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REV.^d DAN TAYLOR .

Aged 71.

*Rev. J. Hooper. 17th. 1814
with the Author's sincere
Respect*

MEMOIRS
OF THE *2d. ed. 114*
REV. DAN TAYLOR,

LATE
PASTOR OF THE GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCH

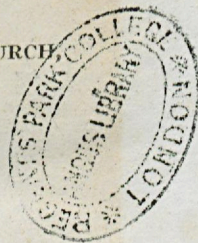
Whitechapel, London;

WITH

EXTRACTS

FROM HIS

DIARY, CORRESPONDENCE, AND UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS.



By ADAM TAYLOR.

“In labours more abundant—in journeyings often—in weariness
and painfulness—besides that which cometh upon me daily, the
care of all the churches.”

PAUL.

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PREFACE.

WHEN it pleased the great Disposer of all events to call to himself the venerable Minister who is the subject of the following pages, it appeared to be the general feeling of his friends, that it would be ungrateful to permit a person who had been the honoured instrument in forming the New Connection, and had laboured, for nearly half a century, with such diligence, disinterestedness and success, in promoting its prosperity, to sink unnoticed into the grave. It was also hoped, that a faithful detail of his exertions for the glory of his God and the good of his fellow creatures might be useful in assisting and encouraging surviving christians, and especially young ministers, in the prosecution of the same great objects. At the ensuing Association, at Castle Donington, in 1817, it was therefore unanimously resolved, "That a Life of our late venerable Brother, Dan Taylor, is very desirable:" and the Author was requested to undertake the compilation of it. It certainly would have afforded him pleasure, if a person of more leisure and less closely connected with the deceased had been selected for the work; but when it was urged that he had enjoyed a considerable intimacy with Mr. T. for the last twenty years—that he had access to all his papers as executor—and that the collections which he had made in composing a former work had already furnished *him* with much interesting information, he felt it his duty to comply. Whether he has been able to avail himself successfully of these advantages, in the execution of the task assigned him, must be left to the judgment of the intelligent reader.

In writing this Memoir, the Author has studiously avoided all affectation or display, either as to matter or manner. To have given an account of Dan Taylor in a pompous, embellished style, had the writer been ever so capable of it, would have been ridiculously inconsistent. All that is aimed at, is a plain and simple narration of facts, disposed in their natural order, and adapted to give the reader a just idea of the character, and an accurate conception of the labours of that worthy man. To attain this, all the documents that could be procured have been carefully examined, the surviving friends and connections of the deceased have been consulted, and an attempt has been made to follow him, from year to year, through the whole course of his active life. This method, it is true, has its inconveniences; but after mature deliberation it was thought the most eligible. It brings the subject indeed before the reader frequently in similar scenes, and thus has an appearance of repetition which some may deem tedious. This however is not wholly the fault of the writer. It is because his hero so often took journeys, attended Associations, assisted at Ordinations, engaged in Disputes, &c. that he is obliged so often to narrate them. And it was thought impossible to convey any adequate view of his industry, zeal and labours, by a more general description, without a chronological enumeration of particulars. But efforts have been made to render these parts as concise as a due regard to the object of the work would permit.

The author is persuaded, that no apology is necessary for introducing the *Extracts* from the Diary and Correspondence of the deceased. It ought however to be observed, that the Diary was written in the beginning of his religious profession; and that he evidently could not expect that it would ever be seen by any of his fellow creatures. He therefore notes the feelings of his mind in the most artless and unstudied language. These entries are the unvarnished and unreviewed effusions of a young christian, who was earnestly endeavouring so to run that he might

obtain the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus. Most of his Letters also were the product of the moment; frequently scrawled over when he was busily engaged in other duties; and dispatched without correction, and probably often without perusal. To consider therefore any of these Extracts as specimens of his skill in composition or accuracy of style would be, in the highest degree, unfair: they are designed to give a view of the heart of the writer, and to enable the reader to estimate the value of his character, and the variety of his labours. For this purpose they are peculiarly valuable.

In sketching the character of Mr. T. the Author has laboured after impartiality and usefulness, by selecting such traits as might be advantageously imitated, and stating them with fidelity. And, with the same view, he has not scrupled to notice defects, when they might operate as warnings to others in similar circumstances. Aware, however, that his neutrality might be suspected, on account of his acknowledged veneration for the worthy original, he has availed himself of the assistance of several surviving ministers who were well acquainted with the deceased, and who have kindly favoured him with their sentiments. And he trusts, it will appear, on a candid examination, that he has not either unreasonably exalted or depressed the character which he has attempted to delineate. He expects to be blamed for both extremes; but a consciousness of having sincerely intended to be faithful will, he hopes, enable him to support such censure with fortitude.

It would be ingratitude in the writer not publicly to acknowledge the obligations which he owes to those friends who have assisted him with their kind communications respecting Mr. T.'s labours, writings and character; as well as with the Loan of Letters which they have received from him. To such he returns his sincere thanks; and trusts that a perusal of the succeeding volume will prove that he has duly appreciated their favours.

On the whole, the Author has endeavoured to keep in view the objects which animated the zeal of the good man whose history he has recorded; and aimed at the profit more than the entertainment of the reader. If this Memoir should be blessed as the means of comforting or instructing the children of God in general, or tend to the encouragement, animation or direction of young ministers, for whose benefit it is more especially designed, his purpose will be accomplished; and he will bless that God who has enabled him, in the midst of many avocations, to complete the work.

SHAKESPEAR'S WALK,
23 March, 1820.

ERRATA.

- Page 25, lines 15 & 16, read "a fine girl of almost *two years and one quarter* old, and his son, *ten months*."
 Page 137, line 16, read, "will do *them* no good."
 — 190, line 27, for "1798" read "1789."

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

REV. DAN TAYLOR.

CHAPTER FIRST.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO THE FORMATION OF THE NEW CONNECTION OF GENERAL BAPTISTS.

SECTION I. *The Transactions of the First Period.*

THE venerable Minister whose labours and character we propose to record, could not boast of splendid ancestry, nor trace his pedigree to distant ages. Nothing certain can be recovered respecting his progenitors, previous to his paternal grandfather, *Adam Taylor*, who was born in 1650, and resided in Lancashire till 1680; when he removed into the West Riding of Yorkshire. It has been supposed that the unsettled state of religion, under the tyrannical Stuarts, might have induced him to leave his native country; but of this there is no direct evidence. He rented some land in Northowram, called *Horley-Green*, within a short mile of *Halifax*; and supported, through life, the character of a reputable farmer. He was twice married, and had eleven children by each wife. He died *January 27, 1727*, in the seventy-seventh year of his age; and was buried in *Halifax church-yard*. The small-pox made affecting ravages in his numerous family. In *February 1714*, six of his children, three sons and three daughters, were cut off, in the short space of a fortnight, by this cruel disorder. Their names were *Tamar, Terah, Zara, Er, Abiah*, and *Tirzah*; and they lie beneath the same stone with their father.

Azor Taylor was Adam Taylor's twentieth child, and born in 1711. He married, for his second wife, Mary, the daughter of Robert Willey, of Fold. Her mother's maiden name was Hannah Shepherd; whose relatives were near neighbours to the pious Oliver Heywood; and there is reason to conclude were connected with that worthy minister. Azor Taylor and his wife, though in narrow circumstances, were industrious and respectable; very regular in their attendance on the worship of the established church, and noted for taking more care of the education and morals of their children than many of their neighbours. Being both good readers, they possessed more books than usually fall to the share of persons of their station in society; and taught their children to read in their infancy.

