

commercial pursuits: yet he ever retained that meekness and humility which are the greatest ornaments of the man and the Christian. 'He was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.' After a life spent in the unostentatious discharge of the duties of personal religion and Christian benevolence, labouring to win souls to Christ by his example, prayers, and exhortations, he left the world in peace with God and all mankind. He was only seven or eight days indisposed; but, during that time, displayed such a sweetness of temper, such trust and confidence in God, and faith in the atonement of Christ, as tended to remove, from the breasts of his surrounding friends, those overwhelming sensations of grief which frequently attend a dying bed.

Though Mr. F. had now no concern in the care and education of young persons, excepting so far as connected with his ministerial duties, he still felt the deepest interest in their welfare; and some time after his removal to Machpelah preached a sermon from Prov. xxii. 6: 'Train up a child in the way in which he should go,' &c. As he now resided in the neighbourhood of a populous village, he had an opportunity of seeing more of the manners and habits of the lower classes than his former situation afforded: and his observation could not but point out the necessity of some advice both to parents and their offspring. The earnest concern he felt for the poor children in Hebdenbridge and the surrounding hamlets, had been evidenced by the little book already noticed, entitled "The History

of John Wise," designed chiefly for their use, and by his taking an active part in the establishment of a Sunday school at Hebdenbridge, almost immediately after the simple, but grand idea was suggested by Mr. Raikes; but as suitable accommodation could not be obtained for continuing the school during the winter quarter, to his great regret, the institution declined, and was at length relinquished. Of all the benevolent designs by which the present age has been so honourably distinguished, Sunday schools may be considered as one of the most effective; especially in those manufacturing districts where the introduction of machinery, while it finds employment for the children of the poor, deprives them of week-day advantages for education, and exposes them to the danger of acquiring vicious habits, by associating promiscuously together. Who that loves his country, and has any regard to religious principle, would not be willing to embrace every opportunity of counteracting those evils, which, but for institutions of this kind, seem unavoidable? The prevailing character of the poor is of infinite importance to the well-being of society; and he who endeavours to raise the standard of morals, so as to restrain the rising generation from vice, and stimulate them to the practice of virtue, may certainly be considered as one of the greatest benefactors of mankind.

The sermon we have already noticed, produced a considerable impression when it was delivered; and he was repeatedly urged to print it, to which he at length consented, not as a sermon, but by the more inviting, though less assuming denomination of "Hints on the Education of Children, particularly the Children of the Poor." Though containing much more matter than

sermons in general, it was sold at four-pence, neatly printed, the principal object being to give it as extensive a circulation as possible among those for whose use it was intended. The demand was so considerable, that it soon reached a fourth edition. It was the author's wish that the language should be level to the meanest capacity, and that it should present, in a condensed form, the most powerful inducements to the great work of cultivating the minds of young persons.

In a letter to a friend, he says, "This tract is designed to be put into the hands of the lower class of people, who have not access to more elaborate treatises. There are thousands of poor families who never think of laying out money on books of this kind; and yet none stand in greater need of instruction on the subject of education. Among these I give many copies away; and for those who purchase, the expense is very easy. The subject itself is of the greatest importance."

Some time after the publication of this pamphlet, he printed, by request of the hearers, a sermon preached at Ackrington, for the benefit of a Sunday school, from Deut. xxxi. 13: 'That the children which have not known any thing may hear and learn to fear the Lord.' In this sermon are considered the importance and benefit of Sunday schools—to the children themselves—to others, with whom they are connected—to the families into which they may be introduced—to society at large—to the parents of the children, and, above all, to the salvation of their own souls, and the promotion of true religion in the world.

