

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

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

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

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

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

to whom I had to speak. I thought my poor services would be of no use; but in the evening learned, to my great joy, that I was, in some measure, disappointed."

"Wainsgate, May 10, 1764.—Yesterday our goods were removed from Bradford to this place. A number of the brethren here came with horses; and having met us at Haworth, conveyed us forwards, and the goods we brought with us.

"I have now set my hand to the plough, and have made a solemn entrance upon the work of the ministry. My partner in life and I have taken leave of our dear friends and brethren, with whom we had an affectionate and sorrowful parting.

"I would now apply with diligence to the work incumbent upon me. I am conscious of great weakness and inability; but the language of my heart is, 'Lord, help me!' I rose before six in the morning, and spent most of the day in regulating my books and other things; at night I was dull and weary.

"I am favoured in my new situation with a convenient study, and almost all the advantages and opportunities I could wish for; but, alas! I see so much of my own emptiness and insufficiency, that I shall be miserable, in the midst of them, if the Lord add not his blessing. Prov. x. 12: 'The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich.'"

The situation in which he had now taken up his residence was very different from a considerable manufacturing town, and in itself could have few

attractions; but he had internal resources; and his books, those silent but inestimable companions, prevented him feeling that *ennui* which throws a gloom over the minds of many, and renders a solitary situation almost insupportable.

Whatever the motives might be, whether to avoid interruption and persecution, or merely for the sake of the private convenience of those who erected them, the first Dissenting places in this part of the country, which were generally small, humble edifices, were built in secluded spots, adjoining neither towns nor villages, but withdrawn from the notice of the public. The promoters of these erections had no idea of courting the attention of their neighbours, by inviting appearances and splendid attractions. Such was the situation of the meeting-house at Rawden, which was unquestionably one of the oldest in this part of Yorkshire. Though there were numerous villages in the vicinity, without any place of worship, it was erected in a solitary, though beautiful place, at a distance from the public road, surrounded by woods, excepting on one side, where the river Aire is seen winding along the valley. Tradition records that when it was opened, the minister, who officiated on the occasion, struck with the peculiarity of its situation, chose for his text the words of the Psalmist: 'We have found it in the fields of the wood.' The congregation, afterwards increasing, and finding much inconvenience from the situation, removed to a more central place. Part of the materials were taken away; but the shell of the old building yet remains nearly covered with ivy, with scattered tombstones grown over with moss, and overshadowed with trees,

inviting the attention of the traveller, as being perhaps the only ruin of a Dissenting meeting house to be found in this part of the kingdom.

The erection of a place of worship at Wainsgate may, under a Divine blessing, be imputed to the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, of Haworth, which is six or seven miles distant, separated from it by a wild and bleak moor. Mr. Richard Smith, who was the first pastor, in the former part of his life attended Mr. Grimshaw's ministry, and derived great advantage from it. The particular circumstances attending his conversion cannot now be ascertained. For some time his mind was in a gloomy desponding state, and he was harassed with many disquieting fears respecting his own personal interest in God's salvation; but he was earnest in prayer, and other means of grace, till at length it pleased God to calm his troubled breast, and to fill his heart with 'joy and peace in believing.'

Being possessed of strong natural parts, and diligent in his application to study, it was the general opinion of his religious friends that he was designed for public usefulness in the church of God. He was accordingly solicited, and at length prevailed upon, to give a word of exhortation. This he did at first privately, and afterwards in larger assemblies. His efforts were rendered acceptable and useful to many.

After some time he was invited to preach in the township of Wadsworth, then a wild and inhospitable part of the country, where civilization was in a low state, and where there was little of the fear or knowledge of God. Mr. Smith preached in the houses of those who were willing to receive him. The number of hearers gradually increased; and though some 'con-

tradicted and blasphemed, many believed and turned to the Lord.

As an evidence that the power of Divine grace had reached the hearts of many individuals, and that they were attached to the ministry of Mr. Smith, they entered into voluntary subscriptions, and, without soliciting assistance from any other quarter, erected a small meeting house, which they called Wainsgate, from the farm on which it was built, in a high situation, without any considerable village near it. The proprietor of the farm, being a warm friend to the cause, gave the ground for the place of worship and for a burying place adjoining. A house was afterwards erected on a very small scale for the minister, whose family consisted only of himself and his wife. As those concerned in the erection were principally poor persons, every part of the work was done in the most economical manner; in one respect, so as to render the place uncomfortable, especially in the winter season. When the walls were reared and the roof about to be put on, thinking that they had not made it sufficiently high, instead of raising the wall a few courses, they lowered the inside of the building about half a yard, which caused it to be damp. The roof was supported by a stone arch, near which was the pulpit. Having no gallery at that time, the place could not accommodate more than one hundred persons.