DAN TAYLOR, the subject of this memoir, was the second child of this worthy couple. He was born December 21, 1738, at a place called Sour-Milk-Hall, in Northowram. In his infancy, he was remarkable for bodily vigour and activity; and very early exhibited proofs of strong intellectual faculties. At three years of age he could read well; and, before he attained his fifth year, his proficiency in that useful art was so noted, that strangers frequently visited his father, in order to hear his son read the tenth chapter of Nehemiah, which they styled the hard chapter. This he performed so much to their satisfaction, that he usually received small presents, as tokens of their approbation. For his skill in this essential part of education, he was chiefly indebted to the attention of his affectionate mother, who proud of his promising talents, took every opportunity of cultivating them. Nor was the son insensible of his obligations; but always ready to give her all the credit of his acquirements. One day, while yet but a boy, he attended at church with a number of other children to be catechized, when the clergyman struck with the readiness of his answers, asked him, "Who taught you to read?" The boy, eager to do justice to his beloved instructor, replied in a voice loud enough to be heard throughout the building, "My mother!" As this good woman made her scholar take most of his lessons from the Bible, it might with great propriety be said, of him, as it was of young Timothy, that he "knew the scriptures from his youth."

When almost five years of age, he was sent to work in a coal-

mine with his father; a proof of the scanty means of the family, which obliged them to put him so early to such hard labour. But in this situation, his natural intrepidity was conspicuous. Though so young, he appeared as void of fear when one hundred yards below the surface of the earth, as he did, in future life, when in the pulpit addressing the most numerous congregations.

In this dangerous and toilsome occupation, this boy spent many succeeding years. He daily descended into the pit early in the morning, and continued busy under ground till late in the afternoon: so that, during the winter season, he seldom saw the light of the sun, except on the Lord's day. The strength of his constitution and the vigour of his mind enabled him to support great fatigue; but this excessive confinement and labour, in his tender years, probably checked his growth and kept him low in stature. It could not however damp his ardour for knowledge, nor abate his exertions to obtain it. Every leisure hour that he could command was sedulously devoted to the acquisition of useful learning; and, so intent was he on this object, that he soon began to take a book with him into the coal-mine, and improved every occasional intermission of labour to enrich his mind. It might be interesting and instructive to trace the progress of his mental improvement; but the want of proper information forbids the attempt. This however is certain, that, though labouring under great disadvantages, without instructors, and with little money to purchase books, his success was great; and his fame for learning spread through the neighbourhood. He was frequently employed in teaching others, before he was ten years old. His neighbours indeed were probably no very accurate judges of literary excellence; but we shall soon have decisive evidence, that his attainments, considering the circumstances in which he was placed, were highly respectable; and reflect great credit on his abilities and application.

This decided taste for mental improvement and his regular occupation as a labourer, happily engrossed most of his time, and preserved him from many of the temptations incident to the station in which he acted. He had seldom leisure for childish amusements; and therefore was not so much exposed to the company of wicked children. But, like all the offspring of fallen Adam, he was prone to evil. His temper was warm and easily irritated; and, when roused to anger, he was ready to seek re-

venge. This naturally involved him in quarrels; and prompted him, when under the dominion of his passions, to use improper expressions; especially when he found himself too weak to attack the offender. When he was about nine years of age, one of his fellow workmen accidentally wounded him with a pickaxe. Filled with resentment, he used violent language against the aggressor; and, in his rage, took the sacred name of God in vain. His father being soon afterwards informed of the circumstance, corrected him very severely; mingling his strokes with serious expostulations on the enormity of the offence, and sanctioning his reproofs by a solemn application of that awful interrogatory to the despisers of the Lord, *Rev. vi. 17.* "The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" Through the influence of divine grace, his father's chastisement and this awakening passage, made a lasting impression on his young mind; and, thirty-five years afterwards, when preaching the funeral sermon for his deceased parent, with the coffin before him, he took this passage of scripture for his text; and publickly ascribed his first convictions to this incident.

A striking deliverance, which he experienced not long afterwards, probably deepened these religious impressions. A large quantity of water had accumulated in a coal-mine, and obstructed the operations of the workmen. Young Dan and the miner under whom he then laboured, being employed to open a drain for it, in an adjoining mine, inadvertently approached the mass of water; which suddenly forced its way, and rushed upon them in an overwhelming body. The active boy, on perceiving the danger started off towards the mouth of the pit, and leaping over his companion, actually outran the stream. On reaching the bottom of the shaft, he was quickly drawn up by those at the top; and closely followed by the water, which filled the pit to the height of several fathoms. In a short time it found a passage through the proper outlets, and the mine was cleared. The spectators were soon agreeably surprized at finding the workman safe; who in the moment of danger, had climbed to a part of the works above the level of the water. Thus both the man and boy were delivered from the most imminent danger, by means at once astonishing and instructive.

The concern for the salvation of his soul continued to increase. At times his convictions of sin were strong. He went frequently

to hear the Methodists, who had been some time established at Halifax. When about fifteen, he became regular in his attendance on their worship, not only on the Lord's days, but often on the week day evenings. His usual companion on these occasions was his brother John. Notwithstanding their hard labour through the week, they were in the constant habit of walking on the Lord's day, six, ten, and sometimes twelve miles from home to hear their favourite ministers. John and Charles Wesley and G. Whitfield stood high in the opinion of these youths; and to hear them they cheerfully would travel twenty or even thirty miles on foot, with often a very scanty supply of food to support them. "But at times," says one of them, "we experienced such special pleasure in our trudging to hear good preachers that it was to us as meat and drink." But the minister most highly esteemed by them was the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw of Haworth; on whose awakening labours they frequently attended, though the distance was upwards of twelve miles.

This conscientious youth did not confine his religion to an attendance on the public means of grace; he wished it to regulate all his conduct. He observed with regret, the neglect of family worship in his father's house, and was anxious to introduce it, but at a loss how to make the attempt: not daring to mention the subject to his father, who had something of sternness in his temper, and kept his children at a distance. In this perplexity, he consulted with his brother John, who was his chief adviser in such concerns. Judging it imprudent to interfere in the management of the family, they determined to discharge their own duty. Retiring into an unoccupied room, the elder brother commenced the social exercise by reading a portion of scripture and engaging in prayer. When he had finished, he encouraged his young associate to imitate his example. Mr. D. Taylor was then in his fifteenth year; and this was probably the first time that he engaged in any religious exercise, in the presence of a fellow creature. The boys continued this practice, as opportunity offered, as long as they dwelt under the paternal roof.

When nearly sixteen years of age, he with another brother and a sister, was confirmed by the bishop, and thus made a regular member of the church of England. Probably his attachment to the Methodists, who were then rigid adherents to the establishment, induced him to submit to this ceremony without previous

examination. It can hardly be supposed, that, acquainted as he then must be with the New Testament, he could have approved of it, had he reflected at all on the subject. His brother John, who was four years younger than he, felt the inconsistency of confirming heedless or wicked children, and escaped the operation.

During the four succeeding years, this young man constantly attended the public means of grace; and frequently was present at the prayer and class meetings of the Methodists. Yet, though so careful to embrace every opportunity of learning the way of salvation, he was long under great distress and darkness of mind. At times, especially on his return from prayer meetings, his trouble of soul rose to anguish and melted him to tears. He has often been heard to say, that if the gospel had been preached as it ought to have been, he should have obtained liberty much sooner. By degrees he obtained clearer views of the plan of mercy through a redeemer; and was enabled, with greater confidence, to lay hold on the hope set before him in the gospel. The application of that noble passage, *John* iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life," was, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, made very instrumental in producing these happy effects. He was now desirous of making a more decided profession of his attachment to that Saviour whom his soul had found precious; and, soon after he had attained his twentieth year, he proposed himself to the Methodists, and was gladly received into strict communion with them.

Though Mr. Taylor was at this period steady in his attachments to the Methodists, and regular in his attendance at their assemblies; yet he occasionally heard preachers of other denominations. When he was about sixteen, the Particular Baptists began to endeavour to raise an interest at Halifax. His brother John, who, though only twelve years of age, was a zealous calvinist, went frequently to hear their ministers; and the subject of this memoir, to please his brother, as well as to learn their sentiments, sometimes accompanied him. He was however, from his first beginning to think on religious subjects, a decided opposer of the doctrines of high calvinism. At this time, these doctrines became the general topic of conversation in the neighbourhood; and he was then a warm advocate for the great truth,

that Christ died for every man, which he afterwards defended so ably, throughout his long life, both from the pulpit and from the press.