In the year 1806, having heard of a considerable revival of religion in the neighbourhood of Bradford, though not in a denomination with which he was con-

nected, he took occasion to write a small pamphlet, under the title of, "A tender Address to returning Prodigals, in the Form of a Letter." It possesses considerable interest, as an evidence that his declining years did not at all diminish the ardour of his soul for the conversion of sinners; and that he felt the most disinterested regard for all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ, by whatever name distinguished amongst men. He says, "For more than fifty years, it has been my heart's desire, and prayer to God, that my poor fellow sinners, in every place, might have their eyes opened, their hearts changed, and their wills bowed to the will of their Maker. The instances which have come to my knowledge of this great work, have filled my mind with pleasure and gratitude.

"With respect to many of you, I never saw your faces in the flesh, nor perhaps ever may, in this world. I must shortly put off this tabernacle; the time of my departure is at hand; but from what I have heard of you, and of the great change that has taken place among you, I do most sincerely love you. O that thousands and millions more may be subdued by victorious grace, and made willing in the day of God's power!"

Several of Mr. F.'s friends had long expressed a desire that he would give a digest of the sermons he had preached on almost every part of the Divine Word, and his general idea of the sense of Scripture, by writing a short comment on the Bible, with suitable reflections at the close of each chapter. The materials he

had long been treasuring up, the leisure he now enjoyed from the confinement of his former avocation, and the state of his health, which was in some respects improved, induced him to take the matter into serious consideration. His mind, however, for a considerable time, shrunk back at the thoughts of such an undertaking.

To commence a work of that magnitude when on the verge of seventy, was what perhaps had never before been attempted. The recollection of the many instances in which those who had engaged in similar works in the vigour of their days, as Poole, Henry, Doddridge, &c. but died before the completion, was a discouraging circumstance. His intimate friend, Mr. Fuller, though he approved of the design, had little expectation that his life would be prolonged till he could bring it to a conclusion. In one of his letters, he says—I hope your life and strength may be spared to go on with the commentary, though there is not much probability of your living to finish it. I have somewhere met with the following expression, “Jesus could say ‘It is finished,’ and then gave up the ghost; but this is more than can be said of any one besides. Death generally finds us with a number of our unfinished works on our hands.”

His advanced years certainly presented one important advantage for entering upon this arduous undertaking, namely, the mental stores and matured experience which he had acquired, from his constant study of the Scriptures, and from his ministerial labours. No doubt, when he finally concluded to accede to the wishes of his friends, he was influenced by motives similar to those of the Apostle Peter, when drawing towards the close of life: ‘Moreover, I will endeavour that, after my

decease, ye may have these things always in remembrance; for we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

From a date (November 17, 1807) in the manuscript, at the close of Gen. iv. it may be inferred, that he entered upon the work of writing the comment, in the beginning of that month. His regular plan, unless prevented by some unforeseen occurrence, was to go through one chapter, on an average, every day; and on the Lord's Day mornings he expounded one of the chapters he had commented upon during the preceding week. This was both a relief to his own mind, in his studies preparatory to preaching, and proved highly interesting to the hearers, as was evident from the considerable increase in his morning congregations, more especially while he was upon the historical parts of Scripture, which he had the happy talent of rendering both entertaining and instructive. For the gratification of his aged partner in life, and others, who occasionally stepped in, he usually read, before he retired to rest, what he had composed during each day. These evening rehearsals also afforded him an opportunity of making the necessary corrections, and supplying what might have been omitted.

In a letter to a highly valued friend, to whose perusal part of the manuscript was submitted, he says, "I am glad to find you do not disapprove of my feeble attempts, in a work to which the powers of my mind are not equal, though I find a present reward in them. I often wonder that I have been enabled to sit to close study, for twelve or fourteen hours in the day, without any

