

attended the ministry of Mr. Smith; or their descendants, whose attachment to the place cannot be wondered at. Their number was, at least, equal to the congregation in Mr. Smith's time, so that those who assembled at the new place, a few individuals excepted, might be considered as the happy fruits of Mr. F.'s personal labours. On this account, as well as his removal to a distance from Wainsgate, the path which duty pointed out to him was evident. The great object of a minister ought to be extensive usefulness, and to co-operate in those plans that are most likely to promote it. As Hebdenbridge was in the centre of a populous neighbourhood, many were now enabled to attend Divine worship statedly, who, from the distance, could only do it occasionally before. This circumstance also rendered it less necessary to hold week-day itinerant meetings, for preaching in those parts which were at some distance. The infirm state of his bodily health, and the engagements in his family, rendered laborious exertions in this way almost impracticable. Riding on horseback, and walking, were both attended with uneasy sensations; and he was often, through extremity of pain, obliged to lie, during the day, in particular postures, on benches or chairs.

In the year 1778, he published his "Advice to Youth, or the Advantages of early Piety." The number of books written expressly for the use of young persons was, at that time, comparatively small; and of those few, scarcely any, on religious subjects. On this account, something of the kind was much wanted; and the reception this book met with from the public far more than equalled his expectations. It appears, from many passages that might be referred to, that it was



composed under the pressure of deep affliction, and intended as a legacy to his beloved pupils, from whom he considered himself as likely to be soon removed by the stroke of death. The following extract, from the preface, shows how little we know of futurity, and how incompetent we are to answer the inquiry, "How long have I to live?"

"The great Searcher of hearts knows the design of this undertaking, and it is humbly laid at his feet, who alone can make it successful. I am conscious of many defects in it. Perhaps the candid will admit, as some excuse for these, the many weighty concerns which lie on my hands, and the continued afflictions with which it has pleased the Lord to exercise me. While the pen is in my hands, death and eternity are before my eyes. The youths who are, or have been, under my care, as a master; those with whom I have to do in the public exercise of my ministry, and especially my own dear children; may look on these hints as the advice of a dying friend, who is most tenderly and affectionately concerned for their present and eternal welfare."

Near as the event of nature's dissolution appeared, at that time, in his own apprehensions, the Almighty was pleased to lengthen out the thread of life to nearly *forty years* beyond that period. The greater part of those for whose use it was primarily written, and whom he addressed as on the verge of eternity, preceded him to the grave; and he had the satisfaction to know that it had been rendered useful in reclaiming many from vice, and leading them into the ways of piety and true wisdom.



It is evident, from this publication, and from the uniform plan which he adopted, and adhered to, in conducting the seminary, that, as he felt the infinite importance of religion on his own mind, so he considered it as an incumbent duty to endeavour to instil into the minds of the young the principles of piety and morality. Like Abraham, his aim was to command 'his children and household to keep the way of the Lord, to do judgment and justice.' And those who knew him best, and enjoyed his religious instructions, will bear witness that his *manner* of doing it was such as to win the heart and affections, entirely remote from that moroseness and reserve which tend to increase rather than subdue prejudice.

He was deeply sensible of the importance of learning; but he ever considered the *fear of God* as entering essentially into the character of the truly wise and accomplished youth.

At the period when this seminary was established the number of similar institutions, in this part of the kingdom, was very small. Population was very limited; and education was not much attended to, except by those who were intended for the learned professions; but the influx of trade and the intercourse which this produced with the higher and more polished ranks of society, soon pointed out the importance of literature to those who were engaged in commercial pursuits; and in proportion as this impression is felt, will be the regard which young persons afterwards retain for those places where they first enjoyed these advantages. Next to the paternal abode, will be a strong attachment to the academic shades where the bright and cheerful season of youth was spent. The thoughts which a charm-



ing poet penned on a distant view of Eton College, have often been applied by the youth grown up to manhood on revisiting more humble seats of science.

“ Ah, happy hills! ah, pleasing shade!

Ah, fields beloved in vain;

Where once my careless childhood stray'd,

A stranger yet to pain.