In September, 1758, his mother died; and that event affected him deeply. The circumstances of the family induced him and his brother John to leave their father's house. They hired a room near Halifax, and provided for themselves. Probably one inducement with Mr. D. Taylor to choose his situation, was that he might more conveniently attend the instructions of Mr. Titus Knight, then in connection with the Methodists. This gentleman taught a school at Halifax; and Mr. T. attended him, at his leisure hours. Here he cultivated the languages which he had for some time attempted without instructor. Mr. J. Taylor observes at this date: "My brother Dan was now a young man: his spare hours busily employed in learning, and the rest in religion." He must have improved his leisure with great assiduity, as we shall find, that, in a few years afterwards, he had attained a considerable acquaintance with the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages. This occasional attendance at Mr. Knight's school was the only opportunity he ever enjoyed of a living preceptor.

But this ardent pursuit of learning did not cause him to forget the claims of humanity. His mother had left a young son, named James, of about five years of age. To him the two elder brothers were very much attached; and felt unwilling to leave him to the care of strangers. They therefore took him with them when they left their father's house, and maintained him as long as they lived together, which was little more than a year. In the spring of 1760, they gave up their apartment; and Mr. D. Taylor went to live with a person of the name of Godfrey Honley; a worthy man of "the same craft" with himself; being both a coal-miner and a Methodist. He took with him his young brother, and continued with affectionate solicitude, to provide for his support.

Here he pursued with increased alacrity and success, his literary studies. Indeed his disposition was well adapted to succeed in whatever he undertook. To a good understanding and quick powers of mind, he joined an unwearied application and an unyielding resolution, which enabled him to encounter and conquer difficulties that, to an ordinary mind, would have appeared insurmountable. His progress in religion kept pace with his advances in literature. His regular conduct and zealous endeavours

to promote the interest of real piety in his own heart and amongst his associates gained him great respect from his christian friends; while his occasional exercises in social prayer, and visiting the sick raised an high opinion of his gifts. It soon became the general wish of those who best knew him, that he would begin to preach, and several urged him to make the attempt. For some time, he resisted their importunities; but the superintendant of the district soon put an end to his hesitation. This gentleman, taking Mr. T. aside one evening, told him, without preface or apology, that he must prepare to preach before a number of select judges early the next morning. The young man was thunder-struck at the communication, and retired to his lodgings in great perturbation of mind. There he sat up the greatest part of the night; and, by the light of the fire, endeavoured to prepare for the task. In the morning he made the attempt with much fear and trembling, from *Ephes.* ii. 8. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." When he had concluded, he withdrew, abashed under a deep sense of the imperfection of his performance. In the course of the forenoon, the superintendant expressed to a friend his satisfaction with the discourse, and his hopes of the preacher. The friend observed, "You should have taken the young man with you to breakfast, and told him how well you thought he had succeeded," "O!" replied the other, "the devil has told him that long ago." This probationary discourse opened the way for Mr. T's regular entrance on the work of the ministry; and he preached his first public discourse in September, 1761, in a dwelling house at Hipperholm, a village near Halifax.

Mr. T. was now frequently employed as a local preacher, in various parts of the district, with great acceptance and success. The opinion of his superior abilities for the sacred work was confirmed; and several of his friends thought him qualified for a more extended sphere of usefulness. They earnestly pressed him to wait on Mr. John Wesley, the patriarch of the Methodists, in order that he might be admitted as a travelling preacher. But he was by no means forward to take this decisive step. He had begun to examine divine truth for himself, and was already determined to form his opinions and regulate his conduct by scripture alone; and to "call no man master on earth." Pursuing this course, though he agreed with Mr. Wesley in many

leading points, yet, he doubted of the propriety of his mode of explaining several other important parts of doctrine. Besides this, he was convinced that the New Testament gave no countenance, either by precept or example, to the scheme of discipline which that gentleman had imposed on his followers. Indeed his independent spirit was not formed to submit to that dictatorship which Mr. Wesley then assumed over the conduct and faith of his preachers. Instead therefore of applying to the great man for his permission to preach the gospel, Mr. T. at Midsummer, 1762, withdrew entirely from all connection with him and his adherents.

About the time that Mr. D. Taylor left the Methodists, several other ministers, in the same neighbourhood, seceded from them. Amongst these were, Mr. Titus Knight, already mentioned as Mr. T's tutor, who raised an independent church at Halifax, over which he presided for many years with credit and success; Mr. James Crossley, who became pastor of a church at Holmhouse, near Luddenden; and Mr. Edwards, the founder of an independent interest at Leeds. These all embraced the calvinistic doctrines; but Mr. T. retained firmly his opposition to personal election.

Mr. T's character and abilities were too well known to permit him to remain long unemployed. Four persons in the vicinity of Heptonstall, a village nine miles west of Halifax, had recently detached themselves from the Methodists; and being previously acquainted with him, invited him to preach for them. This invitation he accepted; and, in a few weeks after his secession from his former associates, delivered his first discourse for them, in the open air, at a place called *The Nook*, in Wadsworth, the adjoining township to Hepstonstall. He preached several times in the same place, and the attendance was, considering the circumstances, rather encouraging. At that time, the country was remarkably wild and uncultivated; the inhabitants few, scattered and in general depraved; and the four friends who had invited him, occupying low stations in society, and possessing little influence: yet, with this discouraging prospect before him, Mr. T. resolved to cast his lot amongst them; and to attempt to introduce the gospel into this dark neighbourhood. Accordingly, at Michaelmas, 1762, he left Halifax, and removed to Wadsworth. He now took a final leave of the coal-mine, and

devoted himself to the work of the ministry. He boarded at Wadsworth with a poor religious woman, who thought herself honoured by having a minister for her guest, and well paid for his maintenance with a few shillings weekly.

His few associates were unable, from the straitness of their circumstances, to contribute much towards the support of the cause in which they had engaged; and the winter was approaching, when they would be less able to continue their present support, and when preaching in the open air would be no longer practicable. All these discouragements had probably been foreseen by our young minister; but he was too resolute to abandon an attempt in which he thought the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls were concerned, because it was attended with difficulties; and too independent in spirit to wish to be a burden on others. He therefore took apartments, and resolved to exert himself to preserve the interest from expiring in its very birth. The apartments were fitted up to answer the double purpose of a place of worship and a school. Mr. T. preached in them on the Lord's day; and taught a few children, during the rest of the week. In both employments he was successful: and the profits of the latter enabled him to pursue the former with more freedom and to greater advantage.

During the winter, Mr. T. and his friends found it necessary to consider on what principles they could unite to carry on the cause of their blessed Redeemer. Their difference of opinion respecting the extent of the atonement made by the death of Christ forbade them to join with the independents, though they nearly agreed with them in their sentiments on church order and government. While they were deliberating on this subject, their attention was called to another no less important. The Particular Baptists had, several years previous to this date, founded various churches within ten or fifteen miles of Wadsworth; and had been, for some time, making an attempt to introduce their cause into Halifax. The subject of believers' baptism became a topic of conversation among the professors of religion; and it was natural for a mind so inquisitive and active as Mr. Taylor's, to be led to examine a point so interesting. He had indeed paid some attention to it while amongst the Methodists, and teased them sufficiently with his queries and doubts; but he now thought it to be his duty to endeavour to satisfy his own mind on the subject,

that he might be able to instruct others. He has himself left us an account of the progress and result of this investigation. "For some time (he informs us) he was very unwilling to allow the propriety of believers' baptism, because it was contrary to the disposition of all those, except one, among whom he laboured, as well as of the most of those with whom he then was or ever had been acquainted. He would therefore gladly have found arguments against it, strong enough to overthrow it. With this view, he read several authors on the contrary side; but met with nothing in them like a scriptural proof of infant baptism: all he met with was mortifying disappointment. Being conscious that he had to do with a heart-searching God, he was determined to act uprightly. He therefore procured the reading of a pamphlet or two written in defence of believers' baptism; and this confirmed him in the sense which he had before put on the scriptures."* He has frequently remarked to the writer of these pages, that Dr. Wall's celebrated History of Infant Baptism contributed more than any other book, except the New Testament, to convince him that it had no foundation in scripture, but was wholly an invention of man.