Under the ministry of Mr. Smith, a Christian church was gathered and constituted in the year 1750. Inconsiderable as it may appear, it was the mother church to many others in the neighbouring towns and villages. The Almighty was pleased to honour the small society at Wainsgate, by bestowing on some of its members

excellent gifts for the ministry. Two of them were particularly distinguished, who were raised up under Mr. Smith's ministrations; namely, Mr. James Hartley, so often mentioned in this biographical account, and Mr. William Crabtree, of Bradford, who laboured long with great acceptance and success.

In the former part of Mr. Smith's ministry, he dwelt much on doctrinal subjects; but being discouraged under the apprehension that his labours were not useful, and that this might be owing to some defect in his mode of preaching, for some years before his death he turned his attention more particularly to the moral and religious duties incumbent on professing Christians. These he enforced by the most striking arguments and incentives, drawn from the love of God, the death of Christ, the credit of the Gospel, the hope of saints as laid up in heaven, and the honour of him who called them 'out of darkness into marvellous light.' In his ministry he had a manner peculiar to himself, of coming home to the conscience, and touching the springs and movements of the soul. His address was full of gravity, and his words as weighty as words could be. A stranger who occasionally heard him, once said, "This man's words fall on us like mill-stones."

In his own deportment he was eminently conscientious, avoiding conformity to the world, and bearing his testimony against the prevailing vices and irregularities of the times in which he lived. In some respects he carried his scruples respecting matters of conscience to a length which few would think it necessary to imitate.

It is related of him, that when he felt the risings of fretfulness and discontent, he generally visited the poorest of his neighbours, which, next to the truths of

Christianity, his experience taught him was the best antidote to these painful sensations.

His natural constitution was very infirm; and he was so broken down with disease, that when but middle aged he had the appearance of one advanced in years. His last sickness was long and tedious, and his pain for the most part very severe. But his humility and patience were remarkable, his faith steady, and consolations strong. 'He longed to depart and to be with Christ,' and his desire was at length granted. His soul was dismissed from this tenement of clay, August 24, 1763, in the 53d year of his age, after he had been pastor of the church about thirteen years.

Those of his hearers who yet survive, bear witness to his integrity and faithfulness.* His successor, who has now followed him to the grave, never mentioned him

* A pastoral letter, from which the following passages are selected, has been found among the manuscripts of the late Mr. Smith. It is without date, but was probably written near the close of his public ministry.

"To the Church of Christ, at Wainsgate, grace, peace, and love be multiplied through Christ our exalted head.

"I am standing at the threshold of your door, with my heart towards you in the bowels of Jesus Christ. I must shortly give account to him that is ready to 'judge the quick and the dead,' as to *what* I have preached, *how* I have preached, and whether I have held fast Christ's name and the form of sound words which he has committed to my trust. If I have let them slip, with a view to gain to myself, to acquire honour or friendship from men, or from any other worldly motive—how can I hope to give up my account with joy?' how shall I be able to say, 'I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith?' I am pained to hear that you discover so much indifference to the Gospel, and that you can tamely admit of innovations of a dangerous tendency. You are anxiously concerned when your temporal interest is at stake. Ah! my brethren, does not your conduct in more important matters betray, if not want of knowledge and discernment, what is much worse, want of zeal and love?

but with respect. As is evident from the former part of this account, he had an intimate personal acquaintance with him, before he left Bradford. He wrote an elegy on his death, of which the following are the concluding lines :

“ For numerous years his labours have been blest,
 But now his work is done, and he's released.
 The Gospel tidings he no more declares,
 His voice no more makes glad his people's ears.
 Alas! for them!—how shall they now be fed?
 Who for their souls will care? their shepherd's dead!
 Like scatter'd sheep, will they not wander now?
 Who then to them the way of truth will show?

“ Thou, God! from whom all gifts and graces come,
 Who thus hast call'd thy servant to the tomb,
 Raise up another who shall useful prove,
 And rightly preach the messages of love;
 That thy poor flock may be instructed still,
 And guided safely to thy heavenly hill.”