I feel the gales that from ye blow

A momentary bliss bestow,

As waving fresh their gladsome wing,

My weary soul they seem to soothe,

And redolent of joy and youth,

To breathe a second spring.”

The sight of those places where youthful amusements and innocent pleasures were enjoyed, greatly assists the recollection of that train of feelings and ideas which then occupied the mind. The rocks and trees, the murmuring streams, and relics of frail memorials, made to perpetuate their memory, when recognized in future life, seem almost to assume the power of speech, and to tell of days long since passed, but never to return; of companions once so dear, now perhaps cut off by the premature stroke of death, or separated either by misfortune, or some other cause, to such a distance as to preclude the hope of ever enjoying their society again.

Often, very often has the writer of these lines observed these emotions; while numbers after a lapse of years, revisiting these scenes, have rambled, with inexpressible feelings of interest, in the adjoining woods, fresh recollections starting up at almost every step. The seat occupied in the school, the station of the master, the marks intended to be indelible, cut in the



rocks or footpaths, &c. altogether produced an effect on the mind, which may be better conceived than described. The reader, or at least the young reader, who has participated in these feelings, will it is hoped pardon the introduction of these reflections, which have almost imperceptibly absorbed the attention of the writer, while tracing back the period when the beauty of science first opened to his view, when it might be literally said with respect to himself and his youthful companions: "Gay hope was theirs, by fancy fed, the sunshine of the breast," and in reviewing which, many incidents start to his recollection, to which he may apply the language of the poet, *quorum pars fui*. He well remembers the circumstances and the views under which the "Advice to Youth" was written; and this remembrance has tended greatly to enhance the value of it to him, as an individual.

The publication of this work contributed more than any of the author's prior writings to make him known to the religious public of different denominations, not only in his own neighbourhood, but in other parts of the kingdom. The style is plain, and suited to the capacities of young persons; the arguments are forcible, urged with the greatest earnestness and affection; and still more deeply to impress the mind with the subject, the ideas are frequently comprised in verse, at the close of the chapters. Every page bears the strongest marks of the sense the author had of the importance of his subject, and his desire to promote the best interests of those whom he addresses. If proofs were necessary, this book contains the most ample proofs, that the doctrine he taught as a minister and an instructor of youth had



the most direct tendency to promote holiness of heart and life.\*

\* Many fugitive pieces which he wrote about this time for the use of his pupils (some of whom gave evidence of true piety) yet remain. One of these is here selected; though not distinguished by poetic excellence, it has merit which gives it a still higher claim to the attention of the juvenile reader.

“THE SCHOOL-BOY’S RESOLUTION.

“May heavenly mercy lend an ear,  
To hear a youth’s request,  
That I my Maker’s name may fear,  
And be for ever blest.

“O might I learn his will to know,  
His holy word to love!  
That I may serve him here below,  
And dwell with him above.

“My parents, who with tender care  
Do all my wants supply,  
With grateful love and humble fear,  
I’ll honour till I die.

“May but kind Heaven grant me grace,  
My studies to pursue,  
Learning’s mysterious path I’ll trace,  
With pleasure ever new.

“My-lesson thus my joy shall be,  
My book my constant play:  
Then will my friends the progress see  
I’m making ev’ry day.

“My native tongue I’ll strive to learn,  
My study this shall be,  
That I its beauties may discern,  
And speak it properly.



The numerous editions through which it has passed are sufficient proofs of its acceptance with the public; and notwithstanding the variety of other works since written for the use of young persons, it is still highly deserving of their attention. In some of the later editions, considerable improvements have been made.

The perusal of this publication, when it first appeared, was the happy means of bringing the late Mrs. Oldham, of Messinden Abbey, to an acquaintance with the best things, in the early period of her life. She resided at that time near Halifax, and wrote to the author on the subject. This was the commencement of a friendship which continued undiminished, through all the changing

" 'Twould be a shame to leave the school  
And not to understand,  
By method and grammatic rule,  
The language of our land.

" In writing fair, I'll strive to shine,  
And every youth excel:  
Improving still in every line,  
My copy minding well.

" Arithmetic shall oft engage  
My study and my care;  
Then to revolve the classic page  
I'll eagerly prepare.