Having thus obtained satisfaction to his own mind, he resolved, though contrary to the entreaties of his friends, to endeavour to explain and enforce what he believed to be the will of God. If we may judge of his abilities from a piece which he published a few years afterwards, we shall conclude that he was, even at that time, no despicable defender of the truth. John Slater, one of the four who invited him to Wadsworth, was his first convert; if they did not, which is very probable, study the subject together, and advance, with equal steps, towards conviction. Several others, soon afterwards, embraced the same opinion, and anxiously waited for an opportunity to carry their theory into practice. But here a serious difficulty arose. Mr. Taylor, according to his new views of things, was himself an unbaptized person, and thus unqualified to baptize others. He was, therefore, desirous of making a profession of his faith by baptism, not only that he might obey what he esteemed a command of Christ, but also that he might be authorized to administer the ordinance to his friends. For this purpose, he applied to several ministers of the Particular

* See Preface to his Humble Essay on Christian Baptism.

Baptist persuasion; but they all refused to baptize him. They professed themselves perfectly satisfied with the sincerity of his christianity, his qualifications for the ministry, and even with his call to the sacred employment: but they disapproved of his sentiments respecting the extent of the death of Christ. Some said that, as individuals, they could cheerfully have administered the ordinance to him, if their churches would have permitted it; while others frankly declared that scruples of their own prevented them. They all, however, declined a compliance with his request.

In these circumstances, Mr. T. was at a loss how to proceed. He was then young, and little acquainted with the state of religion in the world, or even with the various sects in his native country. He appears to have been equally ignorant of the General Baptists connected with the General Assembly in London, and of the societies which had then recently arisen in the midland counties; and probably thought, that he and his few friends at Wadsworth were the only Baptists in existence who denied the doctrine of personal election. It was therefore very agreeable information which he received from one of the ministers to whom he applied, that there was a Baptist minister and church at Boston, in Lincolnshire, of doctrinal sentiments nearly agreeing with his own. This intelligence was soon communicated to Mr. Slater; and, after some deliberation they determined to set out immediately in quest of these singular professors. The distance, one hundred and twenty miles, was indeed formidable to persons who had never travelled beyond their own neighbourhood; the season, the depth of winter, unfit for such an excursion; and the weather inclement: but the object was in their estimation important, and they braved all difficulties. On Friday morning, February 11, 1763, they set out on foot, and travelled as far as they could during the day. Towards the evening they found themselves in a field surrounded with water; and while they were making ineffectual attempts to extricate themselves, the night closed on them. This obliged them to continue in the open air all night; and they were happy in finding a hay-rick under which they might repose. They commended themselves to the divine protection in earnest prayer; and lying down under this friendly shelter, sunk into a sound sleep. In the morning, they found themselves comfortably refreshed; and, after returning thanks to their heavenly protector, set forwards on their journey,

Towards the evening of the following day, a decent inn presented itself, and they went in to obtain refreshment. Full of the object of their inquiry, their conversation here turned upon it; and they were agreeably surprised, when the landlord informed them, that there was a society of Baptists of their own sentiments at Gamston, a place which they had passed about eight miles; and that a deacon of that church resided in the village in which they then were. To this deacon they went, and introduced themselves as well as they could; stating the object of their journey, and requesting information. Whether their exterior appearance after their late nocturnal accommodations was not very prepossessing, or the person whom they accosted was naturally cautious, he received them coldly, viewed them with an eye of distrust, gave short answers to their enquiries, and pointed them to a public house. Not discouraged with this forbidding reception from the first General Baptist whom they had seen, they returned the following morning to Gamston; and arrived at the meeting house as Mr. Dossey was concluding the service. Mr. T. introduced himself and his companion to that worthy minister; who received them kindly, invited them to his house, and in the evening took them to his colleague, Mr. Jeffery. With these friendly christians, the two succeeding days were spent in giving and receiving information: and the result was, that Messrs. Jeffery and Dossey were perfectly satisfied with the character and faith of the two strangers; and declared their willingness to baptize them both. Mr. Slater however declined, wishing to receive the ordinance from the hands of his esteemed fellow traveller; but Mr. Jeffery baptized Mr. D. Taylor, in the river near Gamston, on Wednesday, February 16, 1763.

Our travellers returned to Wadsworth with their zeal animated and opinions confirmed. Soon after their arrival, Mr. T. with his usual frankness, delivered several public discourses on the subject of believers' baptism; earnestly exhorting his hearers to search the scriptures and judge for themselves; and publickly baptized Mr. Slater and some others. The attention of the country was excited, and strong symptoms of opposition were discovered. But Mr. T. convinced that he was on the side of the truth, despised difficulty; and stood ready, both in public and private, to defend his principles and practice against every attack.

At Gamston, Mr. T. learnt some interesting particulars respecting the old English General Baptists. He was made acquainted with the Lincolnshire Association of Churches of that persuasion; and informed that it would assemble at Lincoln in the ensuing May. Desirous of increasing the acquaintance and strengthening the union which had already been formed, he attended that meeting. Religion was then in a low state in the churches which sent representatives to that assembly; and the acquisition of a zealous young minister, of promising abilities, was an event highly gratifying to all who wished well to its interests. He was therefore kindly received at the association, May 17, 1763; and Mr. G. Boyce, who, as messenger of the churches, presided on that occasion, paid him particular attention. But the most valuable and cordial friend which this visit procured him, was Mr. Wm. Thompson, of Boston, Lincolnshire. They were then both young, zealously engaged in preaching the gospel and entertained similar views of its leading doctrines. A warm attachment to each other was quickly formed; which ripened into a christian friendship that death itself could only suspend. Mr. Thompson took his new friend with him to Boston; and introduced him to several of the General Baptist churches in that neighbourhood. This must have had a happy effect on the mind of our young minister, who had formerly thought himself alone in the earth.

The professors at Wadsworth were then unformed into a regular society. In order to remove this defect, Mr. Taylor prevailed on Mr. Thompson, to accompany him on his return to Yorkshire. This visit was rendered highly useful. The visitor, being an ordained minister, preached for this people, instructed them in the nature of church fellowship, formed them into a duly organized church, and afterwards administered to them the Lord's Supper. The persons who formed this original society were fourteen; but, in three months, eight others were baptized; and several appeared to be under serious impressions. Mr. Taylor was not insensible of his obligations to his friend. He tells him, October 15, 1763, "I think I esteem you the dearest friend that I have on earth, by reason of the sameness of disposition, judgment, &c. and more especially because I am so well persuaded of your experimental knowledge of, and sincere esteem for, the Lord Jesus Christ. O that the Lord would en-

able you and me, my dear brother, to love him more and more. In order to this, let us often be thinking what the Lord has done for us, and how little we have deserved from him. This, if any thing, will break our stubborn hearts. I am glad that you are still my real friend. The Lord grant that nothing may happen between us, that may break our love." In a few months after Mr. Thompson's visit to Yorkshire, Mr. Taylor being unanimously invited by his friends to take the oversight of them, complied with their wishes; and was solemnly ordained to the pastoral office, July 30, 1763. Mr. G. Boyce, the messenger, delivered the charge to the minister, from 1 Tim. iii. 1. "This is a true saying, If any man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." Mr. Dossey, of Gamston, addressed the church, from Heb. xiii. 7. "Remember them which have the rule over you."