material injury to my health. The fact is, I am running a race, with death at my heels, not knowing how soon he may overtake me. The work is formidable; but who can tell what the Almighty may intend to do by one of the weakest and most unworthy of his servants? I would live, and act, think, read, and write, depending on him. You will easily conceive that I must meet with many interruptions from company; and I have been obliged to publish three pamphlets during the last summer. The uncertainty of my being able to get through the work, must be an obstacle in the way of printing; but, if I should fail, it will be what others have done before me; and I should hope some one will be found able and willing to carry it forward to a conclusion. At all events, so long as I am continued in a capacity for writing, I feel a strong inclination to persevere. Above two thousand close pages have cost me some labour; and besides these, I have many materials, on several remaining parts of the Sacred Book. As to my style of composition, you know it is plain, and not embellished with the ornaments of modern refinement. My principal object is to make myself understood, and to interest the heart of the reader. It would not suit me to attempt to rise above the level of my own powers;—but pardon my prolixity. My dear wife sends her love; alas! she is sinking apace. I often fear she will soon be taken from me; we have been together more than half a century, and the separating stroke, whenever it comes, will be severely felt. We often talk of our absent friends; and it is my wish to write more frequently; but, after I have spent the whole day in study, I feel my spirits exhausted. Yet,

through Divine mercy, my health is in as favourable a state as I have any reason to expect, considering my years and infirmities."

A variety of letters lie before me, written by the subject of this Memoir about this period, which show that, though his attention was so closely engaged in his laborious and voluminous work, he retained a sense of those sacred obligations which friendship imposes, and found satisfaction in disclosing the feelings of his mind to his Christian friends. In several of these an interesting account is given of a young person to whom his ministerial labours were serviceable, and whom he regularly visited, when languishing under the power of a consumptive disorder. The similarity of her case to that of his beloved daughter, who died some years before, affected him greatly. At first her mind was beclouded, and her spirits were depressed under a sense of her sin and unworthiness; but she derived hope and encouragement from a view of that great remedy which God himself has provided, and the gracious promises of the Gospel; so that the fear of death and every other disquietude were removed, and she departed this life with the greatest composure and tranquillity.

In a following letter to the same esteemed lady, dated July 4, 1807, he relates another instance of mortality, of which he had recently received the mournful intelligence.

"I have lately lost a most valuable friend, who had resided for some time at Missenden Abbey, near

London. She formerly lived in our neighbourhood. It pleased God to make my poor labours useful to her about twenty years ago. She had many severe trials in the course of her life, but she bore them with meekness and Christian patience. She was my steady friend and correspondent for many years, in all the changes through which she passed; but she is gone, and I have no doubt to a better world. She was a person of an enlarged understanding, of a refined taste, and elegant manners, and, which is infinitely more than all, of *steady, persevering, and exalted piety.*"

"July 22, 1807.

"When you were pleased to express a wish to hear from me frequently, you were not perhaps aware of the trouble your poor correspondent might give you. The reason assigned for my last letter must be my apology for the present, namely, relief to my own mind. My dear wife has been greatly afflicted with a bilious complaint, but is at present a little better. We have lived long together, during which period we have weathered many storms, but we have enjoyed many comforts. We have outlived many of our dear friends; but the Lord liveth, whose loving-kindness is better than life, and ever the same, for his mercy endureth for ever. Permit me to thank you for the consolation your friendship affords me. After the many I have seen laid in the grave who were dear to me, it is a relief to my desponding mind to have an interest in your kind remembrance.

"I have just been attempting something by way of funeral discourse for the young person of whose death I gave you some account. When inquiry was made of

her, whether one should be preached, she replied, 'Let nothing be said of me;' a proof, among many others, of the humility of her mind. Her request has been strictly attended to; but I judged this a proper opportunity for addressing young persons relative to their most important interests. The text was Psalm lxxi. 5: "For thou art my hope from my youth." You will believe me when I say, that I was greatly affected."

" May 29, 1807.

"The Rev. ——— informs me, that your health has been for some time very indifferent. This intelligence excites my sympathy and tender concern. May it please the Almighty to restore you to better health, and to grant you the consolations of his Holy Spirit! May Christ dwell in your heart, that you may be filled with all joy and peace in believing, and made to abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost!

