

est undoubtedly was, its tendency to wean him from courtly attachments, and to promote the disposition of which we are now speaking. Indeed of such importance is a contemplative mind, in forming the Christian character, that without it the greatest external advantages will be of little avail; and in the exercise of it many, though surrounded with difficulties, have attained to the highest excellence in the Christian life.—Thus it is that more steady and fixed principles of action are acquired; the mind is not liable to be carried about with ‘every wind of doctrine,’ as is the case with the superficial observer; and the truths of Christianity become the life and support of the soul.

These general observations were strikingly exemplified in the subject of these pages. While many, it is to be feared, attempt to teach others what they know but imperfectly, either in theory or from experience, his Divine Master, by a course of discipline, often severe but salutary, taught him out of his law. By remaining for some time in retirement as a private Christian he was enabled to enter more into the views and feelings of Christians in common, and to speak a ‘word in season to him that was weary; to comfort the feeble-minded; to support the weak;’ and to administer consolation to the fainting soul.

He was in the habitual practice of noticing in a particular manner not only the yearly and monthly, but the *daily* lapse of time:—this is of great importance to the due improvement of it. He who in examining the transactions of the day, seriously inquiring what report they have borne to heaven; comparing time past with what may be yet to come, and lamenting his past fol-



lies, is led to exclaim, with bitter regret, "I have lost a day;" must feel his energies called into exercise, and increasing desires that his mind may not be harassed by the same painful sensations.—The "knell of his departing hours" will rouse him to exertion, and summon him with renewed diligence to 'work while it is called to-day,' knowing that 'the night cometh when no man can work.' In this respect, such a record of passing events, as is contained in a diary, becomes of inestimable value to the writer. In revising it, he in some sort measures back his way; and while he retraces his past footsteps, and reviews his errors and deliverances, his purposes and resolutions for holiness are confirmed. The 119th Psalm, perhaps the most ancient and beautiful model of this kind, affords an admirable illustration. After recounting his backslidings, and the instances of restoring mercy, the Psalmist exclaims, 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!' 'Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect to all thy commandments.'

His habits of early rising were still continued, and he appeared dissatisfied with himself if every portion of his time was not spent in some useful employ. The dawn of the morning was occupied in meditation and prayer, being the season least exposed to interruption, and the leisure he was able to secure during the rest of the day was principally devoted to reading.—For poetry and many branches of polite learning he had a taste from his earliest years.—He did not confine himself to any particular class of books; he endeavoured to store his mind with general knowledge; yet the BIBLE, and those books which were subsidiary to the study of it, engaged his principal attention, and constituted the most essential part of his daily reading. The



*pocket Bible* which, when first acquired, he considered as the greatest treasure he ever possessed, never afterwards sunk in his estimation; it was his *vade-mecum*, and the foundation was then laid for that extensive acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures which distinguished his future life. Like Timothy 'he had known the Scriptures from a child,' and he considered the study of them as the most effectual means of being made 'wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' When employed in his manual labour, he was generally surrounded with his books, on which he glanced when opportunity offered; and having pens and paper by him, put down hastily, sometimes in prose, and at others in verse, such thoughts as occurred from reading or reflection.

But perhaps in no respect was this period of his life more distinguished than by the observance of the Sabbath and the public ordinances of God's house. He rejoiced on the return of the day, not merely as a period of rest, but more especially as 'one of the days of the Son of Man.' On this subject he entered into the feelings of the Psalmist David as expressed in Psalm cxxii. and many other parts of his writings. Those sabbaths on which the Lord's Supper was administered were particularly noticed by him. He had a high value for this ordinance, and kept an account of the number of times he had the privilege of attending to it. He showed the greatest solicitude to have his mind prepared for the work of the sanctuary, and that in public, as well as in private, his heart might be with God.—The hints frequently dropped in his diary evidence that he received with 'meekness and fear, the engrafted word which is able to save the soul.' There are no



traces of a captious, censorious, fastidious spirit, undervaluing the abilities, or dissatisfied with the qualifications of the preacher, but often, very often self-abasing expressions, on account of the misimprovement of privileges so great, and references to particular parts of the sermons, with self-application, endeavouring to derive from them instruction and consolation as the case required. He manifested all the simplicity of a babe in Christ, desiring the 'sincere milk of the word,' or, like Mary, he humbly sat at the feet of Jesus, to hear his Word.