Probably the ministers who assisted at the ordination might encourage this infant society to attempt to erect a more commodious place of worship; as we find the plan soon after resolved upon, and the ground obtained. In promoting this undertaking, Mr. T. was indefatigable. In the letter to Mr. Thompson already quoted, he observes, "I have been constantly employed, either in digging in the stone pit or collecting money among friends; so that I have had no leisure to write or read much, except when I should have slept. I need not say to you, 'Pray, my brother, that the Lord may prosper the work of my hands.' We have bought the ground, about three hundred yards north-east from Hebden-bridge. We have done a little towards preparing the place; and have bought most of the wood and bargained with the mason. We propose to have the house ten yards in breadth and thirteen in length within; and think that upon the most moderate calculation we cannot build with less than one hundred and forty pounds. How we shall raise it, I know not. I am a little comforted with the thought, that the right hand of the Lord bringeth mighty things to pass; and he hath done great things for us already." From the same letter, it appears that Mr. T. had made an excursion to collect for the proposed building, in the course of which he had preached thirty-four times; and visited Ashford, in Derbyshire; Sheepshead, Leicester, Earls-hilton, Wimeswold and Knipton in Leicestershire; Kilsby, Longbuckby, Moulton, Northampton, and Burton Latimore in

Northamptonshire; Morcott and Loughnam in Rutlandshire; and Gamston, Retford and Worksop in Nottinghamshire. In this journey, he collected, exclusive of expences, nearly twenty-two pounds. In the middle of October, he went out again, on the same business, under the auspices of Mr. Boyce; and visited most of the General Baptist churches in Lincolnshire. This journey occupied him till December 9. The following day he wrote to his friend Mr. Thompson: "We get well forward with preparing the place for our new meeting house. Blessed be the Lord! I prospered pretty well in my journey, I brought to Wadsworth, besides expences, forty pounds four shillings, and a horse that I hope will make us something." It seems, that his long absence from his charge, had produced its usual effects. In the same letter, he observes: "I found my friends well in body, though not altogether as well as I could wish in soul. One of the persons I baptized, I am ready to doubt of; she I fear is not so earnest as we might wish. The generality of my friends seem very much alive: and are very laborious in doing what they can for Christ's cause. I hope the Lord will own and bless us, though it should be that some forsake us."

This year, 1763, Mr. T. first appeared as an author; and his maiden publication was a poem; a species of composition in which he was not perhaps qualified by nature to excel. The strength of his reasoning powers, and his determination to search for truth, joined to a studied attention to simplicity and accuracy of expression, prevented him from succeeding in works of genius, in which boldness of imagery and pompous diction are expected. This production was an *Elegy on the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw of Haworth*; a faithful, diligent, zealous, and successful preacher of the gospel; a clergyman of the established church. On his ministry Mr. T. had often attended with profit and pleasure; and frequently walked twelve miles to enjoy the privilege. His death therefore deeply affected him, and he paid a tribute of respect to his memory in these verses, which were printed on a quarter sheet. Though they certainly can boast few of the attractions of the more elevated poesy, yet, considering when they were written, and what small opportunities the author had then enjoyed of acquiring the graces, or even the proprieties of language, they are far from despicable. The concluding lines convey a fair

specimen of the whole; and afford a pleasing idea of the writer's spirit, at this early period.

“ His body lies in yonder silent tomb,
 Until his Saviour call, ‘ Arise and come !’
 Each atom then the thund’ring voice shall hear,
 And mount to meet the Saviour in the air;
 Pompous and gay, like Jesus’ body made;
 For all the members shall be like their Head;
 And in his glory shall for ever shine.
 O! might that lot, that happy lot, be mine;
 When all the blood-wash’d throng shall jointly sing,
 The praises of their ever-glorious King!
 My tongue shall then with endless pleasure tell,
 What wond’rous grace hath sav’d my soul from hell;
 The loving Saviour’s lovely name shall be,
 The subject of my song eternally.”

1764. In the summer of this year, Mr. T. again visited Lincolnshire; and was engaged, June 24, in opening a new meeting house at Boston, for the use of his friend, Mr. Thompson. With the view of increasing the collection towards his own new meeting house, he extended this excursion to the midland counties: and hearing, for the first time, of the churches which had then recently risen in those parts, he called on Mr. Hutchinson, of Loughborough, one of their leading members. Thus commenced an acquaintance which produced important consequences.

On his return to Yorkshire, he pushed forward the building at Wadsworth, with vigour; and December 12, had the satisfaction to commence public worship in it, with a discourse from 1 Kings ix. 3. It was erected on the declivity of a hill, called *Birchcliff*; about a quarter of a mile from their former place of meeting. During the building of this house, Mr. T. was not only diligently employed in overseeing the workmen, but also daily laboured with his own hands. He had been accustomed to toil, and whatever he undertook, he did it with his whole might. Several parts of the furniture of the old place of worship were removed to the new one; and the pastor actually carried his pulpit on his back from one station to the other.

In November, 1764, Mr. T. married *Elizabeth Saltonstall*, a young woman, whose parents were honest and respectable, in easy though not affluent circumstances. She was one of the first fruits of his ministry in those parts, having joined the church in the former part of the preceding year. This connection was

a blessing to him and the cause in which he was engaged. She was a pious and affectionate partner, and bore him thirteen children. Her prudence and care were very useful in the management of a family, which was often numerous, during the frequent absence of her husband. If his estimate may be allowed, "whether considered as a wife, a friend, or a mistress of a family, she had many valuable qualities; and if she did not possess all the splendid, she had not a few of the solid accomplishments of a most valuable associate." After her death, he publickly declared that "he deliberately classed her among the best of wives:" an opinion which it is presumed will be sanctioned by those who had the most accurate means of appreciating her real character.

This year, our author published a sermon under the title of "*The Absolute Necessity of Searching the Scriptures.*" This was a duty to which he frequently and earnestly exhorted his hearers; and to the neglect of which he ascribed most of the errors and contentions among christians. To promote this laudable practice, "he had delivered a discourse, in a mixed company, which to his great surprize, he soon found was little understood and less loved." In order therefore to avoid misrepresentation, he published the substance of what he then delivered in this pamphlet; which, though "he did not suppose it contained any thing worthy the notice of the wise, might perhaps be of some use to the ignorant and teachable." The method of this tract is natural and clear, the arguments well selected and judiciously stated, and though the style exhibits some inaccuracies and provincialisms, it is generally correct and nervous. The writer has avowedly "studied plainness," yet there occur some passages of more animation than might be expected. In urging motives, for instance, to enforce the duty of searching the scriptures, he first notices the command of Christ; but instead of stating this in the form of a proposition, he introduces it thus:—"Having thus explained, I am, in the second place, to enforce the duty recommended in the text, by a few arguments. But what am I now about? What! Enforce by argument what Jesus has commanded! Who could have imagined it necessary? Surely, if he hath said it, it ought, without a moment's hesitation, to be diligently attended to by all who hear or read it. I called your attention, at the entering upon this discourse, by telling you, 'The word of God is thus written.' All scripture is the word of God, being written

by men who were ' moved by the Holy Ghost.' But the text is more directly and emphatically so, ' He who made all things, and without whom was not any thing made that was made,' spoke these words. Spoke them, not when he was upon his high and lofty throne, but when he had ' taken upon him the form of a servant, when he was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' Methinks, I hear every lover of the dear Redeemer say, ' I need no other argument. If my Lord hath commanded it, I will, from this day, make it my business, through his gracious assistance, to search the scriptures. Determined am I, through his grace, let friends or foes, let men or devils, say what they will, determined am I, to be led and directed by the scriptures, and by them alone.' " Again, speaking of the natural disposition of men to follow their teachers, he observes, " The scripture is the touchstone whereby we ought to try every word we hear, every doctrine we receive, every work we are found in the practice of. The Bereans (Oh that every hearer of the word this day would act like them!) are commended as noble, for that they searched the scriptures. Not carelessly looked them over; but *searched* them; scrutinously examined their precise import. When? a little on the Lord's day only? Nay, they searched the scriptures *daily*, to see whether these things were so. What things? Those spoken of by Paul and Silas. But was not this a little too scrupulous? Did it become them to scrutinize into the truth of men who were inspired? Yes. Infinite Wisdom commends it in them as noble."

