father then expressed his satisfaction that the doctrine of the atonement was so fully and clearly inculcated by our Ministers, and that he was leaving our people so free from doctrinal agitation. "If I desire to live," said he, "it is to assist in keeping the great and fundamental truths of the Gospel pure and unmutated before the people."

On Sunday, December 30th, my beloved father became much worse, and seemed fully conscious that his end was not far distant. Whilst supporting his head, he looked at me for some moments, with intense affection, and said, in a very solemn and emphatic tone, "May the blessings of the upper and the nether springs be yours for ever!" This was his parting benediction; and from that time he said but little connectedly.

Such was the calm and peaceful manner in which this distinguished Minister of Christ closed a life of laborious zeal and usefulness, and of almost uninterrupted affliction. He died at ten minutes past eight o'clock, on Tuesday evening, Jan. 8th, 1833, having nearly completed his fifty-second year.\* The distressing intelligence was communi-

\* The subjoined brief description of the *post mortem* examination has been furnished by James Hunter, Esq. :—

“On making an examination after death, the gall-bladder

ated to the Wesleyan Circuits throughout the kingdom, by a letter from Mr. Beecham, then the only surviving Secretary to the Missionary Society; and seemed to spread a gloom over the whole Connexion. Christians of other denominations participated in the general feeling. The sensation excited resembled that which is felt by an army in battle, when "a standard-bearer fainteth."

The funeral of Mr. Watson took place on Tuesday, January 15th, at the City-road chapel, where listening multitudes had so often attended his powerful ministry. All the Wesleyan Ministers stationed in London were present; with a large concourse of Christians of various denominations, most of whom were deeply affected. Mr. Entwisle delivered an impressive address in the chapel, in the course of which he related some interesting particulars concerning the deceased.

In my last visit (said he) to my respected friend and brother, I was deeply interested, and greatly delighted; and I trust that the good influence of the conversation will remain with me, not only through time, but to all eternity. I found him extremely feeble in body; but his mighty mind was as vigorous as ever. "I had desired," said he, "to live a few years longer for certain

and adjoining portion of the liver were found adhering to the neighbouring viscera. The gall-duct was completely obliterated, a case of very rare occurrence; the gall-bladder was much altered in structure; and contained, instead of bile, a clear fluid, like water. The changes in the liver, gall-bladder, and ducts, were evidently of long standing; and were sufficient to account for the distressing symptoms under which Mr. Watson had been labouring for years."



purposes of usefulness; but that is all over now. I shall not recover, I believe. No medicine seems to reach my case. For years I have suffered much amidst all my labours; but during the last twelve months I have found that every attack has brought me lower and lower, and now I have no idea at all that I shall recover." I did not inquire of him any thing concerning the state of his mind; but of his own accord he informed me that he had been kept in perfect peace. I remarked that, from the nature of his disease, it would have been no wonder if he had suffered under depression. "No," said he, "I have not been depressed at all;" and there appeared such humility, tranquillity, and dignity in his aspect and manner, as I never witnessed before. "When I appear before God," said he, "I feel myself like a worm that has just crawled out of the earth amidst the glory of the meridian sun. It behoves me," he added, "to lie very low in the dust before God." Then we entered upon a conversation respecting the mercy-seat,—the propitiatory: and how delightful it was to hear him speak of it!

After a while, he desired me to pray; and we seemed to have an open way to the mercy-seat, free access through the blood of Christ, and liberty to ask and to have whatever we wanted. Others have said to me that they have always experienced similar feelings when engaged in prayer with our departed brother.

His remains were interred in the burying-ground behind the City-road chapel, where are the ashes

of many of the pious and distinguished dead. His tomb is near that of Mr. Wesley; and not far distant are those of Messrs. Benson, Bradburn, Clarke, Olivers, Walter Griffith; Ministers who were "famous in their generation, men of renown."

Sermons on occasion of Mr. Watson's death were preached by the Wesleyan Ministers in the principal towns throughout the kingdom; and the Rev. Jabez Bunting was requested by the Missionary Committee and the family of the deceased to improve the solemn event by a discourse in the City-road chapel. With this request he kindly complied; and, notwithstanding the inclemency of the season, came from a remote part of the kingdom to pay this mark of respect to the memory of his esteemed and beloved friend. He preached on the morning of Friday, January 18th, to a very numerous and respectable congregation, consisting of Christians of various denominations, most of whom were dressed in black. The service was deeply interesting and impressive. The text selected by Mr. Bunting was John viii. 51: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death;" which was highly appropriate, and supplied an occasion for expatiating upon Mr. Watson's profound knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, and unbounded attachment to all its peculiarities, and upon the peaceful and triumphant manner of his death. The sermon, which contained some valuable theological discussion, and an able delineation of Mr. Watson's character, was subsequently published, at the request of the Missionary Committee and

his family and friends, with concise biographical notices. The Rev. Robert Alder, also, who was then stationed in Bristol, published an excellent sermon on Mr. Watson's death, in which he gave a strong and just description of his abilities, labours, and piety.

It might be supposed that a man of Mr. Watson's active and inquiring habits, and possessing great facility in literary composition, would write largely on many subjects of interest and importance; and that, towards the conclusion of his life, his manuscripts would be numerous. Such was the fact. But, during his last illness, when he despaired of recovery, having neither time nor strength to classify and correct his papers; and being apprehensive that some of them contained opinions which his maturer judgment would discard, and the publication of which in his name he therefore deprecated; he committed nearly the whole of them to the fire, except his Exposition, his sermons, and some of the speeches which he had prepared for public occasions. Among other valuable documents which were consumed on this occasion, two are particularly remembered, by some of his friends, as possessing a deep interest. These were an elaborate dissertation on the salvability of the Heathen, which he wrote when stationed in Hull; and an Introduction to a History of Missions. For many years he cherished the design of writing such a History; and the somewhat long Introduction which he had written shows the earnest attention which he had directed to the subject, though his official engagements rendered him unable to make any progress in the work. The

Wesleyan Book-Committee purchased the papers which were spared, with a reference to publication ; and the Exposition was immediately put to press, according to Mr. Watson's intention. It is unquestionably one of the finest specimens of that species of composition in the English language. Without any of the parade of learning, it contains substantially all the light that classical and Jewish literature have thrown upon those parts of the sacred writings which he professes to explain, especially upon St. Matthew's Gospel. The principles of biblical interpretation which he lays down and exemplifies are of the utmost importance. He contends that the Evangelists never cite the prophecies of the Old Testament in an accommodated sense ; a point which some orthodox Commentators have conceded, but which certainly ill accords with the idea of plenary inspiration. He also denies that any of the parables of our Lord were borrowed by him from the Jewish teachers ; and maintains, that the parables which are found in Jewish writings, resembling those of our Lord, are the productions of a later age, and were copied from the New Testament. So that the parables of the Son of God are not to be regarded as improvements upon the parables of Jewish Rabbins, as some Christian Divines have supposed ; but the parables of the Jewish Rabbins are the parables of our Lord, mutilated, perverted, and marred by ignorant and incompetent men, who had not the honesty to confess whence their lessons of instruction were derived : just as modern Deists, having learned the principles of morals from the holy Scriptures, and formed them

into a sort of system, speak of them with consummate effrontery, as having been derived from "the light of nature;" and then contend that a revelation from God is unnecessary. The spirit which pervades Mr. Watson's Exposition is admirable. The work is often characterized by great tenderness and beauty, both of sentiment and expression; and it is scarcely possible for a devout mind to read it without spiritual advantage. It is eminently theological; but the theology which it contains consists not in matters of airy speculation: it brings the reader near to God, through the mediation of Christ, penitent and believing, that his sins may be pardoned, his nature renewed, his entire person sanctified, and presented to God "a holy living sacrifice." Like Mr. Wesley's incomparable Notes on the New Testament, Mr. Watson's Exposition was written in sickness, and in the immediate view of eternity. That a man so gifted, and qualified to serve the church in its highest interests, should be thus prematurely cut off, in the midst of his usefulness, is one of those mysteries of Providence which can only be understood in the light of eternity.

---

## CHAPTER XXV.

FROM the preceding narrative, it is presumed, a tolerably accurate conception may be formed of Mr. Watson's person, labours, and character: yet a few additional remarks upon these subjects, embodying some facts which have not been stated, and bringing

his peculiar opinions and habits more distinctly into view, will perhaps be deemed neither unnecessary nor uninteresting.