The MS. volumes which he left behind him contain, besides a diary, the outlines of many sermons preached by his highly esteemed pastor, Mr. Crabtree, Mr. Smith of Wainsgate, Mr. Wood, then of Halifax, Mr. Nuttall of Goodshaw Chapel, Mr. Oulton of Rawden, and Mr. Hartley of Haworth;—some on public occasions; others when they paid friendly visits to Bradford, and officiated for Mr. Crabtree. These sermons he frequently refers to in his diary, and points particularly to those parts which struck him most forcibly in the delivery. He often read them in the private meeting, and enlarged upon them, after the example of his early friend Mr. Swain:—this must have been a great means of overcoming his natural timidity, and of initiating him in the composition of sermons. No doubt the discourses which he took so much pains in writing at the time of delivery, or afterwards from recollection, were such as particularly impressed his mind; and they are valuable, not only on account of the excellence of the matter, but as specimens of the mode of preaching which then prevailed. They were many of them evidently the result of close study. Like the old Puritan divines, the ministers sometimes dwelt on the same text from Sab



bath to Sabbath. The numerous divisions and subdivisions, appear to a modern taste, dry and unnecessarily diffuse. Much time was taken up in considering the subject in all its different bearings: many *negative* particulars are dwelt upon, in some instances far-fetched, before the obvious and direct meaning of the passage is discussed. In treating upon personal and relative duties, the most minute directions are given, concerning dress, deportment, and civil transactions. This was often carried so far as to betray narrow and contracted views. The sermons contained in this collection preached by Mr. Smith are almost entirely practical. There are several valuable funeral sermons, and others on doctrinal and practical subjects, by Mr. Crabtree; but he evidently placed peculiar value on those delivered by Mr. Hartley, which are by far the most numerous. For his talents and character he retained, from the first of his acquaintance, the most sincere respect:—he consulted him as a friend in cases of difficulty; and so far as an idea may be formed from what remains of his writings, there was a striking similarity in their views, on most religious subjects.

This excellent man was born in the month of March, 1722: he gave early proofs of good natural abilities; but as his parents were poor, he had not many advantages of education. In the year 1744, he began to have serious impressions, and was for some time a hearer of the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw of Haworth: he afterwards attended the ministry of Mr. Smith, and became a member of the church at Wainsgate.—His gifts and graces could not long be concealed. About the year 1748, he began to exercise his ministerial talents to the satisfaction and benefit of many. He was the means of rais-



ing the church at Haworth, and was ordained over it June 12, 1752. He studied the Holy Scriptures with unwearied diligence, and was admirably 'furnished unto all good works;' his method of discussing his subjects was clear and natural, his reasoning nervous and manly. He was an exception to the general observation that 'a prophet has no honour in his own country.' His congregation was not large, but very respectable.—His manner of speaking in the pulpit was slow and sedate; he did not affect popularity; but those who heard him with attention were constrained to exclaim: 'How forcible are right words!' Like those eminent men with whom he associated, he never relinquished the people of his charge, but lived and died with them. In private life he was kind and communicative, and, from the estimation in which his judgment was held, often consulted by his friends. His neighbour, the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, treated him with great affection and respect, as a fellow-labourer, and frequently made him a partaker of his liberality. On some occasions, he visited London; and the letters to him from Mr. Wallin and others, while they show the primitive simplicity and sterling piety which prevailed in those days, bear witness to the high respect entertained for him by his friends in the metropolis.

Among others of Mr. Hartley's sermons, there is one preached at the ordination of Mr. Wood, at Halifax, August 6, 1760. It was most probably copied from Mr. Hartley's original papers, and must have been at full length, as it extends to nearly sixty closely written pages. The following note is prefixed: "This discourse was delivered by the same judicious person as the two foregoing, and is, in my opinion, superior to any thing



of the kind I ever met with, either from the pulpit or the press."