1765. The friends at Wadsworth continued their exertions to promote the cause of their Saviour. Conscious of their need of divine assistance, they set apart January 9, 1765, as a day for fasting and prayer; and Mr. T. observes, " that he hopes they had great humiliation of soul, inflamedness of desire, and resolution." From the circumstances of the neighbourhood, a rapid increase could not be expected; yet the cause gradually extended itself, and new inquirers, from time to time, attended the means of grace. But, in the beginning of April, this year, the rising interest lost a zealous supporter, and the pastor a most affectionate and prudent associate, by the death of Mr. Slater. This good man had cordially co-operated with Mr. T. in his efforts to promote the spiritual edification of his neighbours, and exerted him-

self vigorously in forwarding the erection of the new meeting house at Birchcliff. When that design was completed, he observed: "I am now at liberty and free to die, having seen the great thing that I wished to see in this world; a house for the worship of God at Birchcliff." His minister felt the loss severely; and thus notices it in his diary, April 18. "Yesterday we interred the body of my dear brother Slater, who, glory be to the Lord, has been blest with unshaken confidence in God throughout his whole illness. This is matter of support to us under so great a stroke. He was my dear, I believe my dearest friend. The Lord has hereby taught me something of the vanity of every earthly enjoyment. I doubt, I almost idolized him. Lord, pardon me and humble me, and teach me to have all my hopes to centre in thee! I had much liberty in preaching his funeral sermon: blessed be the Lord!"

This afflictive dispensation did not eventually retard the progress of the truth. Mr. Slater's happy death attracted the attention of the neighbours, and the prudent conduct of his associates gained their respect and confidence. April 26, Mr. T. remarks: "To day I have been collecting subscriptions towards our meeting house, and blessed be the Lord, have prospered well. Friends are very free, even those whom I least expected to be so. When shall I learn to be more thankful?"

May 10, Mr. T. set out for the Lincolnshire Association; and, on the following Lord's day, preached three times at Boston. On the 21st he arrived at Lincoln; and was deputed by the Association as their representative to the General Assembly in London. He was the bearer of certain queries respecting subscriptions to the articles of the Church of England, in order to obtain a licence to preach. Many of these ministers disapproved of this practice, esteeming it a sinful compliance with an unjust imposition; and wished their denomination to make a stand against it. They esteemed the business important; and their choice of the subject of this memoir for their deputy, who was so young and with whom they had so recently formed an acquaintance, is a strong evidence of the high estimation in which they held his talents and character.

May 26, he preached twice at Boston, and thence proceeded to London, where, on the 29th, he attended the General Assembly. On the following Lord's day, June 2, he preached

twice for Mr. Brittain, to that church of which he was afterwards pastor, and once for Mr. Fry of Horslydown. He returned by way of Lincolnshire; and preaching twice at Fleet, thrice at Wablet, once at Wisbeach, once at Toft, twice at Boston, and once at Coningsby, arrived at home June 17. This appears to have been his first visit to the metropolis.

When Mr. T. at first united with the Lincolnshire General Baptists, he probably was but very imperfectly acquainted with their doctrinal sentiments. Possibly he made no rigid inquiry on the subject: but, standing alone as he then did in Yorkshire, united himself with eagerness to a body of christians, several of whom were highly respectable. But it soon appeared, that a wide difference subsisted between his views, on some important points of doctrine, and those of many of his new associates. During the present year this painful fact became very apparent. In his late journey, he stopped to preach at Gamston, May 19: and observes in his diary: "We had long contests about original sin, justification, atonement, &c. but how far do we differ in judgment with respect to all these things! What can be done? Lord, teach thou me!" In the course of his excursion, this difference occasioned much debate and warmth. The worthy Mr. G. Boyce, who, as the messenger of these churches, felt himself called upon to preserve their harmony and purity, thought it necessary that some endeavours should be used to promote a better understanding. He therefore appointed to meet Mr. T. at Gamston, in the ensuing August, freely to discuss the controverted points. In order to prepare for this important interview, it was mutually agreed to devote some part of the 5th day of August to solemn prayer and fasting for the blessing of the Father of lights on their conference. With what seriousness Mr. T. prepared for this meeting, appears from the memorandum in his diary at the above date. "I and my great and good friend Mr. B. are erelong to meet at Gamston, to talk upon some points wherein we differ; and we agreed to set apart as much of this day as circumstances permit for fasting and prayer that the Lord may direct us; that our beginning, proceeding, and ending may be in love, and under the direction of his Holy Spirit; that our minds may be enlightened, our understandings enlarged; that we may know and receive the whole truth as it is in Jesus. Because I have not much time to spare from my study this day,

I set apart three hours for the above noted occasion. The points to be debated are, 'If, or how far we are affected by Adam's sin; What is meant by the terms regeneration and justification and the way by which a sinner becomes regenerated and justified; Whether we allow, and if so, what we mean by Christ's atonement; Whether and how far the Spirit's operations are necessary to a sinner's conversion,' &c. Great subjects! Lord, assist in them." The conference accordingly took place; but the result was unsatisfactory. "I am now returned from Gamston," Mr. T. observes, August 27, "where I have had much disputing for what I call truth. But I am surprised that, while no solid arguments are produced, wise men can satisfy themselves with impertinent quibbles. I see how easy it is to perplex when we cannot refute, the plain truth of the gospel. Lord, help me to hold fast by thy word."

A point of discipline about this time engaged his mind and caused some uneasiness in the church. In conformity with their Lincolnshire friends, the church at Wadsworth had adopted the practice of laying on of hands on baptized persons at their reception into church fellowship. Some of the candidates objected to the ceremony; and a degree of contention ensued. The pastor read various authors and studied the subject with great attention; but remained, for a time, undecided. At length he saw reason to relinquish the practice, and tranquility was restored.

A memorandum, dated October 4, 1765, gives a pleasing instance of this diligent and affectionate minister's concern for the best interests of his people. "Here I would set down," he says, "in several classes, the names of my dear brethren, that I may more regularly take them, a class at a time, and recommend them with their several circumstances and necessities, as far as I know them, to the Lord. Lord, help me." Then follow twenty-four names, disposed in four classes; which probably comprized all the families then belonging to his church.