It has been already observed, that his stature was six feet two inches. In person he was extremely slender; and, though tall, his carriage was graceful and dignified. His eyes were a dark brown, bright and piercing. His forehead was remarkably lofty, broad, somewhat arched, and altogether formed with consummate beauty. His countenance, which was strongly marked, was expressive of intelligence, decision, deep thought, affection, and reverence. In the earlier part of his life it indicated great liveliness; but in his latter years, intense study and care, with incessant disease and pain, impressed upon it an air of sadness and languor. No attempts had been made to render his manners conformable to the rules of an artificial politeness; but the native dignity of his mind, his own inherent sense of what was becoming, and the benevolent feelings with which his heart was charged, gave a superior elegance and propriety to all his movements and conduct in social intercourse. Never, perhaps, was a man equally great more entirely free from eccentricity. His voice was a clear and mellow bass, not remarkably strong; and was very agreeable, except when overstrained in large assemblies.

The mind of Mr. Watson was not distinguished by the overpowering energy of any one faculty, but by the assemblage of all that constitutes true greatness. Some men, who have excelled in pure intellect, and as masters of reason, have possessed little vigour of imagination, or warmth of feeling;

and men of unbounded power of imagination, have often given sad proof of infirmity of judgment. Of the former class were Dr. Barrow and Bishop Butler ; men whose writings are profound and original, but addressed exclusively to the understanding ; and Bishop Taylor and Milton may be adduced as examples of the latter. The richness and splendour of Taylor's imagery are unrivalled ; but as a Protestant Divine his doctrine is frequently erroneous and misleading. Seldom has the evangelical method of a sinner's justification before God been more grievously mistaken than by this eloquent Divine ; and on the question of original sin, his views were very unsound. Milton's genius achieved in poetry what no other man ever accomplished ; but, to say nothing of the theological errors into which he fell in the latter years of his life, he taught opinions concerning divorce which, if practically exemplified, would subvert the very foundations of society, and be fatal to the morals of mankind ; and a mind immensely inferior to his might have seen that the establishment of a military despotism upon the ruins of a constitutional monarchy was not likely to settle the liberties of the people of England upon a permanent base. Yet such was the serious conviction of the author of "Paradise Lost !" Few men possess, in an equal degree, the inventive power of imagination, and the reasoning faculty ; and fewer still connect enlarged and comprehensive views of all the subjects to which their attention is seriously directed, with a correct practical judgment. Such, however, was the character of Mr. Watson's mind. There are in his works specimens of profound and original reasoning on

theological and moral subjects which would reflect credit upon the greatest Divines and metaphysicians; and there are other passages which, for sublimity of thought, and beauty of illustration, would bear an advantageous comparison with the most admired compositions in the English tongue. He united the fancy of a poet, with a sound and discriminating judgment; and a habit of minute investigation, with calm and philosophic thought. It has been remarked by an acute observer of human nature,\* that "the vast knowledge and ruling abilities of Moses might stand in need of Aaron's elocution; and he who speaks with the tongue of angels, and the greatest fluency of spiritual rhetoric, may be at a loss when he comes to matters of controversy, and to assert the truth against the assaults and sophistry of a subtle opponent. God indeed can, and sometimes happily does, unite both these gifts in the same person." Perhaps they were never more happily and strikingly blended than in the lamented subject of this narrative.

To form a just view of the power of his mind, it will be requisite to survey his attainments, and the circumstances under which they were realized. In early youth he enjoyed the advantages of a regular scholastic training, especially in the mathematics, and in Greek and Latin; but at the age of fourteen his school-books were laid aside, and his attention was directed to business; and, though Euclid still engaged his attention at leisure hours, the passion for play and mischief at length nearly

\* Dr. South.



supplanted in him all delight in science, as well as literature. After he entered upon the Methodist itinerancy he had to preach eight or nine sermons every week, and almost daily to travel several miles. While thus employed, for more than two years, his reading was desultory, and classical learning neglected. When stationed with Mr. Edmondson, he began to study upon a plan, and made great proficiency in theological and general knowledge; but in less than three years afterwards he was involved in the vexations of secular business. The seven or eight years which he spent as a Preacher in the Methodist New Connexion were the only part of his public life that was favourable to mental cultivation. His official duties were limited, and he spent little time in travelling from place to place. After his return to the Wesleyan body his labours were incessant and severe. His duties as a Minister were numerous and pressing; and those of his Missionary Secretaryship, with his frequent calls to preach occasional sermons in all parts of the kingdom, were so great an addition to his other engagements, as often to leave scarcely any time at his own disposal. Yet, under all these disadvantages, his attainments were surprising. He would indeed have been the first to disclaim the character of profound and accurate classical scholarship. He perused, however, the Latin poets and moralists with ease; he read the works of the most valuable of the Greek Fathers; and within the last two or three years of his life he went carefully through the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, and the Odes of Pindar. He was accustomed to read French and Hebrew; and he

had a general knowledge of almost every department of science, particularly of the different branches of natural philosophy. But it was to theology that his attention was principally directed; and to this master-science he made every other subservient. In the knowledge of divinity he certainly was not inferior to any man of his age. He thoroughly understood the Deistical, the Socinian, and the Calvinistic controversies, and knew the strength and weakness, as well as the practical bearing, of the systems to which they relate; and, when occasion served, he could point out, with the utmost precision, the views entertained by different bodies of Christians. The Bible was his chief delight. He studied the Greek Testament with close attention for many years, availing himself of the labours of the best critics, both foreign and domestic. He was well versed in the peculiarities of Scripture phraseology, and in Jewish antiquities, with their application to particular passages of holy writ. Considering the state of pain and sickness in which so large a portion of his life was spent, and the incessant activity in which he was engaged, it is astonishing whence he could have acquired those stores of biblical and theological knowledge which he was accustomed to pour forth in conversation and preaching, and has embodied in his writings. But the fact is, that his thirst for knowledge was intense, and continued unabated to the last; and his perception was quick, almost beyond example. Many things he seemed to know intuitively; and he would often make himself a perfect master of a system before an ordinary student had conquered its elements. What he learned he scarcely ever forgot. His

memory was remarkably tenacious, not of words, but of principles and things.

Mr. Watson's imagination was under the perfect control of a severe and strict judgment. It could produce original combinations of thought in endless variety, and in every form of beauty and sublimity; but that faculty was always kept in subordination to his understanding, and was never suffered to luxuriate into extravagance. He could embellish every subject upon which he either wrote or spoke with appropriate figures of speech; but he never uses an excess of ornament, nor conceals his meaning by a profusion of rhetorical flowers. Even a fastidious critic might hear his extempore discourses for years, without detecting in them any palpable confusion of metaphor. The figures used by him in his writings are remarkable for their originality; and they are seldom mere passing allusions, as is generally the case in the writings of ordinary men. They are introduced less for the sake of embellishment than illustration; and are often found on examination to contain striking analogies to the subject under discussion; so that, while they gratify the taste, they enlighten the understanding, and render his meaning more distinct and impressive. Some persons, of cold temperament and little imagination, may perhaps think that, in preaching the Gospel of salvation, all ornament should be avoided, and the fancy laid under absolute restraint; but it would be difficult to prove that there is any mental endowment of which God is the author, that may not, in its highest operations, be sanctified, and advantageously employed in the Christian ministry. The

holy Scriptures, independently of the momentous truths which they reveal, contain richer beauties of sentiment and expression than any other book that was ever written.

In reference to almost every subject his taste was elegant and correct. He was a great admirer of fine specimens of art, especially in painting, statuary, and medals. On the opening of the Annual Exhibition at Somerset-house, by the Royal Academy, he was usually an early visiter to that place of attraction ; and was often highly delighted with the productions of genius there presented to the public inspection. But it was in nature that his perception of the beautiful and sublime met its highest gratification. No "poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling," and "glancing from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven," observed the works of creation with more minute attention ; and no mind more admired the varied landscape, and the endless wonders of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. He traced the analogies between them and moral subjects ; and often introduced allusions to them in his ministry and writings with the happiest effect. In one of his visits to Northampton, to attend a Missionary Meeting, where he was joined by the Rev. George Cubitt, he strayed into the green-house of his kind host ; and there a flower, of diminutive size and exquisite tints, attracted his notice. For some minutes he stood gazing at it with his magnifying glass, in perfect silence ; when he said to his friend, " Mr. Cubitt, I do not say that I disbelieve the Article of the Church of England, which states that God is 'without body, parts, or passions : ' but after all

he is not a mere impalpable metaphysical existence. Look at this flower, Sir ;" pointing out some of its beauties of form and colour ; and then added, with considerable emotion, " No, Sir ; God loves beauty, and has covered the earth with it. This is no chance production. The almighty Architect knew what he was doing when he made it, as much as when he made the most glorious world." His taste was sanctified, and rendered conducive to the improvement of his own piety, and that of others.