The writer of these pages has himself been so much impressed with the same sentiments, as to its excellence, that he would have been tempted to insert it in this work, if publications of a similar kind had not so frequently appeared, as to render it scarcely necessary:—the text is 1 Tim. iv. 16: 'Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine.' Take heed: 1, To your conversation in the world at large; 2, To your conduct to the people of your charge; 3, Take heed to yourself in the closet; and, above all, Take heed to yourself, in reference to the life and power of religion. Take heed to thy *doctrine*:—that it be drawn from and founded on the Holy Scriptures; that Christ be the sum and substance of the doctrine you preach; that it be thoroughly examined and digested before you deliver it to others; that it include the 'whole counsel of God,' and be adapted to the persons with whom you have to do, so as to give to every one a 'portion of meat in due season, rightly dividing the word of truth.'

These are the leading topics of the charge; and they are illustrated and enforced in the most solemn and impressive manner. From many circumstances it is evident that the ordination here referred to, was a most interesting season.—The sermon preached by Mr. Crabtree, and addressed to the people, on the same occasion, is subjoined to the Memoir of him, published by the Rev. Mr. Mann.

The advice given by these servants of God to those who were entering upon the sacred office, was not mere common-place direction, but sanctioned by their own conduct, as Christians and ministers. They were men



of eminent piety; and as there was, in many instances, something remarkable in their conversion and call to the ministry, the light they enjoyed was marvellous in their own eyes and in those of others. Their exterior appearance strongly indicated the gravity of their minds, and in some sort added weight to their instructions. According to the costume of the times, they generally wore large full-bottomed wigs, which, though now deemed an unnecessary, if not an unnatural appendage, were then considered as almost indispensable. Their minds were most deeply impressed with the importance of the work to which they were called; and they were no less distinguished from the generality of their audience, by the peculiarity of their dress, than by their detachment from the world, and the superior sanctity of their lives, being examples to the flock over which they were appointed overseers.

During the period now referred to, a diversity of opinions and much controversy prevailed in the Christian church respecting some abstruse points of doctrine. A considerable number of the Baptist ministers and their people were what we now commonly term *High Calvinists*, though there were some exceptions; among whom may be mentioned Mr. Alverly Jackson, who wrote on the subject, Mr. Parker, Mr. Wood, and a few others. The separation between Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Wesley greatly tended to promote the discussion of these points among their respective adherents, which were sometimes carried on with intemperate zeal. Many of the dissenting ministers, as has been already observed, received their first impressions under these two great leaders. The agitation of these questions between men



whom they so highly revered naturally directed their attention to the same subjects; and those who separated from the Methodist societies carried the controversy with them to the respective denominations with which they united; some having correct, and others more confused ideas, of the Calvinistic system.

The Baptist cause being in its infancy in this part of the country, recourse was had to the churches of the same denomination in London and the vicinity, that their hands might be strengthened, and that by becoming better acquainted with the faith and order of those which were considered as sister churches, they might benefit by their direction and assistance. Mr. Brine, Dr. Gill, and Mr. Wallin, were considered as leading characters; and though as Dissenters they disclaimed all pretensions to dominion over the faith of others, yet it would have been difficult for them wholly to repel the charge of prescribing with too great minuteness, and in language not always authorized by Scripture, what ought to be the sentiments of those who connected themselves with these societies.

As divines they justly continue to stand in high estimation, and their memory will be revered to the latest period of time; but in their voluminous writings, an undue proportion of attention appears to have been paid to points confessedly beyond human comprehension. The questions respecting supralapsarianism and sublapsarianism, eternal justification, &c. are here particularly referred to.

The plan of publishing systematic treatises, or *bodies of divinity*, is now in a great measure laid aside; but at the period under consideration, and for a century



before, Protestant divines on the Continent, and in our own country, who had attained to any eminence, thought it incumbent upon them to lay their ideas before the public in this form. This undoubtedly, in some respects, had its advantages; but it is evident that God himself did not think proper to reveal his counsels to mankind in this way; and it seems almost like presumption to attempt to *new model* what he has made known, and to endeavour to give explanations, where Infinite Wisdom has judged it expedient to withhold them. Some of those who undertook these works were deeply versed in metaphysics and logical distinctions, and were too fond of introducing abstruse questions, attempting to explain what is never explained in Scripture. Many terms were consequently introduced, which, not being clearly understood and defined, and not authorized by the Word of God, tended to perpetuate contentions, to perplex and bewilder, rather than enlighten. As the intermixture of *Platonic* philosophy with Christianity, in the early ages of the church, tarnished its native beauty and simplicity, so the subtilties of *Scholastic* theology, in later times, have been so far from clearing up, that they have magnified and multiplied difficulties.