" May I my kind instructors love,  
And not their words despise;  
But by my grateful conduct prove  
How much their help I prize.

" Each path of danger may I shun,  
And choose the way of truth;  
'Tis pleasant in that way to run,  
E'en in the days of youth."

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scenes of life, till death removed her out of this world. To those who had any knowledge of her character it needs no eulogium. For sweetness and affability of disposition she had few equals; and of her good sense and unaffected piety, the numerous letters in possession of her friends bear the strongest proofs. She had learned through grace, to conduct herself with Christian patience and fortitude in the shade of adversity; and, which is a still greater trial of real religion, to move with condescension and steadiness in the sunshine of prosperity. A long and interesting letter from this lady now lies before me, dated Utrecht, Sept. 3, 1783; containing an account of what she saw in Holland, interspersed with many pious reflections: at the conclusion she says, "I recommend myself to your prayers. I can assure you my spirits are scarcely equal to this expedition; but the appearance of discontent would be ungrateful to my friends here. I shall be happy to see England again: God grant that in this succession of objects and circumstances, I may be enabled to keep my heart with all diligence."

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In the former part of this biographical account several intimations have been given of the views, at an early period adopted by the subject of it, relative to the *Gospel call*, or the obligations of mankind in general to believe and receive the Gospel. It was a sentiment he maintained with great firmness, yet with the true spirit of a Christian pastor; and in the progress of his ministry he had the satisfaction to see his brethren gradually freed from those shackles which had cramped



their energies, and been a means of preventing the success of their labours. Without wishing to make it a point of controversy, much less bringing it forward as a matter of speculation in the pulpit, *he acted upon it*; and the effect produced in the extension of the cause, was a sufficient answer to the objections of those who had been of a contrary opinion. The celebrated publication by Mr. Fuller did not make its appearance till some years after; but the following extract from the "Advice to Youth," shows a coincidence in the views of these writers, though at that period entirely strangers to each other. It is acknowledged that some objections might justly be made against the introduction of the subject at all, by way of disquisition, in a work designed expressly for the use of young persons. The text is, 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.' In explaining what is included in *remembering* him, it is observed that it must intend more than a bare recollection of him. "It includes a remembering him according to the revelation he has made of himself, it takes in what we are to believe concerning him, the confidence we are to repose in him, and a practical regard to his commands. Should any one say, "Is this required of fallen man?" I answer, who can doubt it, that considers the law which we are under, as the descendants of Adam? Though man has lost his power, God cannot lose his authority, nor the law its binding efficacy.

"But should it be inquired further, "Since man has not power to know, love, and fear God himself, wherefore is he called upon to do it?" I answer, this is but just the same as if you should ask, "Since man is now become carnal in his mind, and in enmity to God,

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wherefore does the law of God still require him to love the Lord with all his mind, soul, and strength? " But further, since we know it is so, wherefore should we puzzle ourselves about the reason *why* it is so? If we could find out no other reason why the Judge of all the earth has appointed this and that, his will and good pleasure alone should satisfy us. If in his Word he calls the young to *remember* their Creator, the sinner to repent, believe the Gospel and be converted, though they have in themselves no power to do it, let us remember that there must be some reason for it, and propriety in it, though we should not be able to discern the one or the other.

" There are some points concerning which, perhaps, we shall never have full satisfaction, till we come into the world of light, where every doubt will be solved, and every difficulty removed. 'What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter.' Some imagine that these, and such like commands, only intend an external reformation. They might as well say, that when God's law requires us to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, it means only external acts of love. And who will assert this? Besides, is it not evident that the repentance called for is connected with pardon? 'Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. Let the wicked forsake,' &c. Such was the repentance to which Simon Magus was exhorted, when he was discerned to be 'in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.\*' Why should the

\* Acts viii. 22, 23. In these and such like exhortations there is nothing inconsistent with the secret purposes of God. Neither the



ministers of the Gospel scruple to follow their Lord and Master, who, though he assures us none can come to him, except the Father draw them, yet often addresses the consciences of sinners in terms which by some, perhaps, would be condemned as inconsistent and legal, were they not known to be his? See how he addresses, not his disciples, but the multitude, John vi. 27, Luke xiii. 24—27. Peter and the other Apostles copied after their Divine Master. This is evident from the whole book of the Acts of the Apostles.