The versatility of Mr. Watson's talents was one of the most remarkable peculiarities of his character. He not only succeeded but excelled in every thing that he undertook, except in trade ; and in that he was as certainly opposed by divine Providence, as that " the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." His Maker conferred upon him his great powers for a higher purpose than that to which he directed them when he retired from the ministry. He was equally eminent as a writer and as a public speaker ; in argumentation, and in eloquence ; in the pulpit and on the platform ; in pleading the cause of Christian Missions, and in directing their operations. With equal ease he could take enlarged and statesmanlike views of national affairs, discuss the profoundest questions in theology and metaphysics, and enter minutely into all the arrangements of private life, even to the form and position of common articles of domestic furniture. He would engage in enlightened conversation with persons of highly cultivated minds ; and enter into the views and feelings of pious peasants in country villages, so as to make

himself equally instructive and agreeable. His works all bear the impress of his intellectual character ; and yet they are greatly diversified in their style and manner. The " Conversations for the Young " are written with great elegance and simplicity. His sermons are fine specimens of powerful and commanding eloquence. Burke himself could not have excelled the rich and varied diction of the discourses on Ezekiel's vision, " Man magnified by the divine Regard," and " the Religious Instruction of the Negro Slaves." The style of the " Theological Institutes " is nervous and unadorned, adapted to argument and disquisition ; and his incomparable Missionary Reports present a remarkable admixture of minute and business-like detail, and of forcible appeals in behalf of a perishing world. " His qualifications for interpreting Scripture were of the first rank. Calm, judicious, extensively read, possessing sound learning, he had at the same time a clear insight into the mind of the Spirit, and an intimate acquaintance with the phraseology, idiom, and general principles of interpretation of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures." Had it pleased the Almighty to bless him with robust health, and to spare him twenty years longer, when he would have arrived at the full age of man, it is impossible to say what stupendous monuments of genius and industry he would have reared, and left to posterity, as a theologian and an interpreter of holy writ. But he was cut off at a period when his faculties were matured, and when most men who have been distinguished as writers have just begun to benefit the world by their talents and erudition.

Mr. Watson's mind and habits were eminently practical. There was nothing speculative and theoretic about him. He valued knowledge, books, and principles, according to their adaptation to useful purposes. Although he was an endless reader, he never cherished a passion for collecting a large library; and he seldom permanently retained any books, except such as he needed for the purpose of reference. When they accumulated, so that their removal from one Circuit to another became inconvenient, he would dispose of them to the advantage of a poor and deserving man whom he wished to serve, and advise him to set up a stall in the street, and thus commence a business that might be ultimately beneficial. He had a deep impression of the responsibility connected with authorship; and in conversation often referred to the striking sentiment of Dr. South, that, with regard to men in general, their account for eternity closes with their lives; but that a "running account" is kept open with the writer of a bad book, as long as that book continues to circulate, and to injure mankind in their moral and spiritual interests. No man was happier than he in the selection of subjects upon which to employ his pen. Excepting one or two ephemeral productions which he wrote in early life, all his publications are of the useful and practical kind. They are intended to illustrate and defend revealed truth; and they are generally acceptable to all classes of serious and devout Christians.

It has been thought by some persons, that as Mr. Watson commenced his religious career and ministry in the Wesleyan body, afterwards was a

Preacher in the Methodist New Connexion, and then again returned to his former friends, there was something of fickleness and instability in his mind ; but such persons have had very erroneous conceptions concerning his real character. His attachment to the vital doctrines of Christianity was formed at an early age, when he realized their truth and power in his own conversion ; and to these he adhered through life. The more closely he studied them in the light of holy Scripture, the deeper was his conviction of their divine authority, and the more intense was his zeal in defending and propagating them. Under the pressure of peculiar circumstances he resigned his itinerant ministry, intending to support himself and his family by his labour through the week, and gratuitously to preach the word of life in his own neighbourhood on the Lord's day. When he adopted this unadvised course, he was little more than twenty years of age ; and though his mental faculties were of the first order, his experience was limited, and his judgment immature. He soon felt that in this he had mistaken the path of duty ; he was deeply distressed on account of the step which he had hastily and unhappily taken, and the situation in which he was placed. His salvation depended upon the exercise of his ministry ; and he entered into the Methodist New Connexion, as the only field of evangelical labour that was then open to him. With his convictions, and in his circumstances, the most uncompromising Wesleyan will hardly say that he did wrong in uniting himself as a Minister with that body of Christian people. The New Connexion had then been



formed for some years ; and Mr. Watson had no concern whatever in dividing any society for party purposes ; a practice of which he decidedly disapproved, as unchristian, and injurious to the interests of true religion. Considering his very limited means and opportunities of usefulness in this community, and the unparalleled course of successful labour prepared for him by the providence of God among his old friends, both as a writer, and an advocate and director of Missions to the Heathen, the most ardent admirer of the New Connexion will scarcely blame him for returning to the people who had been his first religious associates. In leaving his proper work as an Itinerant Preacher, he was clearly and decidedly wrong ; but he did what he could to retrieve that practical error ; and when the difficulties with which he was for many years surrounded are taken into the account, it is no mean praise to say, that he maintained his personal honour and integrity unsullied. His offence in the sight of God was painfully visited, and graciously forgiven ; and in the subsequent years of his life greatly was he blessed and distinguished by his Lord, above the ordinary lot of men. Perhaps some previous humiliation was necessary to prepare him for that elevation which awaited him as a public man. At all events, the disappointments and mortifications of his early life were sanctified to him by the providence and grace of God.

Mr. Watson was one of the most striking examples of Christian diligence the world has ever seen. He never appeared to be in a hurry, but he was always intent upon "doing and receiving good ;".

for he kept the great end of life steadily in view. His reading was extensive; and his knowledge, especially of theology and biblical literature, was the result of deep and incessant thought. One could scarcely ever meet with him, after an interval of a few days, but he showed, by the tenor of his conversation, and the questions which he proposed, that he was pursuing some new train of inquiry, anxious to ascertain and know the truth upon a scale the most enlarged. Some obscure text, or difficult point in theology, was generally under his consideration; and he was ready, on every occasion, to draw forth the views of those persons with whom he conversed, who were addicted to studies of this nature. His questions were proposed with such perfect candour, as greatly to relieve his friends from the embarrassment which they would otherwise have felt in hazarding premature opinions on the subject specified, especially in the presence of one whose knowledge was so comprehensive, and whose mind was so scrutinizing and powerful. When he was at home he generally read while taking his meals. He kept in his bed-room a copy of Valpy's Greek Testament, with the Latin Notes; and within the last few years of his life he read the whole of that work while in the act of undressing himself. The plans of some of his most admired sermons and speeches are said to have been formed in his mind when he was travelling by coach to attend Missionary Meetings in the country; and such was his habit of study, and power of abstraction, that he has often passed some of his most intimate friends in the streets of London, without recognising

them. It may give some conception of his activity to survey his labours for the last three years of his life, when he was resident at the City-road; and they are merely a specimen of his regular and accustomed exertions. During this period he was in a state of constant affliction, and through pain and disease presented almost the appearance of a living skeleton; yet he discharged with efficiency the duties of Superintendent of the Circuit, except when disabled by illness; he exercised a ministry which increased in interest, and comprehended the delivery of a course of able lectures on the first eight chapters of the Epistle to the Romans; he devoted a part of his time to pastoral visiting from house to house, and especially to visiting the sick; he attended the meetings of the numerous Committees entrusted with the management of the Wesleyan book-concerns and Missions; he spent much time in deliberating with the other Secretaries on the affairs of the Missions generally, and especially on those of the West Indies, some of which were then violently opposed by the planters and local authorities; during the last of these three years he devoted one forenoon in every week to the Missionary work, when he visited Hatton-garden to assist the resident Secretaries; he wrote his Conversations for the Young, and his Life of Mr. Wesley; he arranged the matter of his Theological and Biblical Dictionary, composed many of its articles, and superintended the printing of the whole; and he also wrote his admirable Exposition of St. Matthew's Gospel. Not satisfied with these efforts, he meditated an Exposition of the Old Testament, when he had finished the New; and

he had entered upon a Life of Mr. Charles Wesley, which he intended to pursue as a sort of relaxation from severer studies. Two paragraphs of this work were found in his desk after his decease.