Enough is revealed of the economy of grace to excite our humble admiration of the harmony of the Divine attributes as herein displayed; but whatever systems human skill may devise, some things must remain inexplicable. It becomes us therefore, instead of implicitly adopting any one framed by man, to *study with impartiality the word of God*. If we read them, as we may do, with advantage, if our aims are right,



and our minds unbiassed, we should endeavour to bring *them* to the standard of God's word, 'to the law, and to the testimony, for whatever is not according to them, it is because there is no light in them.' Though the wisdom of God is revealed in the Bible, it is in such a manner that our *faith*, as well as our other graces, must be brought into *obedience*; and after all our researches such are the imperfections of our fallen nature, that we, seeing as 'through a glass darkly,' must not expect, in the present state, to enjoy more than glimpses of many things, which will never be clearly seen, till we arrive in a better and brighter world. 'Now I know in part, but *then* shall I know even as also I am known.'

If an inspired Apostle, after having considered the subject of the Divine conduct in the distribution of special favours, was led to say, 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?'—if, while he was proceeding in the investigation, he found himself at length getting into a fathomless abyss, where he exclaimed, 'O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' 'How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' how much more does it become us, whose attainments are so much inferior, to check those inquiries which would presume to scan the depths of infinite wisdom, and to be 'wise above that which is written?'

There is no truth more clearly revealed in Scripture than the helplessness and moral inability of man, as a fallen creature, and the absolute necessity of the grace of Christ, imparted by the Holy Spirit, without whom we can do nothing spiritually good. 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that



sheweth mercy,' yet those who 'neglect this great salvation' are left without excuse, and the guilt lies upon their own heads.

How far these general observations will apply to the works, published by the eminent men before mentioned, the writer of these pages will not presume to say. Mr. Brine wrote several treatises on the matters in dispute. In his views on many topics, he went *beyond* what Calvin ever taught. Dr. Gill published a large Body of Divinity, a work entitled the "Cause of God and Truth," entirely polemical, and a voluminous Exposition of the whole Bible. The possession of these elaborate performances was, in those days, considered as almost an essential part of the library, not only of ministers, but of private Christians of the Baptist denomination, who could afford to purchase them. They were read almost exclusively, to the neglect of other works on divinity. The consequence of which was, that not only the ministers, but many of their hearers, acquired a taste for *polemic* divinity, which was eventually found to be highly injurious to the peace and comfort of religious societies. Few works of an expository kind are better adapted for the use of ministers, who can read with discrimination, than Dr. Gill's Exposition, and many of his other works on divinity. They were highly esteemed, in this point of view, by the subject of this narrative; but they certainly are not so well calculated for the use of Christians in common. Not to mention his frequent references to the fanciful interpretations of the Jewish Rabbies, he very often introduces his fa-



yourite points, where the passage to be explained does not appear to have any direct reference to them. This is indeed generally the case with those who engage in controversy. The controverted subjects dwell too much upon the mind, assume an unnatural and undue importance, and give a tincture to the whole train of thinking. From the same cause there is also a proneness in the human mind to impute to our opponents meanings never intended by them, and equally abhorrent to them as to ourselves.

Connected with the influence which the extensive perusal of these works had, and the high and almost oracular authority which they maintained, may be mentioned the *plan of the associations* as then established, the model of which was probably derived from the same quarter. They greatly contributed to keep up the spirit of religious controversy, and could scarcely be considered as consistent with freedom of inquiry on religious subjects. No printed account of the proceedings appeared; but the secretary for the time being had the laborious task of transmitting in writing to each of the churches in connexion, an account of their transactions. Besides public preaching, and an inquiry into the state of the churches, questions on theological subjects were proposed, to which written answers were expected to be given at the next annual meeting of the association. Many of these questions were of a doctrinal nature, others relative to cases of conscience. These were read before the assembled ministers and elders; and as a diversity of opinions sometimes occurred in the answers given to the same question, it was found difficult to preserve peace and harmony, and to come to decisions which would not violate the independence of



Christian societies; so that for this and other reasons the association was dissolved. Numbers of the queries, with the replies given by the respective ministers, are in the possession of the writer. Many of these display considerable ability and biblical knowledge; but as the views of good men, and their manner of stating them, are diversified, it must have been next to impossible for such answers to be given as would, on controverted points, be satisfactory to all; and which, as sanctioned by a body, whether passing by the name of association or synod, would not infringe upon the liberty wherewith 'Christ has made his people free.'