"I have just been at Liverpool to see my daughter, who has drunk deeply of the bitter cup of affliction. The journey of above sixty miles has been too much for me; I was unwell during all the time of my absence, and am so much indisposed on my return that I can scarcely lift up my head. My dear wife is also much afflicted, but mercifully supported in her mind. At Liverpool I was engaged to preach, along with some other ministers: I took for my text some words which came out of a foul mouth, but contain an important truth; for a liar, and even the father of lies, may sometimes speak that which is true. The enemy's design no doubt was to bring the apostles of Christ into contempt, through what was spoken; by leading the people to suppose that they were confederate with the

powers of darkness: Acts 16, 17: "These men are the servants," &c. All true ministers are the servants of the Most High God, but the apostles were so in a peculiar sense; hence their message claims our most serious regard. Men stand in need of salvation; there is a way of salvation, and but one; it is the business of ministers to show us that way; that is, to show us the *importance* of salvation, the *Author* of it, the *procurement* and the *application* of it, and the things which accompany it; namely, illumination of mind, repentance, faith, love, subjection to Christ, and obedience to his precepts. Some of the blessings of salvation were briefly mentioned in the conclusion, as deliverance from the wrath to come, pardon of sin, peace with God, adoption into his family, preservation by his power, and the crowning blessing of eternal felicity. For this felicity, my dear friend, you are now, I trust, waiting with joyful hope.

"I am pressing forward with my comment on the Bible, having prepared for the press 3180 quarto pages, which bring me to the end of the book of Job. My wish is not to exceed three volumes."

"Aug. 5, 1809.

"Your kind letter by my esteemed friend Mr. ——— came duly, to hand and gave me very great pleasure. The Bibles were also received a few days ago; a valuable present indeed; for which I hope and trust He that put it into your heart to impart, will reward you a thousand fold. Accept of my grateful acknowledgments, and those of my poor friends who are now enjoying the benefit of your liberality; some of whom received your gift with tears of joy. Gratitude is a pleasing sen-

sation; but O what obligations, what infinite obligations, do we lie under to him who *gave himself* for us! I have just been musing on Is. xii. 1: 'O Lord! I will praise thee,' &c. This passage I could wish to speak from to-morrow, if it please the Almighty to help me. My plan is simple: I. The sinner's distressful case, 'Thou wast angry with me.' The only procuring cause of God's anger is *sin*. Men, in their natural state, are, as guilty creatures, exposed to the Divine displeasure; yet such is their blindness and stupidity, they do not consider their danger; but when the mind is divinely enlightened, there are awful apprehensions of the Divine anger; 'Thou wast angry with me.' II. The words of the text state a happy deliverance: 'Thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.' The Holy Spirit, in illuminating the mind, directs it to that which affords comfort. The ground of comfort to the distressed soul is the complete work of Jesus Christ, finished on the cross; and the way in which the poor sinner receives comfort is that of believing the testimony which God has given of his Son Jesus Christ. III. The consequence of this is gratitude to God: 'O Lord! I will praise thee.'

"I hope you will pardon the brevity and abruptness of these hints.

"Amidst many infirmities, I am going on with my comment, and have finished the 62d Psalm. You do me great honour, by looking over a few pages of my notes; I wish they were more worthy of your perusal."

"April 22, 1810.