Such were the labours of a dying man. "In the midst of life," says Mr. Montgomery, "he consumed away, like incense upon the altar, burning bright, and diffusing fragrance, till not a residue can be seen."

Mr. Watson's habit of self-denial was not the least remarkable part of his character. His mind was ardent and inquisitive; and no man was better qualified for the successful prosecution of any branch of study. The acquisition of knowledge, and the cultivation of general literature, afforded him a gratification of which persons of ordinary taste and capacity can form but a very slight conception; and there is no reason to believe that he was at all times entirely free from "that last infirmity of noble minds,"—a desire of posthumous celebrity, accompanied by a generous wish to instruct and benefit posterity. Yet, such was his conscientious attention to the obvious calls of duty, that he would not suffer his love of study and retirement to interfere with his official engagements. Greatly as he delighted in the classic page, and in the erudite volumes of Divines and philosophers, and deeply as he was interested in the master-science of divinity, he was willing to forego them all when the sick required his sympathy, and the spiritual interests of his charge rendered it necessary that he should visit from house to house. He never merged the character of the Christian Pastor in that of a man of letters; nor suffered his mind to be so absorbed in

the pursuits of authorship as to forget that he was entrusted with the care of souls. During a great part of his public life much of his time was spent in travelling, in attending Missionary Meetings, and in watching over the concerns of the foreign Missions, when the natural bent of his own mind would have confined him to his closet, and to an entire abstraction from those dissipating and busy scenes. But he had learnt that he was not his own; that a servant of Christ is a devoted man, and must not, therefore, choose his own work. As a member of the Wesleyan body, he was always ready to take his full share of extra and official labour, connected with the institutions of Methodism, however it might interfere with his private convenience and arrangements. Personal predilections were always made in him to give way to the public and general good.

As an illustration of the spirit and manner in which he discharged his pastoral duties, in visiting the people under his care from house to house, the following particulars, which have been kindly supplied by Mrs. Bulmer, may be adduced:—

“One morning I was favoured with a call from Mr. Watson. It was one of those pastoral visits which he was accustomed to pay to the City-road society, the members of which he considered as his own special charge. According to his habit, he turned to solemn and instructive subjects of discourse. The resurrection of the body, and its evidence arising from the analogies of nature, soon became the leading topic of conversation. I found him prepared, not only to question, but to deny, that any proof whatever of the truth of this impor-

tant doctrine can be gathered from that quarter : and on this ground, that there is no identity in the chief circumstance,—death. In nature, nothing that is positively dead revives. Through the dreary months of winter vegetation lies quiescent, but the principle of life remains. Spring, with its genial influences, calls forth that which has been dormant ; but, strictly speaking, nothing that was dead lives again : whereas the human body in death is resolved into its primal elements, and retains no principle of even incipient life. There is no germ which, according to any natural constitution, or law imposed by the Creator, will spring forth into renovated life. The resurrection of the dead will be the result of an immediate operation of divine power. That it will take place, is a doctrine of pure revelation ; and our belief of it rests solely upon the authority of God's word. Shortly after this interesting conversation, which greatly impressed my mind, I was so happy as to meet him casually at the house of our mutual friends, Mr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Smith, of Hoxton, on whom also he had made one of those kind and official calls which gave him so great an interest in the grateful and affectionate esteem and veneration both of individuals and families. We walked into a large and beautiful garden. It was the blooming season of spring. Delight, admiration, and gratitude, were the sentiments suggested by the scene. They were felt and acknowledged. ' But you, Sir,' said one of the party, ' have dissolved a portion of the charm with which this loveliness was wont to be invested. We may no longer justly consider the beautiful renovation of nature as emblematical of

man's reviviscence after the winter of death.' 'No,' he replied, 'the revival of creation in spring can only be very loosely employed even in illustration of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.' Perceiving on the ground a large leaf, which had been beautifully veined by insects, and which was perfectly dead and dry, he stooped to take it up, and said, 'Now look at this leaf. No shower or sunshine will ever revive it. It derives no genial influence from that spring which clothes every thing around it with beauty. It is dead, and will never revive. But we require neither analogies nor metaphysics to sustain our conviction of the certainty of the resurrection of the dead. It is a doctrine of pure revelation; and in the divine power and veracity we have a sufficiently strong foundation of our faith.'"

In all Mr. Watson's pastoral visitations, children were prominent objects of his kind solicitude. He regarded them as the lambs of the flock of Christ, and the hope of the church; he sometimes wrote pithy sentences in their books, and presented to them little curiosities; and he occasionally mingled with their amusements, for the purpose of obtaining their confidence, and that he might more effectually promote their spiritual and moral benefit. His attentions to them became increasingly tender to the end of his life.

Mr. Watson's spirit was naturally lofty and independent; but by the grace of God he became meek and lowly in heart. An impression has prevailed in some quarters that he was cold, dogmatic, and repulsive. It is not difficult to account for this. He had acquired a perfect control over his

feelings, and seldom betrayed strong emotions before mixed companies. In the course of his extensive journeyings he was doubtless often introduced to persons who were overawed by the power of his intellect ; and who, being unable to accompany him in conversation, or to withstand the force of his reasonings, would feel themselves in the situation of the readers of *Paradise Lost*, which Dr. Johnson thus describes : “ We read Milton for instruction, retire harassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation. We desert our master, and seek for companions.” The defect in this case was not in Mr. Watson’s spirit, but in the abilities and feelings of the persons into whose society he was casually thrown, and whose opinions he might sometimes feel it his duty to controvert. It should also be added, that he was a man of the strictest integrity and uprightness ; and any thing which he conceived to be mean and dishonourable always called forth his honest indignation, and occasionally extorted from him rebukes which were calculated to “ shake the delinquents with such fits of awe ” and shame as were not likely to be soon forgotten. He had a deep conviction of the evil of strife and divisions among religious people, having seen their blighting influence upon personal piety, and upon the prosperity of the work of God ; and he would enter into no compromise with the men who arise in the church, “ speaking perverse things, not sparing the flock, and seeking to draw away disciples after them.” For these men his severest censures were reserved ; but he never expressed himself to such offenders in stronger language than that which the Apostles



have used in similar cases. Yet in dealing with wicked and disorderly men of this class he was jealous of himself, and has been known to ask his friends whether he had used terms more severe than the occasion would justify. "I have such a detestation of the principles of those men," he would sometimes say, "that I am afraid lest I should express myself in language of too great severity."

It was not to be expected that Mr. Watson's long and severe affliction would exert no influence upon his spirits. He must have been more than human to have endured pain and disease from year to year with the buoyancy of vigorous health. His sufferings did not unfrequently induce gloomy feelings, and unfit him for that "feast of reason and that flow of soul" in which he had formerly delighted to indulge in converse with his friends; and these feelings formed a distorted medium through which he occasionally looked both at persons and things. This he was free to confess, and often lamented; but it would be unjust to accuse him of any approach to ill-nature. Till his sufferings had seriously affected his spirits, he was eminently sociable and communicative; and to the end of his life he greatly enjoyed the company of pious and intelligent persons. It may serve to show the excellence of his temper to state, that, when he was writing his principal works, which required deep and undistracted thought, he was frequently called from his study at least twenty times in a day; and although he did not in every case of impertinent intrusion "galvanize his muscles to a smile," few men have ever borne such

interruptions with more exemplary patience and self-possession.

A readiness to forgive injuries, and to acknowledge errors and faults, was a striking peculiarity in Mr. Watson's character; and at the same time there was in him a nobleness and generosity which it is difficult to describe. He seemed to be absolutely incapable of every thing mean and selfish. It was his "perfect scorn," the "object of his implacable disgust;" and there was a corresponding dignity in all his demeanour. In his intercourse with his friends, and his moments of relaxation from severer pursuits, he was often playful as a child, and would relate anecdotes, of which he possessed a great variety, with admirable effect and native humour. Yet he never lost sight of the respect due to his office and character as a Minister of Christ, nor indulged himself in unbecoming levity. His wit was brilliant and prompt, and his powers of satire and invective irresistible; but they were laid under constant restraint, and never employed to wound the feelings of his associates, or to injure the reputation of absent persons. Those who applied to him for favours found him "easy to be entreated." When requested to preach occasional sermons, he rarely refused, if it was in his power to comply; and the readiness with which he consented greatly enhanced the value of his services. He never kept the applicants in painful suspense, by urging frivolous excuses; and a repetition of the request was seldom necessary. His liberality to the poor and indigent knew no limits but an empty purse; and he often subjected himself to straits and inconveniences to meet the wants of others.