The *Church covenants*, which were in general minute and particular, being drawn up after the plan published by Dr. Gill, if subscribed *ex animo*, by those who were admitted as members of Christian churches, must have had a great tendency to lead the attention to controversial topics. Many things contained in this form of words, however excellent it may be in itself, must have been beyond the comprehension of 'babes in Christ,' of those who were not able to bear strong food, but who required to be instructed in 'the first principles of the oracles of God.'

Conformity of sentiment among those who unite in church fellowship is certainly desirable; but the confession which satisfied an Evangelist and an Apostle, if connected with a conversation which adorns such a confession, ought to be the model for our imitation, adopting the language of inspiration as much as possible. Every departure from this, by intermixing systems of human invention, tends to tarnish and obscure that 'simplicity which is in Christ,' and has in all ages been productive of unpleasant consequences.



The reading of those long forms, on the admission of church members, has for many years been in a great measure omitted, and the attention of the candidates more particularly directed to the important duties incumbent on those who take upon themselves the Christian profession.

This fondness for systematic divinity, which has in some degree been accounted for by the preceding remarks, had too often an unhappy effect on the minds, both of preachers and hearers. While this was kept constantly in view, a barrier was set to expanded views, and enlarged ideas on Divine truth.\* Disproportionate attention was paid to the points in dispute; and every attempt to diverge from them was considered as a departure from the truth, and an approach towards legal doctrine. Hence those cautions so often introduced in the sermons of that day, lest any thing suggested should be interpreted as inconsistent with their avowed sentiments on the disputed points. In the general strain of preaching many dwelt too much

\* The following judicious remarks, extracted from a recent publication, are applicable to this subject.

“In developing the causes of those various errors and mistakes which have, more or less, abounded in every age of the Christian church, the source of many of them may be traced to that imperfect and prejudiced view which has too often been taken of the scheme of Christianity. Biassed in favour of some particular system of theology, its advocates have not compared spiritual things with spiritual, Scripture with Scripture. On the contrary, they have deduced their conclusions from insulated or broken passages of Holy Writ. But this is not dealing fairly with such a subject. As justly should we conceive the form of some ancient edifice, from surveying its detached and mutilated fragments, as we can determine what the temple of the Lord is, without examining and comparing every part of the sacred fabric.”



on them. Whatever was the subject or text, it was a practice not uncommon to introduce the *whole system*, and to give their particular sentiments a prominent place in almost all their sermons. It is obvious that when this was done in a *disputatious* manner, it could not fail of producing an improper impression on the minds of their hearers, of promoting a party spirit and prejudices against those who differed from them. On some occasions public disputations were held; and in general, where this unhappy spirit prevailed, much greater solicitude was shown by the hearers to ascertain whether the preacher gave a correct statement of their preconceived sentiments and opinions, listening whether they could find in what was said the shibboleth of the party, whether he was a Calvinist of the right stamp, and forming a *judgment* of him accordingly, rather than endeavouring to profit by what they heard.\* Hence the unguarded censures passed by too many, who would scarcely allow that any preached the Gospel who varied at all from their favourite phraseology.

\* An anecdote, which too fully confirms these observations, is related of an old gentleman who professed the highest regard for a certain divine of high Calvinistic principles. Some of his friends noticing that he frequently slept under his ministry, while he was all attention when any stranger officiated for him, could not forbear expressing their surprise at what appeared to them so inconsistent. His reply was, that he was so well satisfied of the orthodoxy of his favourite preacher, who he well knew would advance nothing contrary to his views, that he did not see the necessity of such diligent attention; but that he *must listen to others* in order that he might be able to ascertain whether they were sound or not.—When this is the sole or the principal object in hearing the word, no wonder if there be little growth in grace, or of the true spirit of Christianity.