"I beg leave to present you with a few scraps and gleanings of a discourse which I have just been endeavouring to deliver to my dear people from Is. lix. 19:

‘They shall fear the name of the Lord,’ &c. Obs. 1. They that fear the Lord are in a *militant* state in the present world. An enemy on the one hand, and a standard lifted up on the other, denote war. Hence we read of wrestling and of fighting, of enduring hardship, and of being more than conquerors. 2. The world is divided into those that fight *for* God, and those that fight *against* him. 3. An enemy is here spoken of who comes *in like a flood*. This enemy, namely, Satan, is the opposer of Christ and of all that is good. He tempted Christ, who came to bruise his head and to destroy his works. He commands a numerous host, principalities and powers in high places. He is of great power; hence he is denominated a roaring lion, unwearied in his efforts. 4. Those that fear the Lord are not of themselves able to cope with this adversary. Peter thought himself equal; but mark the issue. Jesus said, ‘Without me ye can do nothing.’ 5. The Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him. He enlightens, renews, sanctifies, comforts, seals, bears witness, and leads to the Redeemer. When we have no might, no courage, no help, he lifts up a standard to direct and encourage. 6. There are some special seasons when this is particularly verified, that is, when ‘the enemy comes in like a flood, and when the Spirit lifts up a standard against him;’ as (1) at the time of our conversion to God. While a man is secure in his sins, the enemy has him in his power; he keeps his palace, and his goods are in peace: but when once a man begins to desert his service, conflicts and temptations prevail. In this situation the Spirit of God lifts up a standard, and directs where to look, in what to trust, as well as how to act. The motto upon this

standard, to encourage the trembling sinner is, 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth.'

(2.) When we have enjoyed heavenly consolations, the messenger, Satan, is sometimes suffered to buffet us, as in the case of the apostle Paul, when, after his seraphic vision, he had to complain of a thorn in the flesh. But a standard is lifted up: 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' (3.) When we fall into declensions, backslidings, and lukewarmness, a standard is lifted up: 'He restoreth my soul;' 'I will heal their backslidings.' Alas! were not this the case, we should be undone.

(4.) In times of great darkness and despondency, 'The enemy persecuteth my soul, he hath smitten my life down to the ground.' Perhaps horrid blasphemous thoughts assail and torment us; but the Spirit of God lifteth up the standard of the cross, to which we look, and find healing and comfort. (5.) In times of persecution, 'The dragon cast a flood after the woman;' fines, confiscations, racks, prisons, flames, &c., but the Spirit lifts up a standard. Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises in the dungeon: others rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the dear name of Jesus; they gloried in tribulation, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; and amidst all their sufferings found an increase of love, of fervour, of joy, and of consolation. (6.) When error and infidelity are rampant. The flood-gates of error are sometimes opened, violent opposition is made to the most important truths, but the Spirit lifts up a standard; the truth is held fast by the real Christian, and shines with more resplendent rays, for 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'

(7.) This is frequently verified in seasons of sickness, and at the approach of death. This is the enemy's last

effort. Sin is sometimes brought to remembrance, and unbelieving fears prevail; but the standard of the cross is lifted up and relief afforded, fear is vanquished, and faith is victorious: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, *through our Lord Jesus Christ.*'

"To his gracious care, my honoured friend, I humbly commend you, and hope you will excuse any defects you may find in these imperfect hints. Accept them as a token of my most sincere regard."

In another letter to the same friend, he says:

"I have just heard of the afflictions and depressions of mind with which it has pleased the Almighty to visit you. Let me assure you, for your comfort, that the adorable Redeemer, who died to save you, ever bears you on his heart, and ever lives to make intercession for you. Let the thought of his love comfort your heart, amidst all your tribulations. Hear his tender language: 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me,' as the Redeemer of sinners, as the Mediator between God and man. Here is the best remedy, the best cordial for a distressed mind; a cordial prescribed by infinite wisdom and love; a cordial, which has been found efficacious by all who have tried it, in every age. Believe therefore in the power, the love, and the truth of God, in whom there is mercy and plenteous redemption; believe in the all-glorious and compassionate Saviour, for the remission of your sins, the acceptance of your person, the supply of all your wants, and the enjoyment of everlasting life. Observe what he further adds for the re-

hief of troubled hearts: 'In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' What can you or I, my dear friend, ask more?"