1766. This year, Mr. T. continued his ministerial labours with undiminished assiduity and encouraging success. He was also unremitting in his endeavours to improve in every part of knowledge, that could assist in his sacred work. Indeed it appears that he had already formed enlarged ideas of the several branches of ministerial duty, and at this time had an opportunity

of explaining them to the public. May 13, according to the appointment of the preceding year, he preached before the Lincolnshire Association at Coningsby, from *Luke* xii. 42. "Who is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season?" From this comprehensive passage, he took occasion to enlarge on the character, the qualifications and the work of a good minister of the gospel. As many aged ministers attended at that assembly, and he was only twenty-eight years of age, it was natural for him to apologize for the apparent presumption of choosing such a subject. This he attempted in the introduction. "When the vast importance of the subject," he observes, "is duly considered, I own it matter of just wonder and amazement to many of you how a person of my years and standing in religion can indulge the vanity to think himself equal to such a subject, or have the assurance to undertake the work. I have just to observe, that I am far from thinking myself equal to the task. If I am not deceived by mine own heart, I am, in some measure, sensible how unable I am to speak as I ought concerning the common affairs and duties of christianity, and how much more of the great, the exceedingly great and difficult work of the ministry. However as I am called to the work, and as it is expected that I say something, I would endeavour, with the simplicity and uprightness of mind which I think such a work demands, to offer to my *young* brethren in the ministry, a few observations and words of advice; desiring that those of you, my honoured friends who are more advanced in age and wisdom would sit by, and observe what will be said to *them*, rather than expect that any remarks I can make or advices I can give will be, in any way, useful to *you*." This discourse however was so well approved by those who heard it, that they united in earnestly requesting the preacher to publish it. With this request he complied; and, in a few months afterwards, it appeared under the title of "*The Faithful and Wise Steward*." It was dedicated to the gentlemen, ministers and others before whom it was preached, as a token of gratitude for the favours with which they had indulged him and his church. A considerable improvement in the art of composition is discernible throughout this discourse. It is evidently the production of a mind well stored with the most useful knowledge, which had well studied the nature and

duties of the great work in which it was engaged. No young minister can read it without being really benefitted by the perusal. Though some of his charges at seasons of ordination, several of which were afterwards published, may be thought to supercede some parts of this tract, yet none of his subsequent publications take so comprehensive a view of the duties, and especially of the qualifications, of a christian minister. Probably too this address will not be the less useful and interesting to persons setting out in the sacred work, as being the production of a young man like themselves, who spoke out of the abundance of the heart, felt all the difficulties which he describes, panted after all the excellencies which he recommends to others, and sincerely laboured to follow those advices which he offers to his fellow labourers. It has been long out of print; but it would be an injury to religion to suffer it to fall into oblivion.

The preacher on this occasion, when he had concluded the principal subject of his discourse, added an address to Christians in general, founded on *Isaiah* xl. 31, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." This address was at first published with the other part of the sermon; but it afterwards appeared in a separate form, and was entitled, "*The Weak Christian encouraged to wait upon God; with some Directions.*" It forms a very useful little piece; containing important instructions how to wait on God, in prayer, in reading and hearing the word, and in holy meditation; with earnest exhortations and powerful motives to the constant, humble, expecting and confident exercise of these sacred duties.

Mr. T. returned from the association, at which this discourse was delivered, through the counties of Nottingham and Derby, with a design most probably of cultivating his acquaintance with the midland churches. This excursion occupied a fortnight, in the course of which he preached ten times, and arrived at home, May 17. In the latter part of the year, he took a journey into the same parts, which employed nineteen days.

We have no information respecting the progress of the cause at Wadsworth during this year, or the following; only that it appears to have been in a state of improvement. Nor have we been able to trace the labours of the pastor, except that we find him at the Lincolnshire Association, at Coningsby, June 2, 1767; from whence he went to the General Assembly in London, as

the substitute for Mr. Thompson who had been deputed to that service. He returned to Wadsworth, June 20; and set out again in October on his usual tour through the counties of Lincoln, Nottingham, and Derby. In both these journeys, he preached frequently and had encouraging proofs that his labours were acceptable and useful. December 16, he baptized three persons at Wadsworth; and soon after left home again to visit the churches.

1768. This year opened with a severe domestic affliction. The small pox, a disorder peculiarly fatal to his family, seized both his children, and great danger was apprehended. Mr. T. who, as we have seen, was abroad on a journey, was immediately sent for home; but, before his arrival, January 7, his daughter, a fine girl of upwards of three years of age, had just expired; and his son, almost two years old, died in two days afterwards. This was a severe trial, especially as he had then no other children. He felt it keenly; but acquiesced in the painful dispensation. The following observations in his diary on this melancholy occasion, exhibit a pleasing view of the state of his mind. "January 10. I am now returned from a long journey, and find my dear, dear little daughter dead, and my son near dying. He expired about fifty hours after my arrival at home. So now I am left childless. This is indeed a heavy stroke; but I suppose the infinitely wise and good Lord sees that I stand in need of heavy strokes in order to bring my rebellious mind into subjection to his blessed self. Lord, work for thine own honour the way thou seest best. But O! suffer me not to disregard the operations of thine hands. In much mercy be thou pleased, glorious Jehovah, to make me submissive and obedient. Lord, thy will be done in, upon, and by me, in all things!"

The same cruel disorder, which had snatched away the two children of this pious minister, had removed many others from the neighbouring families, and not a few from those of his friends. To support himself and his fellow sufferers in these trying scenes, he delivered two appropriate discourses, from 2 Kings iv. 26; the resigned answer of the bereaved Shunamite, respecting her deceased son, "It is well." The substance of these discourses were afterwards published under the title of "*The Mourning Parent comforted.*" The object of this publication is thus ex-

plained by the author.—“ As I in some measure know the worth of these meditations myself, and am unacquainted with any thing on the same or a similar subject easily to be bought and read by the poor for whom I chiefly write, I hope it will be esteemed rather a piece of service, proceeding from real love to other distressed parents and sympathy with them, than the effect of ostentation. I publish them with the same views with which I preached them: 1, to support bereaved parents under their troubles; 2, to prepare others for troubles of the like sort; and 3, to assist all God’s people in the necessary and useful duty of comforting one another.” These are plain, experimental and useful discourses; well adapted to answer the valuable purposes for which they were designed. The feelings of the tender parent and resigned believer are apparent throughout; and, in some instances, there are strokes of natural eloquence peculiarly affecting. It is impossible to read the dying soliloquy of a pious parent over a profligate child without partaking the agony that it describes. “ I am going,” says the christian parent, “ to be happy with my God, and my Saviour, in the realms of bliss: to take my place in that glorious kingdom, to wear that crown, and enjoy that felicity, which are not the reward of my own obedience, that hath always been imperfect, and the best part of it no better than filthy rags: but, which is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. But O! how it tears my heart, to reflect upon the case of an impenitent son whom I am leaving in the world. He has lived to this day, and has never yet savingly known the God that made him! and now I am going to leave him: I can no longer admonish, advise, or pray for him. But soon his disembodied spirit must follow mine into eternity, must stand before that God of whom he is now ignorant and negligent; yea, against whom, he now rebels. Who can bear the thought of the anguish he must then feel, and the woe, to which he shall be consigned? And there is an after-day, still more awful: when all that are in their graves, when all the dead, both small and great, shall be caused to stand before God, and the books shall be opened, and the dead shall be judged out of those things that are written in the books, according to their works. Methinks I see, amongst the rising multitudes, my own unconverted child. He arises from the grave, compelled to it by the resistless energy of the Omnipotent’s awful voice. His distracted heart is filled with

the most racking agonies, and all the symptoms of ghastly despair are manifest in his pale looks. The crush of the hugest mountains, to grind his revived bones to powder, the jaws of the fiercest lion to shatter in pieces his reanimated body, any thing to screen him from the wrath of God, and the Lamb, would now be welcome, be delightful to him. But no such favour is allowed. He is compelled to appear; he is examined; he is judged; he is condemned. The dreadful sentence; 'Depart thou cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels,' is denounced, is executed. The bottomless flaming pit, opens; and my wretched son sinks into flames unquenchable; and there is consigned to welter, without reprieve, without hope, through never ending ages."

This awakening visitation seems to have excited the pious parent to greater zeal and exertion in his sacred work, and his efforts were not in vain. The congregations at Birchcliff were numerous, frequently overflowing, and many were affected by the word. A house was this summer built for his residence adjoining the meeting-house to which he removed in November. The erection of this house occupied his time and attention, and probably detained him from the Lincolnshire Association; as we do not find his signature to the minutes of that assembly. He took possession of his new dwelling with much satisfaction, on November the 10th. He observes, "I have been removing the place of my habitation, which has been matter of labour and discomposure; but blessed be the Lord, I trust he has enabled me to watch over my heart. I am now much more agreeably fixed. O! that the blessed God may enable me to love him more and to glorify him more, for and with all my blessings and advantages." Those who have seen the edifice for which this good man is so grateful, will not, it is presumed, accuse him of wishing to exalt his gate, or of seeking great things for himself.