On the minds of others, to the inexpressible grief of their pious ministers, a still more unfavourable effect was produced. The ignorant, captious, and perverse, taking but a partial and incorrect view of the system, drank in the spirit of antinomianism, became lax in their sentiments, and, by their unholy conduct, occasioned great distress both to the ministers and the societies to which they had belonged. These excellent men took great pains to guard what they advanced in their pulpits from such misrepresentations and unhallowed abuses. They were far from approving the unqualified assertions contained in some parts of the writings of Dr. Crisp and Mr. Hussey, and entirely disclaimed the dangerous positions respecting moral obligation, which have been boldly maintained by some modern innovators, who have arrogated to themselves the exclusive denomination of preachers of the Gospel; and by their distorted representations of the doctrines of grace, have given occasion to the enemies of truth to speak evil of what they understand not. The reasoning of an inspired Apostle must convince every unbiassed mind that the law is not 'made void through faith,' but established on the firmest and most substantial basis.

The discussions here described were by no means confined exclusively to the Baptists; they prevailed more or less among other denominations, and extended to the Church of England, as must be evident to those who are conversant with the polemical writings of the Rev. Mr. Toplady, which had an extensive circulation, and were highly esteemed by those both in and out of the church who adopted his sentiments.

A controversy also existed at that period, which na-



turally arose from the high Calvinistic principles then prevalent, respecting what was termed the *Gospel call*. This was considered by some as inconsistent with those doctrines which they had embraced, and as having a tendency to Arminianism. It is truly painful to reflect how the minds of good men have been perplexed by this idea, as if the hidden purpose of God was ever intended to be the rule of our conduct, in addressing the consciences of men. Justly may it excite our astonishment that, with the Bible in their hands, containing the discourses not only of the Prophets, but of Christ himself and his Apostles, they should ever have felt any scruples of this kind. Did *they* take up their time in nice casuistical distinctions? No; their object was to 'approve themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God,' and to 'be pure from the blood of all men.' Whilst the Saviour explained to his disciples in private the mysteries of the kingdom, resolved their doubts, and answered their inquiries, he from time to time addressed himself to his hearers of all descriptions, and not merely to their outward ears, but to their hearts, calling them 'to repent and believe' the Gospel. The same commission he gave to his disciples, both before and after his ascension. Accordingly we find that Peter, in his first sermon after the day of Pentecost, being filled with the Holy Ghost, addressed himself to the rulers of the people and the elders of Israel, the very *murderers* of his risen and exalted Saviour. 'Repent and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins.' Such has been, in every age of the church, the spirit and conduct of those who have been most singularly instrumental in reviving and carrying on the work of God. The example of Christ and



of his Apostles have been their *authority* for so doing ; and here they have rested satisfied, whatever cavils human sophistry might raise against them.\* Thus it

\* The remarks made by the Rev. Mr. Newton, in his letter on ministerial address, are too appropriate to be omitted : “ We should undoubtedly endeavour to maintain a consistency in our preaching ; but unless we keep the plan and manner of the Scripture constantly in view, and attend to every part of it,—a design of consistency may fetter our sentiments, and greatly preclude our usefulness. We need not wish to be more consistent than the inspired writers, nor be afraid of speaking as they have spoken before us. We may easily perplex ourselves and our hearers, by nice reasoning on the nature of human liberty, and the Divine agency on the hearts of men ; but such disquisitions are better avoided. If when you are in the pulpit, the Lord favours you with a lively sense of the greatness of the trust, and the worth of the souls committed to your charge, and fills your heart with his constraining love, many little curious distinctions which amused you at other times will be forgotten. Your soul will go forth with your words ; and while your bowels yearn over poor sinners, you will not hesitate a moment whether you ought to warn them of their danger or not. That great champion of free grace, Dr. Owen, has a very solemn address to sinners, the running title to which is, ‘ Exhortation unto believing.’ It is in the Exposition of the 131st Psalm.”