Are not you seeking your own more than the things of Jesus Christ? Is not that night of which Dr. Gill speaks coming fast upon us? Does not he who ‘walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks,’ see your Laodicean temper of mind, and has he not something against you, because ‘you have left your first love?’ Let us search and see. Is there that love to Christ, his ministers, his word, his truths, and company, that there once was? Is there that zeal for his cause, his honour, his interest, which was evidenced at your first conversion? Is there that fervency of prayer in your families and closets?—But I forbear; let conscience speak; and if it bear witness against you, ‘let him that hath an ear, hear what the spirit saith unto the churches:’—‘Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.’

“What I have written to you more at large before, I wish you to read with diligence and deliberation; and if things are not as I apprehend, be so kind as to inform me better. Having no other copy, I wish them, along with this, to be returned to me. ‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.’ Amen.”

During the long confinement of Mr. Smith, as the number of Baptist ministers was small, and no academical institutions were then established in the north of England, the church at Wainsgate was unable to procure supplies more than once in the fortnight. On the intervening Sabbaths, one of the members, whose son has been since known to the public as the writer of "Essays in a Series of Letters to a Friend;" read the whole of Gurnal's "Christian Armour," to the congregation. Being a person of strong mental powers, he occasionally commented upon his author, so that he was enabled to keep up the attention of his audience, who often expressed themselves edified by what they heard.

Few persons indeed were better qualified than he for usefulness as a private member of a Christian society. Having a deep sense of the importance of Divine things, a warm heart, and a well-informed mind, he and his partner in life, for a long succession of years, laid themselves out in encouraging, by social converse and meetings, those who were setting out 'in the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward.' Religion was the business of his life from youth to advanced age; and nothing excited his interest so much as the prosperity and extension of the kingdom of Christ among different denominations. A man of such a spirit is a most important acquisition to any Christian society; and through the course of his public ministrations, he who was about to be Mr. Smith's successor found in this old disciple a steady, zealous fellow-helper in the work of the Lord.—The reader will excuse this digression; it is a just, though imperfect tribute, to one whose memory is now precious to many.

Among others ministers invited to fill Mr. Smith's

pulpit while he was laid aside, Mr. Johnson of Liverpool spent some time at Wainsgate. He had been connected in association with the Baptists, and was requested as a friend to assist them in their 'time of need;' but whether some of Mr. Smith's hearers had misrepresented his sentiments to Mr. Johnson, or from some other cause, he embraced the opportunity of disseminating some peculiar opinions of his own, which were rendered the more acceptable by his ready and fluent utterance. On his return home, he published a book, which he denominated the "Trial of Two Opinions," in which he laid before the public many things relative to Mr. Smith, in a hasty, improper manner. Mr. Hartley, of Haworth, grieved by this attack upon his afflicted brother, published a pamphlet in reply, entitled, "The Trial of Two Opinions Tried," wherein he vindicated the conduct and character of Mr. Smith, and confuted many erroneous positions which Mr. Johnson had laid down. The controversy is now become quite obsolete, but, for the time, it had a very unhappy effect on the small society at Wainsgate. The number of members was but about thirty, and some of these were infected with Mr. Johnson's sentiments. This was a discouraging circumstance to a young minister, who was naturally very timid, at his first entrance among them; but by avoiding any share in the controversy, and by a conciliatory disposition on his part, the breach was made up, so that those members who had stood at a distance, on account of some difference in sentiment on matters of minor consequence, were again united, and they mutually agreed to allow one another their own way of thinking and of expressing themselves.

What has now been related will convey a general idea of the situation of this little society, when the subject of this narrative first entered upon his labours. As to the neighbourhood in general, it would be difficult, at this distance of time, to form any proper idea of its civil and religious state. The population was comparatively small, and the provincial dialect almost unintelligible to strangers: in those parts where large and flourishing villages now stand, there were only a few scattered houses, and in some instances no erections of any kind. The principal hamlets were on the declivity or near the summit of almost inaccessible hills; which situations were also the favourite residence of persons of landed property, who appear to have had no idea of the picturesque beauties which, in more modern times, have been discovered in the valleys and dells below, where the scenery is distinguished "by being ever varying and ever new." As there were no wheeled carriages, little attention was paid to the public roads, which were generally carried through valleys and over the summits of hills, so as to suit the convenience of the proprietors and occupiers of the land, without much regard to the accommodation of the more distant traveller.