"I hope you will be pleased to excuse my long silence, and not impute it either to want of respect or gratitude. The work in which I am engaged so entirely absorbs my attention, that I have little leisure for any thing else. God only knows whether I shall live to see it completed or not. I desire to be resigned to his Divine will. My life has hitherto been a busy one, but it has pleased the Almighty to bear me up amidst many afflictions and discouragements. I make no apology for writing about myself, as I know your goodness will excuse it. That the best of blessings may rest on you, and all who are dear to you, is the sincere desire and hearty prayer of yours most sincerely."

Though Mr. F. avoided, as much as possible, being absent from his labours, which to almost any one at his age would have appeared an Herculean exertion, he acceded to a pressing invitation, to preach at the opening of the new place of worship, York-street, Manchester, April 20, 1808; and at the earnest request of many, he afterwards printed the sermon.

From an advertisement prefixed, it appears that it did not come out till the beginning of July following.

The delay, he says, has been owing partly to that reluctance which arises from diffidence and conscious inability, and partly to that bodily and mental weakness which attended the author in the first delivery, and which has still attended him in preparing it for the press. The subject of the sermon is, The Holiness which becometh the house of God, from Ps. xciii. 5: 'Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.' No text could have been better adapted for so solemn and interesting an occasion. The division of the discourse is plain, and such as the words themselves naturally suggested; namely, what we are to understand by the *house* of God, and the *holiness* that becomes it. Whether the term is applied to the church of God, as consisting of professing believers in Jesus, or to the material building wherever the worship of God is maintained, it may with the greatest propriety be said, 'Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever!' But under the Gospel dispensation, this holiness does not so much refer to the place itself, as to those who assemble there for religious exercises; and as such it may include, holiness of *intention*, holiness of *doctrine*, holiness of *worship*, of *discipline*, and of *practice*.

The progress he made in writing the comment on the Bible far exceeded the expectations of his friends. That persevering and steady industry in his undertakings, which had distinguished the former periods of his life, did not fail in its effect here; but he had scarcely got to the middle of the work before his assiduous

labours were impeded by a circumstance most painful to his private feelings; though it did not come upon him by surprise, as is evident from many expressions in the preceding letters. His beloved partner in life, who had distinguished herself in that relation by activity, integrity, steady piety, and sincere affection, for more than fifty years; after languishing for some months, was removed by the stroke of death. The complaints with which she had long been attended terminated in a dropsy. She took her room about Christmas, 1809, and died March 30, 1810. Her sickness deprived him of the satisfaction he had found in reading to her his commentary; and the attention her feeble situation required by night and by day, while it broke in upon his rest, rendered him often unfit for study.

In a letter to a friend, dated March 25, 1810, he says:

“Exhausted with continual watching, fatigue, and anxiety, I feel myself unfit for any thing; yet would not neglect this opportunity of communicating a line to my much valued friend. My dear wife has been many times brought back from the very gates of death. When the lease of life seemed just going to expire, she has had it renewed from time to time. Last night we all assembled round her bed, and thought her dying for some hours; we did not at all expect she would live till morning, but she suddenly revived, and called me by name, with her usual tenderness. I think I never had closer exercise than to go through my labour of preaching in these circumstances. My text yesterday was, ‘It is the Lord, let him do what

seemeth him good.' This disposition I wish to feel, and to cherish. I have been revising part of my manuscript, and must now leave what I have done, as far as I am able, in the hands of Providence. The will of the Lord be done! If he smile upon this feeble effort, for the promotion of his glory, I hope I shall be thankful."