In the various domestic relations Mr. Watson was entitled to high commendation. He did indeed "honour his father and mother," not only by every mark of filial affection and respect, but by affording them assistance under the pressure of age and adverse circumstances. Often did he deny himself, that he might be the better able to promote their comfort. His surviving family speak of him as one of the kindest of husbands and parents, whose constant solicitude it was to meet their wishes as far as lay in his power; and no sacrifice did he deem too great in his endeavours to render them happy. His conviction of parental responsibility was very deep: and hence he would not entrust the training of his son and daughter to merely mercenary teachers; but was himself accustomed for some years to devote two hours daily to their instruction. When he could abstract a larger portion of time from his official duties, it was appropriated to them; but the rule was, that they should be two hours every day under his own immediate tuition. The scholarship of his children was derived principally from his own personal instructions; and is equally honourable to the teacher and his pupils. When his son was pursuing his classical studies at home, such was Mr. Watson's kind solicitude for his improvement, that he often went even three or four times a day into the room of the youth, to inquire whether he had met with any difficulties which he was unable to surmount, and to afford his assistance. His deep concern for the spiritual interests of his children is attested in several of his letters contained in these memoirs, and addressed,

when he was from home, to different members of his family.

Perhaps no man possessed better qualifications for the office of a Missionary Secretary than Mr. Watson. His high sense of justice and honour rendered him cautious in the appropriation of public money; and his cordial affection for the Missionaries secured from him a prompt attention to their wants. He had a thorough knowledge of the peculiarities of every station occupied by the Society with which he was connected; and his letters of advice and encouragement addressed to the Missionaries were marked by fidelity, wisdom, and kindness. His respect for the Missionaries was strong and cordial. He regarded them as raised up by the special providence and grace of God; and he greatly honoured them for their work's sake. With many of them he was personally acquainted; not a few had pursued a course of preparatory study under his own direction; and their self-denial, and heroic piety and zeal, excited his admiration. Their discouragements and privations awakened his sympathy; and daily did he, in the most feeling manner, invoke blessings upon the Missionary, and on the "crown of the head of the man" who, to save souls from death, is "separated from his brethren." When he bowed his knees before the Lord, whether in the family, in the public congregation, in the social party, or in the Conference, the Missionaries were almost sure to be remembered by him. Their sufferings from persecution, and personal or domestic affliction, deeply affected him. When Mr. James died, and Mr. Watson had prepared some account of that

excellent man for publication in the monthly *Missionary Notices*, the printer inquired whether he should enclose the mournful intelligence in a black border. Mr. Watson, who then began seriously to anticipate his own dissolution, replied, "O no! When we announce the deaths of our blessed Missionaries, we never accompany their names with any such mark of distinction; and yet, what are the services which any of us render to the Missionary cause, compared with the services and hardships of the men who labour and die among Heathens and savages, without perhaps a friend to close their eyes?" As a public man, and the former able Editor of the *Liverpool Courier*, Mr. Watson was well known to the principal members of His Majesty's Government, especially under the administration of the Earl of Liverpool; and this circumstance was of great advantage to the Missions. It often gave to his memorials and suggestions, addressed to the Colonial Office, a weight which they would not otherwise have possessed. All his talents and influence he devoted, not to the objects of personal honour and emolument, but to the cause of Christ, and the benefit of mankind.

The success of the Wesleyan Missions was to him a ground of holy joy and triumph. When he was first connected with them, their annual income fell short of £7000; the Missionaries were about sixty in number; the persons in religious society on the Mission stations amounted to somewhat more than fifteen thousand: and he lived to see the yearly income of the Society raised to £50,000; the Missionaries increased to somewhat more than two hundred, exclusive of a large num-

ber of Catechists and other subordinate teachers ; and the regular and accredited members of society, under the pastoral care of the Missionaries, augmented to nearly forty-four thousand, a large proportion of whom were converts from the darkness and misery of Heathenism. He witnessed the formation and establishment of flourishing Missions in Southern Africa, India, New South Wales, and the Tonga Islands, and men every where raised up to exercise a native ministry ; as well as the extension of the work in all the old stations, particularly in the West Indies. Towards these glorious achievements of Christian mercy the personal exertions of Mr. Watson greatly contributed. His ministry and writings, by the blessing of God, gave an impulse to the Missionary cause which is felt in every part of the empire, and in every quarter of the globe ; and its effects will be gratefully acknowledged in future ages.

Mr. Watson's connexion with the Mission cause often brought him into direct intercourse with Christians of various denominations, and gave exercise to that catholic and liberal spirit in which he delighted to indulge. Men like him seem to be raised up for the benefit of the universal church ; and he embraced with a cordial affection "all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." To bigotry and rash judging among Christians, he was decidedly and on principle opposed. While he claimed the right of private judgment himself, he freely conceded that right to others ; and took a pleasure in recognising the image of his Saviour in men whose religious creed in many respects differed from his own. He would indeed hold no

religious communion with those who impugn the distinguishing verities of Christianity, especially those who deny the Godhead and atonement of Christ, and the immaculate purity of his human nature; but he acknowledged as his brethren in the Lord orthodox and devout believers of every name. It gave him pleasure occasionally to occupy the pulpits of pious and liberal Dissenters; and he cultivated the personal friendship of some excellent Clergymen of the established Church. Where the graces and virtues of the Christian character appeared, he acknowledged them as the fruit of the Holy Spirit's operation, and was not tenacious of every peculiarity of a favourite phraseology. Among that part of the Clergy who are not usually denominated evangelical, and the attendants upon their ministry, it was his persuasion that there is far more sincere piety than some warm religionists are disposed to admit. Uncharitableness he regarded as a sin.

Mr. Watson was as remarkable for his modesty as for any other quality whatever. He was never dogmatical in conversation, but always paid a just deference to the opinions of others. For many years he occupied a very prominent station as a public man; he was regarded, even beyond the limits of his own denomination, as one of the master spirits of the age in which he lived; and many persons of talent, and of elevated rank, sought his acquaintance, and solicited his opinions on subjects of interest. Yet he never appeared to be lifted up by the respect which was shown him; and he scarcely ever mentioned, even in the society of his most intimate friends, his interviews and corre-

spondence with eminent personages. To the largeness of his congregations he was scarcely ever known to refer; and he never spoke of the impression produced by his incomparable discourses and speeches. The encomiums which he might occasionally hear passed upon his ministry always appeared to make him uneasy; and he invariably waved the subject by introducing some other topic of discourse. No one ever heard him depreciate his own sermons for the purpose of affording an opportunity for others to express their admiration of his ability;—an expedient to which vanity sometimes resorts for its gratification. Seldom would he commit any of his works to the press till he had obtained the opinion of his friends respecting their value; and he was often guided by the judgment of men greatly inferior to himself, both in intellect and acquirements. While his publications were read by others with delight and edification, he took little pleasure in them. When he had nearly finished his Exposition of St. Matthew's Gospel, he entertained serious thoughts of abandoning his design of extending that work to the end of the New Testament; and proposed to merge his critical and expository labours in an improved edition of Mr. Benson's Commentary on the Bible. "If the public," said he, "give me any credit for biblical knowledge, I will gladly lay my reputation at the feet of that great and excellent man. The excellence of his Commentary has never yet been duly estimated." He was persuaded, however, to persevere in his original design, by the earnest entreaties of the writer of these memoirs, who urged that an original theo-



gical Exposition of the New Testament, upon the plan which he had laid down, and thus far so successfully executed, was greatly to be desired.