Another extract from a recent publication is also much to the purpose. “ Mr. Elliot, the Indian Apostle, said to a minister who came to visit him in dying circumstances, ‘ Brother, brother, let there be much of Christ in your ministry, if you would win souls.’ Christ crucified must not only be preached, he must be preached to *all*. If the Gospel is of the inspiration of the Spirit, then the free preaching of that Gospel will prove the certain medium of his ministrations and glory. It is the stale declamation of an inflated orthodoxy, that you may with as much hope of success call upon a dead man to arise and come forth from his grave, as to persuade a dead sinner to believe in Christ. But with the leave of these sapient logicians, we may ask, what is there that bears the least resemblance or agreement in the cases supposed ? To raise a dead body, a *miracle* must be wrought ; but the process by which a soul



was, as an excellent writer observes, with Elliot, Brainerd, and several others, who preached Christ with so much success to the American Indians. They seemed to have their work all plain before them. They had none of those shackles with which good men have sometimes found themselves encumbered, so as to en-  
fetter their minds and bar their exertions. In such addresses to the consciences, as it is evident they delivered, there is something to rouse attention and excite the interest of every one. The care of the souls of hearers of every class, the rescue of perishing sinners from the brink of destruction, or, to use the energetic language of inspiration, 'pulling them out of the fire,' appear, when this is the case, to be the great object of a minister's preaching; and through a Divine blessing, the strong holds of Satan are demolished, a holy violence

is raised to spiritual life, is as plain as it is adapted and efficient. Here are the Scriptures, the ministry,—all necessary means of instruction; means appointed by the wisdom, and sanctioned by the blessing of heaven. The sinner for whom this provision is made, though dead in sin, and debased by it in the noble faculties of his nature, must yet be treated as a rational being. You are to state the Gospel to him, and urge the belief of it upon him as one who is capable of thinking, reflecting, understanding, remembering, reasoning, and feeling. The Holy Spirit gains access to the heart through the media of the ear, the understanding, and the conscience. To these faculties you must therefore address yourself, unshackled by any false notions. Otherwise you would be chargeable with the guilt of shutting up the very avenues by which the Spirit approaches and takes possession of the soul: and you would then rest the final condemnation of men on grounds as abhorrent to the Divine character, as they are inconsistent with the real condition of the sinner, and the tenor of revelation. 'This is the *condemnation*, that light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.'



is done to the most careless and stupid, so that they begin to cry out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' On the contrary, when the precious moments are spent by the preacher in dwelling almost entirely on the counsels of God from eternity, attempting to prove and defend things utterly beyond human comprehension, and to establish his peculiar system; he may by his supralapsarian visions, or, according to the cant terms formerly much in use, by elucidating the *upper fall settlements*, amuse the fancy and lull the consciences of a certain description of persons, who will applaud him for the correctness of his notions; but the souls of his hearers are in general, it is to be feared, in a starving condition; no warnings given, no encouragements held forth to them to 'flee from the wrath to come.' The conduct of such teachers is like that of a learned divine, whose mind was so much absorbed in his favourite studies, that when preaching to a number of converts under sentence of death, he entered into a long and laboured dissertation on the form and dimensions of Solomon's temple, which he told them, when concluding his sermon, he would finish at a future opportunity. Alas! the poor wretches, in whom such a discussion was not likely to excite much interest, were to be executed the very next morning.

The writer of these pages has been led to dwell pretty largely on these subjects, by several hints interspersed through different parts of the diary, and some circumstances which were frequently mentioned by the deceased, when speaking of the time which he spent as a private member of the church at Bradford. During the early part of his ministry, his worthy and highly respected pastor enlarged much more upon those points



which distinguish high Calvinism than in later years; and this was likewise the case with others, who occasionally filled his pulpit. Some even carried their notions so far as to endeavour to show, that where the terms 'wicked and unrighteous' are used, and exhortations given them by the voice of inspiration to forsake their way, regenerated or converted persons were intended. These perversions of Scripture, and the small portion of the discourses he sometimes heard which could be applicable to the circumstances of careless sinners, and of those who were beginning to feel some concern about the best things, could not but occasion much uneasiness to one who retained a lively impression of the energetic sermons which Whitefield had delivered to thousands who received their first serious impressions under his awakening ministry, and in whom the sentiments he then imbibed were matured by a diligent study of the writings of Flavel, Henry, Watts, and Hervey.