“Though sinners are void of spiritual life, they are not mere machines, but rational creatures, possessed of understandings, wills, affections, and consciences. And if it is the will of God, by calling them, through the instrumentality of his ministers, to *repent*, be *converted*, be *reconciled to God*, and the like; to convince their judgements, awaken their consciences, and impress their hearts with a just sense of the nature and importance of these things, what are we that we should call in question the propriety and reasonableness of this appointment?

“If the author errs in this point, he errs in the company of almost every evangelical writer of the last age, of our great reformers themselves, and of the most successful ministers of the Gospel that have appeared since their day. This is some satisfaction. But his aim has been, ever since he engaged in the ministry, to follow the example of Christ and his disciples; and in the view

minister nor his unconverted hearers know any thing of these. But in the ministration of the Gospel, men are dealt with simply as sinners. God’s purpose concerning them is to us out of sight.”

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to this he has been particularly led to study the Acts of the Apostles, being desirous to acquit himself in the awful work, so as to be 'pure from the blood of all men.' He rejoices in the doctrines of distinguishing grace as revealed for the comfort of saints: but when he addresses a perishing sinner, he thinks he is not to inquire about his election, but to testify to him the necessity of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

The length of this quotation may require some apology; but it is of considerable value, as containing a clear and explicit view of his sentiments on a point of great importance. It was this view of the subject which led him to exert himself, both by his writings and by his ministry, for the conversion of sinners, trusting that the same holy unction and Divine blessing which had accompanied the earnest and unwearied labours of God's servants, in thus calling sinners to repentance, would still succeed the use of the same means.\*

\* During the repeated visits which Mr. F. paid to London, he had the happiness to form a friendly connexion with many valuable private Christians, of great eminence in their day. One of his most intimate friends was the late James Smith, Esq. of Colebrooke Row, Islington, a deacon of Dr. Stennett's church. He was a warm and zealous supporter of the various institutions established to promote the interests of religion. The following extracts from one of his letters, written soon after the publication of the "Advice to Youth," exhibit both the pious feelings of his own mind, and his sympathy with his friend, who was at the time under the pressure of heavy afflictions. It is dated March 6, 1779. "I received yours in December, and am ashamed of my long silence. Allow me to say it is not owing to any want of regard, for I respect you much; I feel most sincerely for you under your great afflictions; but you are in



In the year 1779, a few persons at Leeds, of the Baptist denomination, hired a part of the Old Assembly Rooms, and requested Mr. Fawcett and the Rev. J. Parker, of Barnoldswick, to preach on the occasion of its being opened for public worship. It is said, that Mr. F. delivered a very ingenious sermon, which was greatly admired, from Neh. iv. 2: 'What do these feeble Jews?' This may be considered as the commencement of the Baptist interest in Leeds. In 1781, he preached a judicious and solemn discourse, at the

the hands of a Covenant God, who knows what is best. I am glad to find you are so resigned; 'tis your Father's good pleasure thus to prepare you for himself. Heaven will make a rich amends. The book you refer to (meaning the "Advice to Youth") I have not yet seen, but will obtain a copy the first opportunity. I showed your letter to Dr. Stennett, when I first received it, and he evidenced great tenderness and affection for you. He is tolerably well at present, but often otherwise. I am glad to see from yours, that real religion is on the whole getting ground in your parts. I trust it does so elsewhere. I often think that this is the best support we have, and the greatest encouragement that the Lord will not utterly forsake us, though many things look very dark at present. It is of little consequence to us as individuals how we are conveyed home, whether in a storm or otherwise; the inheritance is sure. There is a rest, and a secure rest too, remaining for God's Noahs, and not far distant."

In a postscript, written some time after, Mr. Smith mentions having met with and perused the publication referred to in the former part of the letter, expressing in strong terms his approbation of it as likely to be productive of the most essential good.