In another letter, he thus discloses the feelings of his mind, on this trying occasion :

" It has long been a gloomy, anxious time with us, and still continues to be so. My dear wife has been confined to her chamber for three months ; I cannot say to her bed, for she is not able to breathe otherwise than sitting up in her chair, which is her posture through the night. We have many times thought her ready to expire, but she is still spared to us. When she is herself, she is composed, comfortable, and very affectionate, but sometimes she is quite delirious. It often distresses us to see her suffer so much ; yet amidst her great affliction, she is sensible that it is the hand of the Almighty, and is desirous to wait his will in due submission. As to myself, I am as well as I can expect, considering what restless nights I have long had. My trials are very heavy, but strength has hitherto been afforded equal to the day. I feel the want of sleep very sensibly. This makes me a poor companion for the elevated prophet Isaiah. He is all life, but I have to complain of great dulness and stupidity. What I have written on the preceding part of the Bible is in the hands of some judicious friends ; and should they not encourage

the publication, perhaps it may be of some value to those with whom I am personally connected in its present form, when my head is laid low in the silent dust."

He was enabled to bear the parting stroke with the fortitude and patience of a Christian. It is one happy tendency of extreme and long-continued suffering, that it reconciles us to a separation from our dearest relatives, and especially when satisfactory evidence has been given, that death will be their release from all pain and sorrow. He remained by her to the last moment of her mortal existence, holding her arm, so as to feel her pulse, till the lungs finally ceased to heave, and the crimson current was arrested in its progress.

In many instances where the husband and wife have been spared so long together, the death of the one proves a forerunner to the removal of the other; the survivor languishes, and at length expires, unable to bear the separating stroke; but the close attention requisite for the work in which he was now engaged, tended greatly to divert his thoughts from those distressing ideas and reflections which such a bereavement must occasion, and which almost overwhelm the mind that can fly to no other resources.

Among the many letters of condolence which the aged sufferer received on this mournful occasion, the following afforded him particular satisfaction. It is here introduced, both on account of its own intrinsic excellence, and the subsequent reply.

"I perceive by the public papers that my worthy and venerable friend has sustained an irreparable loss, in the death of a faithful and beloved wife, who has long been an affectionate support to him, and a cheering companion through the varied periods of life. I embrace an early opportunity to express my sympathy under this trying event. On such occasions I know of no reflections so consoling as the grateful remembrance of the many years we have possessed the mercy and the well-grounded hope of soon meeting the blessed spirit in a state of glory and happiness which admits of no alloy, and which will last for ever. 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord,' are the pious aspiration of a devout and resigned heart; and such I doubt not will be the humble and grateful language of my dear friend.

"Infinite goodness has by this event afforded a fresh occasion of pious resignation to his holy will; it has cut asunder one more of the bonds which attach to this world, and is thus mercifully preparing the spirit, with more composure and alacrity, to take its leave of all the things of time."

To this truly sympathetic letter, he soon after returned an answer, dated April 19, 1810; from which a few passages are extracted.

"It was very kind in you, my much esteemed friend, to favour me with a consolatory letter, in this midst of my distress. O how grateful do I feel for this token of your goodness! Were not the distance so great, I would come and thank you in person. I do sincerely love you both, and feel that union of heart with you,

the sweetness of which I am persuaded you understand better than I can express. I have sustained a heavy loss indeed! Death has left a vacancy, which I feel every hour; but what you suggest is a great consolation to me. We have lived very happily together for a long course of years, and I hope we shall soon meet again, to *part no more*. My thoughts are far from being composed. Do write again, my dear friend. O what would I give to be able to spend one hour with you! There is something peculiarly soothing in sincere and tender friendship. It is a cordial to a wounded heart; and such a heart is mine at present. But I must bid you farewell, and make no apology for writing with a childlike simplicity. I am,

“ Ever yours.”