As Mr. Watson had a high relish for rational and enlightened conversation, so his powers in this most useful and edifying exercise were of the first order. Having a general and accurate acquaintance with both sacred and profane literature, and with public affairs, as well as an intimate knowledge of human nature, he was never at a loss for interesting topics of discourse. In conversation he poured forth his intellectual treasures with all the confidence of an original thinker ; and with all the munificence of one who knew that, while he made others rich, he was in no danger of making himself poor. He was well skilled in the art of conducting an instructive conversation on subjects with which he only was familiar, without permitting others painfully to feel their comparative ignorance. Often did he instruct without seeming to do more than inquire. He took pleasure in noticing and honouring modest worth ; and though he must have been often aware that he was the soul of the company, and that nearly the whole expense of the mental feast devolved upon himself, he never appeared to grudge the demands which were made upon his resources. He was rarely known to laugh aloud ; and whenever he perceived that the conversation was in danger of degenerating into trifling, he would say, " Well ; this is a digression ; now for something more serious." By proposing a question to some one in the company, he would introduce a subject of importance. His conversation was always useful and instructive, becoming a

wise and good man ; and it increased in spirituality to the end of his life. He never appeared wishful to attract attention by any peculiarities of sentiment and manner. No attempts were made by him to excite admiration by flashes of wit, the utterance of paradoxes, or by a bold dogmatism. To convey information, to promote piety, and to minister to the innocent gratification of his friends, seemed to be his prevailing desire in social intercourse. Dr. Johnson is said to have conversed for victory ; but it may be safely said that Mr. Watson's great end in conversation was instruction and moral improvement ; and had his colloquies been preserved, they would have shown that he was quite as successful in building up, as the Doctor was in pulling down. When his friends retired from his society, the remark was often extorted from them, " Mr. Watson never disappoints us. His conversation is always interesting, and always new."

As a theologian, the distinguishing peculiarity of his mind was, an absolute submission to the authority of holy Scripture. Of the necessity and value of divine revelation, his convictions were deep and solemn. All true religion he considered as based upon revelation. Without the direct sanction of the Almighty, he thought even the most correct religious and moral principles could only be regarded as the unauthorized opinions of individuals, and would therefore fail to bind the consciences of men. Whatever truth may be discovered in the religious systems of the Heathen he viewed, not as the original discoveries of human reason, but the traditionary remains of those revelations

which were vouchsafed by God in the primitive ages. He had carefully studied the various religious and moral systems of Heathenism, as well as the principles and claims of modern Deism; and he found in them nothing to meet the wants of sinful and dying men, but much to aggravate their guilt, and increase their misery. Of every Heathen and Deist in existence he perceived that it might be justly said, "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Without a revelation, men have never been able to discover either their origin or their end; they have never ascertained the perfections and character of God, the true relations in which they stand to him and to each other, and the obligations resulting from those relations; and the designs of the Almighty, in regard of a future state, have remained in palpable obscurity. Above all, they have never been able to discover in what manner guilt might be cancelled, and a corrupted nature renewed. Anxious to know the truth, Mr. Watson studied the Deistical controversy with close attention, and intense interest. He read all the principal works that scepticism and infidelity have produced, and carefully weighed the arguments which they contain. Against these he balanced the reasonings advanced by the apologists of revealed religion; taking into the account the practical influence of the different systems, as exemplified in the history of all ages, and in the present state of the world; and the result of his inquiries was a perfect conviction of the inspiration, and consequent divine authority, of the Jew-

ish and Christian Scriptures, and their uncorrupted preservation. With this conviction his mind was at rest. He viewed Christianity as reposing upon the two immoveable pillars of prophecy and miracles; and, while he admired the fair and beautiful proportions of the system, his heart expanded in grateful feeling, and its prevailing sentiment was, "Thanks be unto God for the unspeakable gift!" "Inspired theology," he justly regarded, with Lord Bacon, "as the haven and Sabbath of all man's contemplations."

A revelation from God, Mr. Watson perceived, must have a character of authority; not in its preceptive part merely, but in all its doctrinal statements and discoveries; and it is as much the duty of men to submit their reason to the divine wisdom, as it is their duty to submit their wills to the divine commands. Reason is an excellent gift of God; but its exercise is not to be carried beyond the prescribed bounds. Its office is to judge of the evidences of revelation; and to ascertain its fair and legitimate meaning; but it is not to reject, nor even to modify, any doctrine which the revelation of God obviously teaches, because it happens not to accord with our preconceived opinions. Our present state is a state of discipline and trial. In several instances, God has revealed facts, and the principles of things, the reasons of which are reserved in the councils of his infinite wisdom. "We know in part;" "we see through a glass darkly;" and our present calling is, to "walk by faith, and not by sight." "Out of the contemplation of nature," says the profound philosopher just mentioned, "or ground of human

knowledge, to induce any verity or persuasion concerning the points of faith, is, in my judgment, not safe: *Da fidei quæ fidei sunt.* For the Heathens themselves conclude as much in that excellent and divine fable of the golden chain: that gods and men were not able to draw Jupiter down to the earth; but contrariwise, Jupiter was able to draw them up to heaven. So as we ought not to attempt to draw down or submit the mysteries of God to our reason; but contrariwise, to raise and advance our reason to the divine truth. So as in this part of knowledge, touching divine philosophy, I am so far from noting any deficiency, as I rather note an excess; whereunto I have digressed; because of the extreme prejudice which both religion and philosophy have received, and may receive, by being commixed together; as that which undoubtedly will make an heretical religion, and an imaginary and fabulous philosophy.\*

With these sentiments, so eloquently expressed by the father of the inductive philosophy, Mr. Watson decidedly concurred. "We can reason but from what we know;" and divine revelation directs our attention to subjects which infinitely surpass all the knowledge that we can acquire from created nature, and which therefore contradict our previous conceptions, and the conclusions we have been wont to deduce from them. On this question Mr. Watson speaks with a fearlessness worthy of a profound thinker, and of a consistent advocate of revealed religion. He maintained the absolute authority of the word of God;

\* Advancement of Learning.

and every attempt to explain away its great and vital doctrines, upon metaphysical and philosophic grounds, he met with uncompromising hostility. On these grounds the doctrine of the Trinity has been given up; the atonement of Christ has been denied by some, and limited by others; and, in fact, all that is peculiar and saving in Christianity has often been abandoned. By an appeal to the Bible, the Protestant Reformers shook the Papal throne, and compelled the Romish Church to quail before them; and by a steady adherence to the great principle of Protestantism, that the Bible, and nothing but the Bible, is the standard of appeal on all questions of theology, he waged a successful warfare against various forms of error, and established many minds in "the faith which was once delivered to the saints."

As so many of Mr. Watson's discourses have been published, it is the less necessary to say much on the subject of his preaching. His sermons were never crude and indigested, but prepared with great care. Those which he preached on public occasions were generally written at full length; and in the latter years of his life especially, he was accustomed to write a copious outline of each discourse before its delivery, that the subject might be the more deeply impressed upon his mind. All the sermons contained in his printed works, except the first eleven, which he wrote expressly for publication, may be regarded as specimens of that preparation which it was his practice to make before he addressed his congregations.

The great aim of his preaching was usefulness; and hence, except in very peculiar cases, he de-

cidedly disapproved of those sermons which consist mostly of elaborate metaphysical discussion, and the texts of which are used merely as a motto. The business of a Christian Preacher, he thought, was to explain and enforce the pure word of God. "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." No man could have appeared to greater advantage than he, as an intellectual Preacher, had fame been his object, and had he chosen to address himself only to the understanding and imagination of educated persons; but he felt that his business was especially with the consciences of mankind; and that his Lord had sent him, not to shine, or to amuse, but to convert sinners, and to build up believers in holiness: and these ends, he saw, could not be obtained but by the instrumentality of divine truth, faithfully and plainly declared, and graciously applied by the Holy Spirit. To the end of his life, therefore, he became increasingly partial to the expository mode of preaching; and in his ordinary ministry his sermons consisted entirely of deductions from his texts, the several parts of which he was careful to explain, and apply to the purposes of practical godliness. His sermons were evangelical, in the strict and proper sense of that abused term. Christ crucified was his favourite theme. He preached Christ in the glories of his Godhead, the infinite merit of his passion, and the plenitude of his grace and saving power; and so practical and impressive were the views which he presented of every truth upon which he expatiated, that those hearers must have been callous indeed who were not seriously affected under his energetic ministry.