Mr. Smith died December 20, 1803, aged seventy-six. His biographer says of him, "He was a gentleman well known to the religious world, and respected wherever known. His piety, zeal, and suavity of manners, entitled him to the esteem of a numerous acquaintance, among whom he attained the name of Demetrius, 'having a good report of all men and of the truth itself.'"



opening of the present Baptist chapel in that town, from Gen. xxviii. 17: 'How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'

Towards the close of the year 1779, and in the commencement of 1780, Mr. F. was deprived, by the stroke of death, of four of his most intimate and faithful friends. He felt their removal most sensibly, not only as an individual, and for the sake of the families they left behind, but on account of the loss the neighbourhood in which they lived, and the church of God, sustained. The persons here referred to, were the late Mr. Wm. Greenwood, of Oxenhope, near Haworth, who died Sept. 30, 1779; Mr. Wm. Hudson, of Gildersome, near Leeds, who died Nov. 7, 1779; Mr. Adam Holden, of Halifax; and the Rev. James Hartley, of Haworth. The death of the first three was sudden, particularly that of Mr. Hudson, who, though apparently in the vigour of health, dropped down in a fit of apoplexy, and expired a short time after. In memory of this gentleman, he wrote a poem, entitled the "Death of Eumenio," the name by which he designated his friend, on account of the candour, humanity, and benevolence, by which he was so eminently distinguished.

The most intimate friendship, as appears from some of Mr. Hudson's letters, had long subsisted between them, which the congeniality of their dispositions, and the similarity of their views on religious subjects, tended to cement and increase.

The following lines, extracted from the poem, are evidently the expression of genuine grief and sincere attachment:



"Here is Eumenio's grave! O my full heart!  
 A flood of tears would give thee some relief;  
 Here sleeps the breathless dust of him I loved,  
 Beloved of all: whose heavenly virtues shone  
 With an unusual brightness to the close  
 Of his dear life, alas! (for us) too short!  
 He was a public blessing to mankind;  
 And public grief attends his sudden fall:  
 Each friendly bosom heaves a bursting groan;  
 Each neighbour pours a sympathizing tear;  
 Each servant mourns the best of masters dead.  
 "As heavenly Watts lamented Gunston's fall,  
 So, dear Eumenio, I lament for thee.  
 Inferior is my strain, not so my love.  
 Friendship divine, that sweet and sacred tie,  
 Had bound my heart to thee, and made us one:  
 Hence doubly painful is the parting hour;  
 Hence I this grave with nightly tears bedew."

A few elegiac verses on the death of Mr. Wm. Greenwood are subjoined to this poem, descriptive of his amiable and charitable disposition, and of the deep interest excited in the neighbourhood, by the death of one so much beloved as a husband, a parent, and a friend to the poor, as well as to his equals.

Mr. F. preached a funeral sermon for Mr. Hudson, from Ps. xii. 1: 'Help Lord, for the godly man faileth,' &c.; and for Mr. Wm. Greenwood, from Rom. iv. 20: 'He staggered not at the promise of God,' &c.

Soon after the decease of the Rev. Mr. Hartley, the "Reign of Death," a poem occasioned by his death, was published, with a funeral sermon on the same event by Mr. Crabtree. A tribute is also paid in this publication to the memory of Mr. Adam Holden, under the poetic name of Philander, or Lover of Mankind. By a mysterious providence, he, as well as Mr. Greenwood,



was snatched away unexpectedly, leaving behind them a numerous offspring of tender age.

"Midst scenes of business and domestic cares,

Death's hand unseen the fatal shaft prepares.

A fierce disease Philander's life assails,

Baffles the healing art——

His God sustain'd him in that gloomy hour,

When all created comforts lose their power.

When nature faints, and death's impending shade,

In awful darkness, hovers round the bed."

The Rev. James Hartley had not completed his 58th year when he departed this life; but the delicacy of his constitution, being much afflicted with the asthma, had long impressed the furrows of age on his countenance. The summer before his death, he had a paralytic stroke, succeeded by all the symptoms of a consumption, which gradually brought him down to the dust of earth. The writer most distinctly recollects accompanying his parent to Mr. Hartley's house, a short time before he died, where they also met the Rev. Mr. Crabtree. The object of their meeting was to value his books, the chief property he had in the world, that they might be sold for the benefit of his wife, so soon about to become a widow. His wish was 'to set his house in order,' and to make every necessary arrangement previous to his departure. He was still able to sit up, and evidenced an extraordinary degree of calmness, composure, and even cheerfulness. When Mr. Crabtree, who had engaged to preach in the evening, was about to go into the pulpit, Mr. Hartley re-



quested that he would not pray for his recovery, as he was satisfied it was the will of God to take him hence, but rather that all needful support might be afforded in the prospect of the closing scene.