The introduction of carriages, the influx of trade, and the consequent connexion with commercial towns, pointed out the necessity of new roads, winding along the valleys; and the abundance of waterfalls on the Calder and its tributary streams, forming situations where considerable factories have been erected since the invention of machinery, have altogether produced an incalculable change in the appearance of the country, and a great accession to the population.

At the period before referred to, the places of worship were very few and thinly attended; the principal of which were, an ancient and almost dilapidated episcopal church at Heptonstall, which has since that undergone many repairs; a small Methodist meeting house at the same place, and two others on a still smaller scale, at Slack and Rodhill End, belonging to the Baptists. Among the inhabitants in general, ignorance and vice prevailed in a deplorable degree; there was little appearance of religion; their tempers, dispositions, and habits, partook much of the wildness of the country, so that an extensive, though unpromising field, presented itself before those faithful labourers who were raised up in these parts about this period.

Among the number of those who came forward at this time, and were for many years great blessings to this neighbourhood, the Rev. James Crossley is deserving of particular notice. He was born in the year 1731, at Lower Saltonstall, a small hamlet in Warley, near Halifax. His parents were industrious, respectable members of society; but having a large family, were not able to give him a liberal education. His disposition from his earliest years was cheerful and engaging. Whilst young, he had many alarms of conscience, which were much increased by his attendance upon the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, and among the Methodists, who had sometimes preaching at Luddenden. It is not known what was the precise time, or what were the particular means, of his conversion to God; but he became a zealous professor among the Methodists, and used all his influence to induce his former companions in sin to follow him in the ways and service of God. He was a leader at one of the prayer meetings,

and having frequently dropped a few words by way of exhortation, he at length ventured to make a few remarks from a portion of Scripture. He was led to devote his attention to the study of God's most Holy Word, with a view to the ministry; and some change having taken place in his religious sentiments respecting the doctrines of the Gospel, a separation from his former religious connexions ensued, and a large room was hired at Upper Saltonstall, where he preached regularly every Lord's Day. The room, though spacious, soon became inadequate to contain the numbers who flocked to hear him. A suitable place of worship was now resolved upon; but much discouragement arose, from the poverty of the hearers, and other obstacles. A subscription was entered into; and those who had no money laboured alternately in digging the foundation, getting stones in the quarry, and serving the masons. During the year 1761, the building, called Booth Chapel, was reared and rendered fit for public worship; there were no galleries in it at the time of its first erection. The situation was very solitary, and, for want of suitable roads, for a long time difficult of access; but it was probably fixed upon as being at a central distance from several surrounding villages. Mr. Crossley opened the meeting house himself, by preaching an animated discourse from Psalm xxvii. 6: 'I will offer in his tabernacle,' &c. He was ordained in the year 1763. The Rev. Mr. Knight, of Halifax,* who had been or-

* The Rev. Titus Knight was born December 17, 1719. He began to preach in the year 1749, being then among the Methodists. He withdrew from that connexion in 1762, with a few friends who had adopted his views on the doctrines of the Gospel. The place becoming too small for the congregation, a very spacious and

dained the day preceding, the Rev. Mr. Edwards of Leeds, and the Rev. Mr. Scott, of Heckmondwicke, were present, and took part in the services on that occasion.

Mr. Crossley continued for the space of about twenty years in this situation. A friendly connexion took place between him and his neighbour, the minister at Wainsgate, which was maintained through life. They frequently preached double lectures together; and for several years, in conjunction with the Rev. Mr. Simpson, of Warley, they gratuitously preached in succession once in the month at the workhouse belonging to Warley, for the benefit of the paupers there, who were not able to attend Divine service elsewhere.