Mr. Watson's manner in the pulpit was very solemn. He felt the responsibility of standing between God and redeemed sinners, proposing to them in the divine name the terms of reconciliation and acceptance : and he often trembled at the thought of being to some of his hearers "a savour of death unto death." His pallid countenance was therefore paler than usual when he entered the pulpit ; and he frequently commenced the public services of religion with a quivering lip, and a faltering voice. In the delivery of his sermons he stood perfectly erect ; and nearly all the action that he used was a slight motion of the right hand, with occasionally a significant shake of the head. He was generally calm and deliberate, and often gave strong indications of deep feeling ; but his preaching was never declamatory. His appearance was dignified, and calculated to command respect and silent attention ; and when he began to speak, his hearers felt that they were in the presence of a man who was qualified to instruct. From every thing approaching to affectation he was perfectly free ; his pronunciation was chaste and elegant ; and his language remarkable for simplicity and strength. He excelled equally in argument, exposition, and persuasion. In some of his sermons there was a remarkable tenderness of sentiment ; but the tone of thought which principally characterized his preaching was that of sublimity. His conceptions often appeared to be even superhuman. The truths of Christianity, as they fell from his lips, were invested with peculiar authority ; and were proposed, not as subjects of speculation, but to be received with meekness and submission, to



be believed and practised. In his mind every feeling was lost in the desire to be useful; the intense solicitude to save his own soul, and them that heard him. There were not unfrequently in his sermons bursts of eloquence which were absolutely irresistible, and the impression of which was scarcely ever lost. After hearing him preach on the subject of the atonement, in the Methodist chapel at Leicester, Mr. Hall, who was then resident in that town, declared that for a long time he could think of nothing but Mr. Watson's sermon. He preached the substance of it to his own congregation; and for several successive Sundays he referred to it in the course of his ministry, and earnestly pressed his people also to hear "that great man," as he denominated Mr. Watson, should they ever have an opportunity. Speaking of Mr. Watson's preaching, in conversation with the Rev. Theophilus Lessey, whom he honoured with his friendship, Mr. Hall said, "He soars into regions of thought where no genius but his own can penetrate." It has been also remarked by Mr. Montgomery, who often heard Mr. Watson, and knew him well, "It was the character of his great mind to communicate its own power and facility of comprehension to all minds that came under his influence. He so wholly possessed us with his spirit, that, during his progress through regions of intellect, or mazes of argument, we were not aware of the speed at which we were carried, or the elevation to which he had borne us beyond ourselves, till some mighty thought came rushing by, like a roll of thunder beneath the car of an aëronaut, reminding him that he is far above the clouds."

A very important branch of ministerial duty is that of conducting public worship; and in this Mr. Watson was an example of seriousness and decorum. The manner in which he recited his hymns, that they might be sung by the congregations, was remarkably impressive. Had they been the spontaneous effusions of his own mind, and called forth by the occasion, they could not have been pronounced with greater propriety. The tones of his voice were in perfect unison with the hallowed strains of the Wesleyan Hymn-book; and that incomparable volume was never made to speak with happier effect than when in his hands. The repetition of a single stanza has often produced a visible impression upon a large assembly, at once repressing every appearance of inattention, and producing a feeling of solemnity and awe; while the devout part of his hearers frequently wondered how it was that they had never previously seen the full beauty and force of the hymns which they had long been accustomed to sing. In Mr. Watson's public prayers there was great copiousness and variety. He was often minute in the confession of sin, especially the corruptions of the heart; and he was in the habit of bringing the concerns of the church and of the world, in all their extent, before the Lord, and of commending them to his providence and grace. The fallen churches of Christendom, the apostate and unbelieving Jews, and the perishing Heathen, were especially remembered by him in his addresses to the throne of grace. His spirit seemed to bow in the deepest reverence and self-abasement before the Lord, as a "just God and a Saviour;" and he

always most distinctly recognised the atonement and intercession of Christ, as the only medium through which sinners can obtain access to him, and be saved. "The spirit of interceding grace" appeared constantly to rest upon him; and his supplications were remarkable for the earnestness and pleading importunity with which they were uttered. On many occasions he seemed to realize even more than Job desired, when he said, in reference to his Maker, "O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even unto his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments." "More favoured than the saints of old," who were but imperfectly acquainted with the mediatorial scheme, Mr. Watson saw the way into the holiest opened, by the blood of Jesus; and he did often "draw near" in such a manner, that the divine presence was sensibly realized, and his fellow-worshippers were compelled to own, "It is good for us to be here." His public devotions were equally removed from cold formality on the one hand, and unhallowed levity and presumption on the other. They were the devotions of a conscious sinner; but of a sinner justified by the blood of Jesus, and inspired with a filial disposition by the divine Comforter whom the Saviour promised.

While Mr. Watson was free from bigotry, and a narrow, sectarian spirit, he was most cordial in his attachment to his own religious denomination. The doctrines held by the Wesleyan body he believed to be those of the New Testament; and as such he embraced and defended them. To the Wesleyan discipline he was equally attached; and

he deprecated all attempts to innovate upon its vital principles. It has, by the divine blessing, preserved the orthodoxy and spirituality of the body for near a century ; and he felt that it ought not to be tampered with, especially by men of speculative habits, and of questionable piety, who might wish to render it more conformable to the principles of a secular policy. Whenever Methodism was assailed, or the character of its Founder was a subject of misrepresentation, he appeared as the unflinching advocate of both ; and whatever reputation he possessed as a man of talent and genius, he willingly employed it in the service of his brethren, and the cause which they had espoused. He never seemed to think that he had done enough for the body to which he belonged. His days and nights were devoted to its interests ; and his life was shortened by the ardour of his zeal to extend the Wesleyan Missions, and to improve the piety and intelligence of the societies by the productions of his pen. In the introduction to his will, which he wrote only a few weeks before his decease, he declared his affection for his brethren in the strongest terms ; and the gift of his literary property to the Connexion was an expression of the same cordial and disinterested regard for a people among whom he had obtained the "pearl of great price," and whom, above all others, he esteemed and loved. It was his judgment, that a part of the proceeds of the Wesleyan Book-Establishment in the City-road should be appropriated to the education of the junior Ministers ; and it was with this view that he was so munificent a donor to that concern. The improvement

of the Methodist ministry lay near his heart. He saw that his esteemed brethren possessed the requisite talent; and he was anxious that this talent should receive the best direction, and be always found connected with deep piety, and laborious zeal.

During the three years in which he resided in the City-road, Mr. Watson was a frequent visitant to the Wesleyan Book-Room, in the immediate neighbourhood of his own house; and its judicious and successful management by his friend Mr. Mason afforded him the highest pleasure. He often saw several tons of books sent from that place in the course of one month, to supply the home stations and the foreign Missions; and when he reflected upon the character and tendency of these publications, his satisfaction arose to gratitude. He knew that many of them found their way to obscure villages and hamlets, and to distant colonies, where scarcely any other literature is known; and that all of them were calculated to promote that holiness of spirit and conduct which is the great end of man. These were facts to which he often referred; and he thanked God for the means thus supplied for counteracting ungodliness and infidelity. The influence of his own writings upon the Wesleyan body has already been very great. The Catechisms which he compiled instruct our children; his "Conversations" direct our youth; and his other works exert no common influence upon the thinkings of our Preachers, both Itinerant and Local, as well as upon private individuals. The records of religious experience, which constitute so prominent a part of Methodist

literature, and which even some individuals belonging to the body have affected to despise, had his cordial approbation ; and when he sometimes heard it urged, that the Methodists ought either to enlarge their own Magazine, or establish a Review, he invariably expressed a hope that, whatever arrangements of this kind might be made, "the blessed experiences of our pious people" would always form a prominent object in the periodical works of the Connexion. The religion of the heart, which prepares men to walk with God in singleness of purpose, and to die in peace, he regarded as the leading design of Methodism in all its apparatus.

As a colleague, and the Superintendent of a Circuit, Mr. Watson was perfectly frank in all his intercourse with his brethren, making them acquainted with his plans, and taking his full share of labour and responsibility. In the quarterly visitation of the classes, for the renewal of the society tickets, he took sufficient time to inquire into the spiritual state of each member ; and it was a high privilege to listen to his kind, discriminating, and appropriate advices. With a truly pastoral solicitude he would enter into the various cases and circumstances of his charge, and so adapt his counsels and encouragements, that none could fail to find a portion for himself, while at the same time he participated in the general benefit. There was a force and an appropriateness in his addresses on these occasions which often produced a very deep and hallowed impression.

To the Wesleyan doctrine of present salvation

from the guilt and power of sin, by faith in the sacrificial blood of Christ, he was strongly attached. "O brother Jackson," said he to the writer of these memoirs, in their last interview, "we who have had a Methodist training can never be sufficiently thankful to God for the two great lessons which we were taught in early life,—the atonement of Christ; and the use to be made of that atonement:" intimating that, while some people acknowledge Jesus Christ as a mere martyr to the truth; there are others who regard the atonement of his death only as an article of their creed, without understanding the nature of the salvation connected with it, or the faith by which that salvation is obtained, and enjoyed in the present life.