The high esteem which Mr. F. long had for the excellent man, whose end was now approaching, is evident from the preceding part of this narrative; and in this poem he exhibits his character as a Christian minister, in the strongest and most pathetic language, as one who well knew how to appreciate his worth. The following lines are descriptive of the closing scene :

“ But dear Euphronius felt his frame decay,  
By slow degrees his vitals waste away ;  
His happy mind, composed to sweetest peace,  
Wish'd only for the day of his release.

“ Clear was his prospect of the vast reward  
Of heavenly bliss ; by sovereign grace prepared :  
The setting sun was cloudless, bright, and clear,  
Rejoicing that the happy goal was near.  
Celestial comforts all his powers sustain,  
Support his fainting heart, and ease his pain,  
Till he resigns the sad remains of breath,  
Infolded in the friendly arms of death.”\*

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\* The Rev. Isaac Slee, who had before been a clergyman of the episcopal church at Plumpton, in the county of Cumberland, was Mr. Hartley's immediate successor. He preached with great acceptance and success for about three years. His constitution was delicate, and being invited to officiate at the funeral of the late Rev. Mr. Smith's widow at Wainsgate, he caught a severe cold, through the inclemency of the weather, which terminated in a pulmonary consumption. He died Jan. 13, 1784. At his request Mr. Crabtree preached on the occasion, from Job. xix. 25 ; and Mr. Fawcett delivered the oration at the grave. Mr. Whitfield, of Hamsterley, published an account of his life, from which he appears to have been eminently pious and conscientious.



Soon after the death of Mr. Hartley, a letter was received from Mr. Medley, of Liverpool, from which the following passages are taken.

“ L——, Feb. 14, 1780.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,

“ To-day at noon I had the opportunity of perusing your affectionate and mournful letter to Mr. Walley. The first intelligence of the death of Mr. Hartley, and also of Mr. Sugden, was conveyed to us by it. From the little I knew of Mr. Hartley, I must say, ‘ A great man is fallen in our Israel, indeed.’ I shall ever feel a respect for his memory. In reading the account you give of his last hours, how justly may we adopt the language of the Psalmist: ‘ Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.’ Our good and gracious God has fulfilled all his counsel, respecting these his servants in this world, and now he has in loving-kindness and mercy taken them to himself. O that I may not be slothful, but ‘ work while it is day,’ and ‘ be through grace a follower of them, who do now through faith and patience inherit the promises.’ In this vale of tears we must expect these mournful, and for a season parting strokes; but blessed be God, the scene will ere long change, and change undoubtedly for the better. I was yesterday led to speak from Heb. xi. 40: ‘ God having provided some *better thing* for us.’ And will not he who has provided them for his people put them at last into the eternal possession of them? Most certainly he will. You know who has said, ‘ I am he that liveth.’ Blessed be his glorious name, because he liveth, his saints shall live also. Ministers must die. Our heads must soon be laid in the



silent dust. But our Divine Master wanted us not before we were born, nor will he need us as instruments to carry on his work when we are no more here. 'The government is on his shoulders,' and Zion lies near his heart; so that he will most assuredly make her a praise in the earth, and cause her to prosper, whatever our misgiving fears may suggest to the contrary. Yes, my dear brother, I humbly hope we shall shout and sing with the redeemed, to all eternity, 'He hath done all things well.'

"The sympathetic grief of my heart has been excited by the account you give, in another part of your letter, of the falls and backslidings of some concerning whom you hoped well. This, to an affectionate minister, is in many respects a trial worse than death itself. My own painful experience has taught me this. We have lately been under the necessity of excluding several members for immoral conduct. On account of these things I have been brought so low, as frequently to say, 'If I had not the precious word of God to fly to, pray over, plead, and depend upon, I must have given all up.' Both outward and inward trials have multiplied upon us; but blessed be God, all this does not prove that we are not in the right way, but rather the contrary; for it is said, 'We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom.'