Having received an unanimous invitation to accept the pastoral office in the newly established Independent interest at Bradford, he resigned his beloved charge at Booth, though very reluctantly. He was no doubt induced to go, from the hope of more extended usefulness; but it is generally supposed that he died of a broken heart, so greatly did the removal prey upon his spirits. He only preached one Sabbath after he finally left Booth; and died the Lord's Day following, May 18, 1782, aged 51 years. Rev. Mr. Cockin preached his funeral sermon, from the 3d epistle of John, 8 verse. Mr. Crossley was plain in his person and address; but the primitive simplicity, piety, and good sense, which dis-

elegant structure was erected, and opened in May, 1772. About the year 1764, he had become acquainted with Mr. Whitefield, and was appointed one of the preachers at the Tabernacle, in London. He was engaged during forty-three years in the work of the ministry, and died, after a tedious illness, March 2, 1793.

tinguished his discourses, rendered him a very acceptable and useful preacher. He printed one sermon, occasioned by the melancholy end of one of his hearers, who, having formed a connexion with coiners, was tried and executed at York, April 28, 1770. The text was 2 Sam. xii. 14: 'By this thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord,' &c. A copy of a letter which he wrote to Mr. Crossley, just before his execution, is in possession of the writer. It was found in his pocket. He bewails, in the most feeling manner, his past backslidings in heart and in life. "God in his judgment," he says, "has overtaken me. But, in the midst of judgment, I would hope he will yet remember mercy. O that my wanderings may be a warning to others, and that my death, shameful as it is, may produce some good effect, and prove a real blessing to others! My heart is pained for my dear relatives; O that I could bear their sorrows! but I must leave them. Let me entreat you to give them seasonable and suitable advice whenever you can.—I can say no more; but, O that I could come to tell you what my heart feels!"

But it is time we should return from this digression, and resume the thread of our narrative. In the month of May, 1764, a public meeting, or association of the Baptist denomination, was held at Halifax. The letter sent by the church at Wainsgate is still preserved, in which they mention, in a feeling manner, the death of their pastor, with the steps they had taken during his illness, and subsequent to his death, particularly in inviting a young preacher from Bradford, whose labours

gave universal satisfaction. "We, therefore," they say, "looked upon him as one whom the Lord was raising up in our necessity, and requested him to come and settle among us, which he has done. We earnestly entreat the Lord to give him suitable abilities for the great work, and make him a wise and faithful steward of the mysteries of God."

In a passage of the diary, written a few days after his removal (May 12), he complains on account of the state of his mind, which was still probably unsettled, from the hurry necessarily attendant upon so great a change in situation :

"I have endeavoured to prepare for the Sabbath this afternoon; but was dark, and made little progress. What pains me most is, that I am not more deeply interested. Lord, incline my heart to pray, and cause thine ear to hear!

"I have spent the Saturday wholly in my study; but, alas! it has been an unprofitable day with respect to prayer and converse with God in my work. My object has been to lay up something for the Sabbath; but, though favoured with every advantage, I have done little to purpose. Formerly, when I had less time, I found the work much more easy."

"Lord's Day, May 13.—I have been carried mercifully through the work of the day, though not so happily as at some times. I had not freedom of utterance, and my mind was contracted. The text in the morning was Matt. v. 3: 'Blessed are the pure in

heart, for they shall see God:’ In the afternoon, Heb. xiii. 6: ‘So that we may boldly say,’ &c.”

“ Lord’s Day, July 15.—This has been such a day to me as calls for much thankfulness. I found great freedom and pleasure in every part of the work I had to attend to. John xiv. 19: ‘Because I live ye shall live also’ was the subject of discourse; I enjoyed somewhat of the sweetness of what I held forth to others.”

“ Lord’s Day, July 22.—I was not prepared, as I could have wished to be, for the work of the day. In the forenoon I spoke from Luke viii. 6: ‘Some fell,’ &c. At noon I was very poorly; but after I entered upon the afternoon service I felt much better; and was comfortable in enlarging upon Ps. xcii. 12: ‘The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree,’ &c.

“ In the evening the church, after consulting together, gave me a call to take the pastoral office upon me. I told them it was a very important affair, and desired time to consider of it. O that the Lord would give me a heart to lay the matter before him, and to ask counsel at his mouth!”

“ Monday, July 23.—The former part of this day I spent in fasting and prayer, in examining my heart, confessing my sins, &c.

“ I proposed to myself, and in my poor manner answered, those questions in Mr. Henry’s Life, page 47:

“ I. ‘What am I?’ After examination, I concluded myself to be a subject of grace.

“ II. ‘What have I done?’ Here my conscience charged me with many sins and imperfections through my past life.

“ III. ‘From what principles do I act?’ If I am not

deceived with myself, from zeal for the Divine honour, and a principle of real love to the souls of men. "Lord search me and try me!"