In the month of June, 1810, the annual association was held at Bradford. As this was Mr. F.'s native place, he was earnestly importuned, and at length consented, to attend on that occasion, to officiate as one of the ministers, and that he might once more have an interview with his relations and friends, who were resident there, and with those who came from distant places. On the morning of the day on which he had to preach, he was more than usually agitated in the prospect of appearing in public, expressing in the strongest and most humiliating terms the sense he had of his unfitness for the work, both on account of his great weakness and mental infirmities. But when he entered the pulpit and read his text (Joshua xxiii. 14: ‘Behold this day I am going the way of all the earth’), every eye in the large assembly

was fixed upon him, and he had not proceeded far in opening the subject, before almost every individual present was melted into tears. Since the days of Whitefield, few such seasons had been witnessed; and the remembrance of it will remain with many who were present to the latest period of life. It was not enthusiasm; it was that melting of the heart, which truths of infinite and universal concernment, delivered with feeling, and accompanied by divine energy, cannot fail to produce. He had a few months before completed his three-score years and ten; his partner in life, for whom this was intended as a funeral sermon, had, as we have seen, been recently taken from him; many present had known him long, and had often been greatly edified by hearing him at these solemn seasons; and their presentiments told them that he was now, like Joshua, taking a final leave of them, as a public character. This sermon, the last he published, was soon after printed in a cheap form, and has gone through many editions. It cannot be supposed that, independently of circumstances peculiar to the time and mode of delivery, and which in themselves have a great effect upon the mind, it should be equally impressive in the perusal, as when first delivered; but it has generally been considered as one of the best specimens to be found among the writings of the deceased of his method in preaching, and illustrating subjects of that nature. Those who have sat under his ministry will here find his manner exhibited, so far as language can convey it. For this reason it is subjoined to the narrative.

During the last year of his being employed on the commentary, he had several serious attacks of indis-

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position, by which he was for weeks together prevented from making any progress. On one of these occasions he had a slight paralytic affection in his right arm, which disabled him from writing. This was a discouraging circumstance at his advanced age; but by the use of proper means and a little respite, he resumed his pen sooner than could have been expected.

In a letter written at this time, he thus expresses himself: "Through mercy I feel myself in a way for recovery. I began to be better yesterday in the afternoon, and have had a good night. I hope you will lend me your kind assistance on Lord's Day, in the afternoon. I thank you for all your affectionate solicitude, of which I am totally unworthy. The solemn subjects now under my consideration in Matthew almost overpower me. I sink under the idea of my own insufficiency. There is a majesty and glory in revelation, which I never felt so forcibly as now. It is all Divine. O that we did but understand it, and experience its energy!"

Notwithstanding these frequent interruptions from indisposition and other causes, the writing of the commentary was completed in less than four years from the time of its commencement; namely, in the month of August, 1811; and about the same time the degree of Doctor in Divinity was conferred upon him, by one of the Transatlantic Universities.

To a much valued friend, he thus writes when drawing towards the close of his labours.

"Your letter was to me as cold water to a thirsty soul, and good news from a far country. Accept of my warmest and most grateful acknowledgments. I am

favoured with a respectable list of subscribers; but among them all no name is dearer to me than yours. My time has long been fully, but pleasantly occupied about the solemn work I have in hand. I began too late in life, but I now hope I shall be helped through it."

The Sabbath after he had finished the manuscript, he descanted, in the morning, on the two last chapters of the Revelation. The whole of the service was interesting, and in particular the concluding part, in which he adverted, in a most feeling manner, to the events which had taken place since he undertook the work, the personal and family afflictions with which he had been exercised, the discouragements of mind under which he had frequently laboured, and the help which amidst all had been afforded him. In the afternoon he preached from the last verse in the Bible: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.'

As the care and expense of publishing a work of such magnitude were too considerable for him, as an individual, in his retired situation, and at his advanced age, to undertake, arrangements had been made for that purpose, through the medium of a kind friend, with some of the London booksellers. The copy was sent up as it was wanted, and carefully preserved, so that when the work was printed off, the manuscript was returned and bound up in sixteen quarto volumes. It extends to 8578 pages. The whole of it was written on single quarto-sized leaves; so that by loosening the string which connected the parts together, any single leaf might be taken out, and another substituted in its place. This was the form he adopted in all his manuscripts for the press. The number of erasures through-