"On account of bodily weakness, and the loss of my voice, I have been for a long time almost laid aside, but through tender mercy I am now much recovered. I hope I can say I have been kept during my indisposition from a murmuring, impatient spirit; and if I have not felt raptures of joy, I have derived solid and substantial support from Scripture.



"I most affectionately commend you to God, and am yours in the best bonds,

"SAM. MEDLEY."

In addition to the affecting breaches which have now been noticed, another event took place some time after, which, though long expected, must have been painful to his private feelings. His widowed mother, who had been for years confined to a bed of languishing, waiting with Christian patience and resignation for her release, died March 2, 1782, aged 79. On this occasion he preached a funeral sermon, from Rev. xiv. 10: 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,' &c.

About the year 1783, a favourable change began to take place in his health; though for several preceding years he had been so much indisposed, that there was little, if any probability that his life would be continued much longer.

At one period he had been incapacitated for his public labours, during the space of four or five weeks. The paroxysms were so acute, and the attacks so frequent, that, as has been hinted before, he was in the habit of taking strong medicinal preparations both to afford some present alleviation of pain, and to remove the supposed cause of his indisposition. Notwithstanding these means were continued for a long period, he experienced no relief. To freedom from pain, he was a stranger. His extreme sufferings gradually wasted his frame, and produced a constant fever. In this distressing situation he resolved to put himself under the care of his highly respected friend Mr. Hey, of Leeds, and to undergo the operation of having the stone taken out, which was considered as the occasion of his misery. That



eminent surgeon, when he saw the debilitated situation of his patient, declined performing the operation, from an idea that death would almost inevitably ensue. At his recommendation, Mr. F. in a great measure discontinued the use of medicine, and took more exercise; by means of which his appetite improved, and his bodily strength increased, so that he became better able to endure the pain, from which, though greatly mitigated, he was seldom entirely free. It is not improbable that the medicines before mentioned might have dissolved the stone, and that change of habits prevented the formation of another.

About the same time he began to wear his own hair, instead of a large white wig. This alteration, together with his more healthy complexion, occasioned such a change in his external appearance, that his distant friends, for some time, scarcely knew him at first sight. A ludicrous mistake, arising principally from his uncommon timidity in preaching before strangers, and especially before ministers, was often mentioned by him in social converse. A poor man, to whom he gave his last appendage of this kind, attended the Sabbath evening lecture at Brearley Hall. Observing a person thus attired, in a distant part of the room, and not recollecting the circumstance just mentioned, he was much agitated till near the close of the service; when, on a more distinct view of his countenance, he recognised his humble friend, who had been the object of his charity.

Finding that exercise was of great advantage to his health, he for some time amused himself at his leisure hours with a turner's lathe, and afterwards with book-binding, an employment which, while it afforded exercise, was more congenial with his taste. As his bodily

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health improved, the vigour of his mind also increased, and his exertions were unwearied in the discharge of the duties of his station, to which he found himself more equal. The extended intercourse he now enjoyed with many persons, of both sexes, eminent for piety and taste, while it was a source of pleasure, was no less so of mutual improvement.

The following verses, inscribed to him, under the name of Abdiel, written by one of these associates, have been found among his papers.

“ Sequester'd from the haunts where folly drowns  
Each serious thought, derides each mild reproof,  
And revels in the lap of earthly bliss,  
Oft may the lonesome cell engage thy hours,  
To meditate the task which God enjoins :  
Delightful task ! O Abdiel, to plan  
Thy people's welfare and secure thy own.  
Delightful task ! to form thy tender youth,  
To root within their minds the great concerns  
Of life and death, of judgment, and of heaven.  
And may the Power, who looks propitious down  
On all his servants, bless thy pious care,  
Assist thy labour, and reward thy love !  
So shalt thou see these infant hearts aspire  
To things divine, their manhood clasp and guard  
The Christian faith, assert their Maker's praise,  
And vindicate his ways ; so shall the peace  
Unknown to vice adorn thy useful life,  
And a new vigour o'er thy frame diffuse—  
Blest antepast of immortality.