Before he had left Bradford he had formed an intimate acquaintance with some families at Yeadon, near Rawden. Among his papers a letter has been found, dated August 30, 1764, subscribed with the initials of the names of five females, who were then young in years and religious profession; but through their future lives, which were protracted to a considerable length, they were ornaments of the societies to which they belonged. For strong sense, sterling piety, and engaging manners, they had comparatively few equals.

"An extract from the letter, it is hoped, will be acceptable to the reader.

"DEAR SIR,

"We should have written to you some time ago; but a variety of things prevented. We trust you will not do us the injustice to impute our silence to want of friendly regard. Your last letter was very acceptable, and particularly the short sketches you gave us of the sermons you had preached since your removal to Wainsgate. We were much interested in that from these words: 'The Lord is my helper.' It was very seasonable and applicable to the difficulties with which we were then struggling. The Almighty has seen meet to exercise us lately with heavy trials; but he is infinite in wisdom, and therefore cannot err. We have had great reason to complain of pride and unbelief. O the bitter fruit which these corrupt trees produce!

What poor creatures should we be were the Lord to leave us to ourselves; but we have to 'sing of mercy as well as judgment.'

"The power, love, and grace of God, have been displayed in so wonderful a manner, that we think we can now number our greatest trials among our choicest blessings. We see the need of them, to make our souls more lively in the ways of God—our views are thus directed to the precious promises contained in the Divine Word; and while the Almighty is chastening us, he puts underneath us his everlasting arms, and bears us above all our troubles.

"Thus we have endeavoured to describe to you the feelings of our minds. We love to speak of God's goodness to us; but we mourn on account of the body of sin and death which we daily carry about us. It, at times, causes us almost to faint; but it pleases the Lord, who giveth strength to them who have no might, to grant us fresh supplies of grace, which enable us to keep our heads above water. We often compare ourselves to a ship tossed upon the tempestuous ocean, ready to be swallowed up in the great deep, or ready to be dashed to pieces upon some fatal rock. Not that we are left to doubt of God's faithfulness in perfecting the good work which he has begun; but our fears arise from ourselves, lest our comforts and usefulness one to another should be prevented. Pray for us, that we may be kept lowly and honourable in our profession—that we may overcome the evils of our own hearts, the temptations of Satan, and the allurements of the world.

"We remain

"Your unworthy but affectionate Friends,
and fellow Pilgrims."

The following verses were some time after addressed to the ladies who subscribed this letter.

“ To _____ and others who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

“ Hail! heaven-born souls, celestial race,
Offspring of God’s peculiar grace;
Ye ransomed tribe, ye pious few,
Whose feet the paths of life pursue.

“ From off the rocks, like him of old,
Your blissful state let me behold;
Not void of hopes that worthless I
Belong to your blest company.

“ Through a long wilderness you rove,
Where beasts and savage monsters roar;
Gins, pits, and snares, infest the road;
But your defence and help is God.

“ Eschol’s sweet grapes you’ve now in hand,
In earnest of the heavenly land;
Celestial fruits e’en now you eat,
And long to have your bliss complete.

“ May you oft stand on Pisgah’s top,
And view your home with stedfast hope;
With patience wait till Jesus say,
‘Come over Jordan, come away.’

“ Then in his arms he’ll you embrace,
You shall behold him face to face;
His beauties then unveil’d you’ll see;
Ah! Lord, and is this bliss for me?”

The diary affords some further materials relative to this period of his life, though with considerable intervals.

“ Tuesday, January 1, 1765.—This forenoon I was in the greatest distress. I had a meeting to keep up at

25, 26 : 'I thank thee, O Father,' &c. I am filled with wonder when I review the Lord's dealings with me."

" Wednesday, May 29.—Went from home about ten, A. M. Had some agreeable conversation with a friend at Mytholmroyd. Passed through Sowerby, and took a view of the new church there, which is indeed a beautiful building, and then proceeded to Halifax. Had a pleasing interview with Mr. Wood—heard his answers to some questions proposed for discussion at the Association, and told him my temptations, discouragements, &c. He is much endeared to me."

" Thursday, May 30. Read with pleasure some parts of 'Nature Displayed.' Went to John Foster's, and spent an hour or two with him very agreeably. On my return home, began to make some preparation for the Lord's Day."

" Friday and Saturday, May 31, &c.—I have been studying a subject in which my own conscience condemns me, namely, *private prayer*. O that God would enable me to practise what I recommend to others!"