Mr. Watson's Methodism was of a purely Wesleyan character. He was no theoretic Dissenter, and cherished no feelings of hostility to the religious Establishment of this country. An established Church, recognising the principles of evangelical truth, and accompanied by a legal protection of all who prefer a different creed and mode of worship, he declared to be in his view the most likely means of promoting true religion and morality, and by consequence the national welfare. He was far indeed from thinking that the Church of England had done all that she ought to have done for the instruction and spiritual benefit of the people; but her formularies embody all the vital truths of Christianity; her services keep the subject of religion continually before the public mind; not a few of her Clergy have been and still are among the most useful and exemplary of the Ministers of Christ; and her general influence is

therefore great and salutary. In his writings he repeatedly speaks of her as "the mother of us all;" and he describes the sanctified and profound erudition embodied in the works of her Divines, as "the light of Christendom." It was not indeed either his wish or his hope, that the Church should sanction all the functionaries and machinery of Methodism, or that the Methodists should abandon any of the peculiarities of their discipline, which has been of such vast utility in promoting the interests of religion; for this he thought would be beneficial to neither party, and would require from both such a sacrifice of principle as they ought not to make; but he was desirous that the Methodist body should always stand in a friendly relation to the Church, aiming not at party purposes, but simply at the advancement of true religion. Few things therefore gave him greater pain than the calumnious and unprovoked attacks upon the Methodists, which have been made of late years by the conductors of some periodical works professing to advocate the cause of the Establishment; because he saw that they were only calculated to excite a spirit of recrimination, and alienate the Methodists more and more from the Church, to the injury of Christian charity, and of the work of God. The Methodists, he thought, might derive great advantage from the sobriety and sound learning of the Church; and Churchmen might be benefited by Methodist zeal and activity. When he published his *Life of Mr. Wesley*, one of the Prelates addressed to him a friendly letter, expressing the general pleasure which he had felt in the perusal of the work; and Mr. Watson remarked,



when he read it, "If these men would only treat us with ordinary kindness and respect, instead of denouncing us as schismatics, they would find us to be among their best friends in the approaching struggle." His admiration of the Liturgy was unbounded; and he greatly enjoyed the use of it in the Wesleyan chapels on the Sunday morning. Its beauties as a literary composition recommended it to his fine taste; but it was more strongly endeared to him by the spirit of pure and elevated devotion which it breathes. When he was confined to his house by sickness, he read it with his family, as a substitute for public worship; and he said to the writer of these pages, about a year before his death, that if he were a private individual, and there were no Methodist congregations with whom he could unite in divine worship, he should attend the religious services of the established Church in preference to any others, because of the solemnity and order which are secured by the use of the Liturgy. To the public reading of so large a portion of the holy Scriptures in the services of the Church of England he also often referred, as a peculiar excellence. These sentiments were not the result of prejudice and early habit, but of observation and deep thought.

The crowning excellence of Mr. Watson's character was his piety. It was this that guided him in the application of his talents, and gave a superior force and energy to his mind. There was nothing visionary and mystical in his piety; it was thoroughly scriptural and practical. He cherished deep and impressive views of the evil of sin, the purity and spirituality of the moral law, and of the

holiness and justice of God; and from merely abstract conceptions of the divine mercy he could derive no hope. It was upon the atonement for sin made by the death of Christ that all his confidence rested; because he saw that this doctrine is one of the most prominent truths of the Bible, and reconciles the exercise of mercy to sinners with the authority of law and the claims of justice. To the redemption of mankind by the death of Christ, his attention was daily and hourly directed. It was from the meritorious passion of his Saviour, of which he entertained the most affecting views, that his chief motives to piety were derived. Here he saw the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and loathed himself as a depraved and guilty creature; here he saw the exceeding riches of the divine compassion, and he aspired to the possession and exercise of perfect love in return; and in sight of the cross he felt his obligations to present to the Lord his entire person, "a holy, living sacrifice." Happily conscious of his acceptance in the Beloved, of the constant influence of the Holy Spirit vouchsafed to him through the mediation of Christ, and of his title to endless blessedness in heaven, he knew not how he could adequately express the sense which he entertained of the mercy of his Saviour. The fire of grateful love, kindled at the altar of the cross, shed a lustre over his whole spirit and conduct. His Missionary zeal was zeal for the honour and rights of Christ, as the sovereign Lord of a redeemed world. His yearning pity for the Heathen, and for the unregenerate part of mankind in every place, was a pity derived from the tears and groans of Calvary. That Christ

was honoured and adored among men who were recently in a savage state, afforded him the richest satisfaction ; and it was with feelings of deep and pure delight, that he contemplated the worshipping assemblies of converted Heathens, lifting up their voices in the sublime strains of the universal church, and in the spirit of a pure devotion. The prevailing sentiment of his heart was that which has been so eloquently expressed by Milton :—“ Come forth out of thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the Kings of the earth ! Put on the visible robes of thy imperial Majesty ; take up that unlimited sceptre which thy almighty Father hath bequeathed thee ; for now the voice of thy bride calls thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed.”

His piety was at once improved and manifested by a devotional spirit and habit. He evidently spent much time in secret prayer, and in holy converse with God ; and he diligently read the Scriptures, not merely to find matter for the pulpit and the press, but with a reference to the regulation of his own heart and life. When he read the sacred Scriptures in his family, or with the social party, his manner was reverent and devout ; and he often paused, as if to receive the full impression of the holy sentiments to which his lips gave utterance, and to which others were listening with fixed attention. It was the gracious feeling thus excited, and which, by the divine blessing, he succeeded in communicating to his hearers, that gave the principal charm to his public ministry. The strong and permanent effects produced by his sermons were not occasioned so much by the comprehensiveness and sublimity of his views, the force of

his reasonings, and the richness and power of his imagination, as by the tone of piety by which they were characterized, and the spiritual influence by which they were attended. He felt the truths which he delivered in all their weight and importance; and under a corresponding impression, his hearers became silent and prayerful. The more pious his hearers were, the more they valued his preaching. He showed them not only the external magnificence and beauty of the temple of truth, but he conducted them into the interior of the sacred edifice, and led them from one compartment to another, till he placed them in the holiest of all, and fixed their reverent gaze upon "the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat." The same remark will apply to his conversation, which was intellectual and instructive in the highest degree; but it was also directed to holy purposes. He spoke of public events in their connexion with the providence of God, and the interests of the church of Christ; and of personal religion, and the progress of Christianity in the world, in connexion with the mediatorial scheme, and the work of the Holy Spirit; and many a social party was, by his wisdom and cheerful piety, rendered a means of grace.

At the close of the year 1831, he thus speaks of himself, in a letter to the Rev. William M. Bunting, who enjoyed his friendship. It shows the deep sense which he entertained of the responsibility connected with the sacred office, and the feelings with which he contemplated the termination of his public labours. "My health is very feeble, and I have hard work to keep on; yet I never

loved my work so much, and, I trust, never laboured more to do it in the solemn view of eternity. One thing I feel, standing upon the close of active life, that I have read, prayed, preached, in all far below the true standard of ministerial devotedness; and that, if life were again to begin, I should endeavour, at least, to enter more fully into the spirit of the only work on earth which directly connects itself with 'glory, honour, and immortality.' I seem rather to have been in a dream than broad awake. Still these humbling thoughts serve to heighten the infinite grace which gives the sweet sense of acceptance; and make me feel more powerfully the emphasis of, 'By grace are ye saved.' May your course, my dear friend, be always increasingly bright and influential; and may your ministry fix many gems in your diadem at last!"

Mr. Watson was a remarkable instance of sanctified affliction. For many years his personal sufferings were great, and he seemed to be suspended over the gulf of eternity by a slender thread. The frequent interruption of his labours and projects gave exercise to submission to the divine will, till his "soul was as a weaned child;" and even the desire of life for the purpose of usefulness became extinct. His constant anticipations of death led to realizing views of the world of spirits; and "the death-bed of the just" has seldom been more honoured than in his case. Those who witnessed the scene can never forget it.

"He taught us how to live; and,—O too high  
A price for knowledge!—taught us how to die!"

Till within a little while of his dissolution, his powerful intellect was unimpaired; and he was fully aware, that in a few days he should be in another world; yet he walked through the valley of the shadow of death with a spirit "calm and undismayed." His peace flowed like a river, and his hope was full of immortality. Upon the sacrificial blood of his Saviour he placed his exclusive reliance; and he looked for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Being now freed from the burden of the flesh, which had so frequently interfered with his mental exercises, and with his active services in the church, and had so long proved a source of intense suffering, his sanctified spirit knows no more pain,

"And hears the unexpressive nuptial song  
In the blest kingdom meek of joy and love.  
There entertain him all the hosts above,  
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,  
That sing, and singing in their glory move,  
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes."

THE END.