“ SYLVIO.”

In the year 1782, the first edition of “Hymns, adapted to the Circumstances of Public Worship and Private Devotion,” made its appearance. Several of these hymns, of which a new and neat edition has recently been published, had been composed at a very early



period in life; others on occasions which sometimes occurred in the long course of his ministry, when he preached from subjects which were not particularly referred to in Dr. Watts's Psalms and Hymns. For this inimitable work no one could have a greater value than himself; it was in unison with his avowed sentiments, and touched the finest feelings of his soul. On no occasions did his mind approach so much to holy rapture as when joining with the great congregation, at the close of public worship, in singing these divine compositions. He had not the most distant intention, in publishing the above-mentioned poems, to interfere with a work so long and so universally admired, but to furnish his friends with a humble supplement for occasional use; several of them being in metres not to be found in Dr. Watts's Hymn-book, and adapted to favourite tunes of recent composition. As he observes in the preface, it had "been customary with him for many years, after having digested his thoughts on some portion of the Divine word, to sum up the leading ideas in a few plain verses, to be sung after the service, that the recollection of his hearers might be aided, and that the truths he had been attempting to explain and enforce might be more deeply impressed on their minds." Copies of these hymns had been frequently circulated in a fugitive form, and it was in compliance with the earnest request of many, that they were at length collected into a volume. He observes, that they had been (whatever imperfections may be discerned in them) the result of much labour, "and were principally composed in the midnight hours previous to the Sabbath, while others were enjoying the sweets of balmy rest."

Another portion of these poems was not intended so



much to be introduced in public worship, as for perusal in private. Among these may be enumerated the imitation of the Latin prayer of Mary Queen of Scots, the Christian Soldier, and the Hymn on Spring; to the last of these the notice of Reviewers and the insertion of it in the "Introduction to the English Reader," have given considerable publicity. It is unquestionably one of the happiest of his poetical effusions, though produced with less effort than others of inferior merit.\* It was

\* The following is a copy of it: besides this, there are several others in the "Hymn Book" on similar subjects, particularly the 51st and the 153rd.

#### SPRING.

##### I.

"Lo! the bright, the rosy morning  
Calls me forth to take the air;  
Cheerful spring, with smiles returning,  
Ushers in the new-born year;  
Nature, now in all her beauty,  
With her gentle moving tongue,  
Prompts me to the pleasing duty  
Of a grateful morning song.

##### II.

"See the early blossoms springing,  
See the jocund lambkins play;  
Hear the lark and linnet singing  
Welcome to the new-born day:  
Vernal music, softly sounding,  
Echoes through the vocal grove;  
Nature, now with life abounding,  
Swells with harmony and love.

##### III.

"Yonder rise the lofty mountains,  
Clad with herbage fresh and green;  
Playing round the crystal fountains,  
There the lowing herds are seen:



composed on a fine morning in spring, while enjoying the scenery he there describes. This has not always been the case with those who have excelled in the description of rural scenes. With them imagination and

There, the stately forest bending,

Thrives amidst the limpid streams;

Whilst the source of day ascending,

Crowns it with his mildest beams.

IV.

“ Now the kind refreshing showers

Water all the plains around;

Springing grass and painted flowers

O’er the smiling meads abound:

Now, their vernal dress assuming,

Leafy robes adorn the trees;

Odours now, the air perfuming,

Sweetly swell the gentle breeze.

V.

“ Now the tuneful tribes delight us,

Perching on the bloomy spray,

And to gratitude invite us,

With their sweetly dying lay:

Now the shrill-tongued blackbird singing,

Loudly sounds its Maker’s praise;

All the spacious valleys ringing,

Teach us thankful songs to raise.

VI.

“ Praise to thee, thou great Creator,

Praise be thine from every tongue;

Join, my soul, with every creature,

Join the universal song;

For ten thousand blessings given,

For the richest gifts bestow’d,

Sound his praise through earth and heaven,

Sound Jehovah’s praise aloud.”