At the close of this year, he took an excursion of a fortnight into Lincolnshire, and as usual preached frequently. His friend Mr. Thompson accompanied him on his return to Wadsworth, and spent there a few happy and useful days.

In the beginning of this year, Mr. T. published his first polemical work. It was, "*An humble Essay on Christian Baptism, offered to the consideration of upright Inquirers concerning the Subjects and proper Mode of administering this Ordinance.*"

Contrary to his usual practice, he did not affix his name to this piece. Several publications on this subject had then recently appeared, in which the defenders of believers' baptism by immersion were roughly handled and held up as objects of contempt. To check this ill-timed triumph our author yielded to the solicitations of his friends, and printed this Essay. Its design is well explained in the opening of the work. "It may be allowed," says the writer, "that very much cannot well be said more than has before been said on this subject; yet it is hoped that could a few thoughts, in easy language, suited to the capacities of common readers, be once more offered to view, it might, under the blessing of God, have a happy tendency to discover the error of those vain persons, who, alas! delight in reproaching what they know little of; to satisfy some inquiring souls, and establish some weak minds, with regard to this ordinance. With this view, the following remarks are humbly and in the spirit of meekness submitted to consideration." "The chief request the author would make to the reader is, that he would impartially examine the *scriptures* with regard to the ordinance of baptism, and regard this pamphlet as far as it will be found consistent with them; but *no farther*. He has long thought, and still thinks, that would every one, according to his ability, act thus, and not take things from others without examination, it would greatly tend to the promotion both of truth and peace. And, O! what would we not give, what would we not suffer to promote these?"

In conformity with these views, the writer states with brevity, plainness and force, the arguments for immersion built upon scripture; and examines at large the objections drawn from the sacred volume. But, though he rests on revelation as the only foundation of a positive institution, yet he considers the pleas for immersion and sprinkling drawn from antiquity, decency, and the practice of the great body of christians. This he does, "for the sake of some who seem to think, that the practice of immersion was but lately become usual, whereas the truth is, it hath but lately been laid aside." On the proper *subjects* of baptism, he pursues a similar plan: first insisting pretty largely on the commission of our Saviour, and the precepts and examples of the New Testament, and then considering the arguments for infant baptism founded on circumcision, the baptizing of Jewish converts, the practice of antiquity, &c. the work concludes with

"Remarks on some passages of the Fathers," designed to prove, that there is no trace of infant baptism during the two first centuries of christianity.

This pamphlet exhibits great acquaintance with the subject, and considerable abilities in controversy. Its principal excellencies are perspicuity and force. More learning indeed is displayed, than could have been expected from the opportunities of the author; several of the Fathers are quoted in their original languages: and now and then a critical disquisition respecting the signification of a Greek or Hebrew term is introduced. This erudition is however confined, with much propriety, to the notes. The Essay was well received; and the first impression sold off soon after its publication.

1769. This was a year of peculiar labour and success. Mr. T. preached diligently, not only in his own meeting house but in the dwelling houses of his friends, frequently at some distance from Wadsworth. His exertions were abundantly blessed by his divine Master. Twenty persons were added to the church in the course of the year; and the congregations were so numerous that it became necessary to erect a gallery for their accommodation.

Mr. T. was now in a feeble state of health. For some weeks previous to June 12, he had been nearly laid aside from his sacred work: and about that time, returning in a heavy rain from preaching at a distance brought on a severe cold which long afflicted him. It does not appear, that he was obliged wholly to suspend his ministerial labours; and these indispositions had a happy effect in animating him to greater diligence and circumspection.

The difference of sentiments between Mr. T. and his Lincolshire friends, continued to produce disputes. This year, at the Association held in Lincoln, May 9, at which Mr. T. was present, the contentions ran so high, that a division seemed highly expedient. Our minister had sedulously cultivated an acquaintance with the midland General Baptists, and had found them strenuous advocates for what he esteemed the essential truths of the gospel. It was therefore natural for him to wish for a closer union with professors whose sentiments he so cordially approved. He proposed that they should unite with the churches in Lin-

colnshire; but to this they decidedly objected, because they esteemed several of them highly erroneous in their creed. They even went farther and declared it to be the duty of all who maintained the truth, to have no fellowship with such as had so grossly fallen from it. These remarks had considerable effect on the ingenuous mind of the subject of these memoirs; and he, in conjunction with his friend, Mr. Thompson, resolved to leave their former associates, and endeavour to form a new union with their midland brethren. In order to accomplish this design, a preparatory meeting was held, at Lincoln, about Michaelmas, this year: when Mr. Taylor and Mr. Thompson were met by Mr. F. Smith of Melbourn, Mr. J. Grimley of Loughborough, Mr. N. Pickering of Castle Donington, and several other leading men in the midland churches. At this Conference the plan was laid for the formation of the *New Connection of General Baptists*, which, as we shall soon see, was successfully carried into effect in the succeeding year.

Having thus followed Mr. Taylor through the first period of his life, we shall close this section with a few hints that could not properly be introduced under any distinct year.

We have already seen, that the country in which this active minister had fixed his residence was, when he settled there, excessively wild and ignorant. His exertions to spread the light of knowledge and especially of the scriptures among its dark and depraved inhabitants were almost incredible. He did not confine his attention to Wadsworth, nor his labours to the meeting house, but went out on all sides to a considerable distance to preach on the evenings of the Lord's day and frequently on the week days. In the expressive language of one of his contemporaries, who had good opportunity of observing his conduct: "Mr. D. Taylor laboured hard, not only on the Lord's day when it was common with him to preach three times; the third at a considerable distance, in a wild country, the inhabitants of which were hardly civilized and generally great strangers to religion. But, by the blessing of God on his Lord's day evening and week day labours, many were brought to repentance; an honourable change took place in their behaviour; several meetings for prayer and christian conference were established around the country; and the improvement was so evident that intelligent observers

could not but allow the propriety of applying to the place and its inhabitants, 'The Lord hath done great things for them?' and many would have gratefully replied, 'The Lord hath done great things for us, of which we are glad.' Mr. T's excursions on this benevolent errand often extended to places at six or eight or even ten or twelve miles from Wadsworth. His exertions laid the foundation for the raising of churches in various places; but, as this effect did not take place till the ensuing period, we defer particulars to the next chapter.

In the year 1764, Mr. T. obtained a valuable co-adjutor in these laudable attempts, Mr. afterwards Dr. Fawcett then accepted the office of pastor over the Particular Baptist church at Wainsgate, a village in the vicinity of Birchcliff, and fixed his residence at that place. A congenial taste for literature and equal zeal for religion soon produced an intimacy between these two ministers, which, notwithstanding their difference of sentiments on points of doctrine, ripened into a friendship that was never interrupted through the course of their long lives. They cordially co-operated in their attempts for the good of their neighbours; and frequently consulted on the best means of improving their character. Among other schemes for this purpose, in the beginning of 1769, they united their influence in the establishing of a *Book Society*, on a general plan, at Heptonstall. In reference to this institution Mr. T. observes in his diary, January 29, 1769, "To-day, several of us have been engaged in establishing a circulating society. May it be of real use: and may the blessed God enable me more simply and sincerely to seek his glory in all things I do." These prayers were answered: the society was very useful in carrying forward the improvement in the manners and knowledge of the inhabitants, and gave rise to many similar institutions in adjacent neighbourhoods. The pious and intelligent ministers who formed the plan, were careful to secure a selection of books proper for general reading; which chiefly consisted of works on divinity, biography, travels, &c. and took frequent opportunities of instructing their friends in the most beneficial mode of using them. Some time after the formation of this institution, Mr. T. delivered a discourse to the members upon "the Uses to be made of Knowledge."

But this good understanding between the pastors did not prevent their flocks from occasional squabbles. They would some-