Neither his taste, nor his talents, as has before been stated, led him to engage in controversy. He had an utter aversion to it; he had no leisure to turn aside for the purposes of vain wrangling. Nobler aims and objects engaged his attention. He was desirous to feel the power of Divine truth upon his own soul, and thus to make his 'calling and election sure.' The doctrines of free grace, properly so called, were through life the foundation of his hope and comfort. He was ready on all occasions to adopt the language of the blessed Apostle, 'Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' The views he had on those subjects tended to expand his soul in love to God and



love to perishing sinners. 'The unsearchable riches of Christ, in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell,' and his 'ability to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him,' were the burden of his song; he rejoiced in the invitations of the Gospel, as displaying its freeness and fulness. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,' &c. 'If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.'

Some of his religious friends at Bradford, who were strongly tinctured with high Calvinistic sentiments, and rigidly attached to the books which favoured those opinions, having in one of their interviews made some pointed observations on his slowness of speech, his backwardness to engage in controversy, and his partiality to the writings of some other divines, he soon after addressed a poetical epistle to one of them, in which, with much good humour and pleasantry, he made a reply to the charges adduced against him. Towards the close of life he occasionally repeated, from recollection, some lines of it; but no copy can now be found. In justification of his slowness of speech, he replied that while there were so many to preach and dogmatize, it was certainly fit that *some should hear*. The concluding lines were to the following effect:

"To be brief, my dear friends, you may say what you will,  
I'll ne'er be confined to read nothing but Gill."

For the writings of this laborious divine, he had, as we have already intimated, a high value, in many respects; but he could by no means reconcile himself to



that *exclusive* attention to them, which his friends wished to enjoin.

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In the diary there are several intimations of his having, in a private way, given exhortations from portions of Scripture; but, in the year 1763, he was induced, by the persuasion of his pastor and Christian brethren, though attended with many fears, to speak in a more public manner. On his first appearance in this way, he chose, as the subject of discourse, the words of our Saviour, John x. 'Other sheep have I which are not of this fold,' &c. In this attempt his mind was very unhappy. The assembly was much larger than he expected, and he was overcome by that fear of man which bringeth a snare. This prevailed to such a degree, that he could not recollect what he had premeditated, nor avail himself of the notes he had before him. He was so much discouraged by what he then felt, that he formed a resolution never more to expose his weakness in the same way; but his friends saw something, both in what he delivered at that time and in what they had heard from him on former occasions, which led them to solicit him again. They also requested Mr. Hartley, to whose judgment he paid the greatest deference, to urge him to a compliance. After a considerable interval of hesitation, he consented. His text was in unison with his feelings: 'A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' He was, on this occasion, as happy as he could wish; his hesitations were removed; he was enabled to look above man, and to express himself



with becoming boldness and firmness. From that time he continued to preach frequently. The following is extracted from his diary: "When I had engaged six or seven times in public, the church agreed to pass their approbation on me; and an invitation having been sent from the church at Wainsgate, I consented to officiate, after many earnest supplications to the Almighty for his direction; being deeply impressed with a sense of my own unworthiness. The first Sabbath I spent there was, if I am not mistaken, December 18, 1763. The text in the morning was 1 John, iii. 2: 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God,' &c. In the afternoon I preached from Psalms li. 17. I had great liberty on both occasions. The people expressed their satisfaction, and invited me to go again. I have been four times, not successively, but every second Sabbath."

"February 9, 1764.—I have been for some weeks exercised with bodily affliction, and my mind is not less afflicted than my body. I go mourning from day to day under a sense of my unfitness for the great work in which I have engaged, and what to do I know not.

"About a fortnight ago I received an invitation from the church at Liverpool, under the care of Mr. Oulton, to go and preach in conjunction with their pastor; but I believe, if I have a call any where, it is to Wainsgate. The people there unanimously approve of my poor labours, and unweariedly press me to settle among them."

"February 10.—My companion and I set out for Wainsgate, and were mercifully conducted thither."

"February 11. Lord's Day.—But poorly in body; and in the morning was very unhappy in my mind. I feared it would be a lost day to the Lord's dear people