" Thursday July 18.—This day I set apart to seek the Lord by fasting and prayer; to examine myself in order to my ordination, having accepted the invitation of the church, which was unanimous."

" Friday, July 26.—The church met to make the necessary arrangements for the ordination. Moses Brigg spent some time in confession of sin; James Murgatroyd, and John Foster, also engaged in prayer. After this, I addressed the society from Ps. xc. 17: 'Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us,' &c. I concluded the meeting with petitions in behalf of the

church and congregation. It has been a good day to me; may it never be forgotten!"

"Lord's Day, July 28.—My dear wife and I received our dismissal from Bradford, and joined the society here. I preached from Cor. ii. 2: 'I determined not to know any thing among you,' &c."

"Wednesday, July 31, 1765.—This day I was solemnly ordained pastor over the church at Wainsgate; the most important day, as to its transactions, I have ever yet witnessed. Mr. Hartley asked the questions, and made the ordination prayer. Mr. Crabtree gave the charge, and an awful one it was, from 1 Tim. ii. 15: 'That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself,' &c. Then Mr. Nuttal preached to the people from 1 Thes. ii. 20: 'For ye are our glory and joy.' The place was very much crowded, and the weather exceedingly hot. O my soul! what a work hast thou now entered upon."

"Thursday, Aug. 1.—Had much pleasure in conversing with Mr. Oulton, Mr. Hartley, &c.; but have reason to complain on account of the hardness of my heart, and want of fervour in prayer."

"Lord's Day, Aug. 4.—I was feeble in my outward man. Preached in the forenoon from Numb. xxvii. 15; in the afternoon from Ps. xvi. 2, 3: 'O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord,' &c. I was much edified in the morning, in reading Mr. Newton's Life."

"Lord's Day, Oct. 27.—During the last week I have been composed in my mind, found my heart engaged in the service of God, and was greatly refreshed in reading Mr. Henry's "Exposition," the sweetest and most spiritual work I ever consulted.

This has been a comfortable day. We had a short meeting in the morning, which was opened at ten o'clock, when I read the first Psalm, and began to expound the first Chap. of the Epistle to the Romans.*

“The latter meeting commenced at twelve. This method we intend to continue for the winter season. I much prefer it to the practice still prevalent in some neighbouring churches, of having only one long service in the winter quarter.”

“Lord’s Day, Nov. 3.—This, through mercy, has been a happy day. In the morning I expounded, and in the afternoon preached from these words: ‘The just shall live by faith.’ Oh that I may live the life I spoke of!”

These extracts will give some general idea of the state of his mind, from his removal to Wainsgate to his ordination. This comprises considerably more than the space of a year. His labours at that early period of his ministry were by no means confined to the pulpit. He preached, after the example of primitive ministers, from *house to house*, wherever a door was opened to him. By these means, under a Divine blessing, prejudices were gradually weakened, and a spirit of inquiry was excited.

It may perhaps appear strange that so considerable a period elapsed between the invitation to accept the charge, and the time of ordination; but a

* His expository remarks on the Epistle to the Romans, which he probably continued from this time, were written at large, and afterwards put up in a separate volume; he was often solicited to publish it.

variety of papers, still preserved, show the sense he had of the arduous nature and difficulty of the pastoral office, and the discouragements he often felt from a conscious sense of his own weakness. Sometimes his mind was cheered by the liberty he found in speaking, and the satisfaction his hearers expressed; at others he was full of despondency and dejection. These painful feelings so preyed upon his spirits, about six months after his removal, that he had serious thoughts of wholly declining the work of the ministry. He wrote a letter to his intimate friend and counsellor Mr. Hartley, of Haworth, of which the following is a part:

“DEAR SIR,

“I have taken this opportunity to acquaint you with the bitter distress I at present feel. I fear I have entered upon a work to which God has not called me; and instead of combating these fears with success, I think I grow worse. I compare myself to the parched heath in the wilderness, which knoweth not when good cometh. I am continually bowed down under a sense of my weakness and foolishness. I spend my days in pain and anguish of mind, on these accounts; and what will be the event of these things I know not. Surely, if the Lord had called me to the work, I should be more sensible of his presence with me, and of his assistance. I make my complaint to him daily, but he seems to cover himself with a cloud, that prayer cannot pass through. I am ready to say with Job, ‘When I cry and shout he shutteth out my prayer.’ In attempting to make preparation for the pulpit, I sit for hours together, and can do little or nothing.”—